

INSPECTION REPORT

**Threlkeld Church of England Primary
School**

Threlkeld, Keswick

LEA area: Cumbria

Unique reference number: 112276

Headteacher: Mrs K. Horder

Reporting inspector: Mr P. M. Allen
17531

Dates of inspection: 28th – 30th January 2002

Inspection number: 197997

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 Controlled
Age range of pupils:	4 – 11
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Blease Road Threlkeld Keswick Cumbria
Postcode:	CA12 4RX
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Appropriate authority:	Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	Rev B. Rothwell
Date of previous inspection:	13 th October 1997

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members			Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
17531	Mr P. Allen	Registered inspector	English Art and design Music Physical education Religious education Foundation stage	What sort of school is it? How high are standards? How well are pupils taught? What should the school do to improve further?
11474	Mr P. Berry	Lay inspector		Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development How well does the school care for its pupils? How well does the school work in partnership with parents?
17310	Mrs A. McAskie	Team inspector	Mathematics Science Information and communication technology Design and technology Geography History Equal opportunities Special educational needs	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

Threlkeld Church of England Primary School is a small rural primary school east of Keswick in North Cumbria, which draws the majority of its pupils from the communities in the surrounding area. There are 73 children on roll. The number of pupils has increased and the school is over-subscribed. There are slightly more girls than boys. There are three classes, one for Reception and Key Stage 1 and two for Key Stage 2. There are three full time teachers, including the headteacher who teaches virtually full time. All the children are of white ethnic origin. There are fifteen pupils on the special educational needs register, this proportion being broadly in line with the national average. The proportion of pupils taking free school meals is well below the national average. Most children have experienced pre-school education. Attainment on entry varies from year to year although overall it is broadly in line with what could be expected. The recent improvements to the building are having a very positive impact.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

This is a good school with a very supportive family atmosphere that is valued by parents. In it, pupils are helped to become secure and confident. The school is inclusive for all pupils in all of its practices. The headteacher provides good leadership and the school is well supported by the governors and the parents. The staff work very hard as a team and the quality of teaching is at least satisfactory, very often good and sometimes very good. The small number of pupils makes overall evaluations of attainment difficult, although the current Year 6 pupils are likely to attain standards which are good. Most pupils achieve well relative to their abilities across most curricular areas. Overall the school gives good value for money.

What the school does well

- ◆ The good leadership of the headteacher has brought about significant improvements since the previous inspection, including the very effective partnership with parents and the community.
- ◆ The Key Stage 2 pupils attain very well in science.
- ◆ The provision for spiritual development is good and the provision for the moral, social and cultural development of the pupils is very good.
- ◆ The attitudes, values and personal development of the pupils are very good.
- ◆ The very good provision for pupils with special educational needs leads to their very good progress.
- ◆ There is excellent provision for extra-curricular activities.

What could be improved

- ◆ Standards in written work.
- ◆ The Foundation Stage curriculum.

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

The previous inspection in October 1997 followed an unsettled period in the life of the school; there has been good improvement since then. Since then the school has moved forward and improved the quality of education provided. The issues from the report have been substantially addressed. The rate of progress and attainment in English and mathematics has improved, although there is still a need to further raise standards in written work. The provision for pupils with special educational needs has improved significantly. Standards in information and communication technology have risen and progression and continuity have improved in the foundation subjects. The school now has effective procedures for managing and monitoring its finances. The school has improved in many aspects of its work, including its links with parents and the community; the accommodation has been extended and improved. The enthusiasm and commitment of the staff gives the school a good capacity for further improvement.

STANDARDS

The number of pupils in each year group is small and so it is not appropriate to include a table of standards in national tests.

The youngest children are likely to meet the nationally prescribed Early Learning Goals by the end of the Foundation Stage (Reception year) and around a third will probably exceed them. There are too few pupils at Year 2 to make meaningful overall evaluations. The results, like those at Key Stage 2, fluctuate from year to year, partly dependent on the proportion of pupils with special educational needs. The current Year 6 group is likely to achieve results which are good in English and mathematics and very good in science. Standards in recent years have been consistently very good in science. Progress is more marked in the core subjects at Key Stage 2. There is recognition in the school that standards in written work could be higher. Standards in information and communication technology are satisfactory across the school. Standards in religious education are satisfactory and meet the requirements of the locally agreed syllabus.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Pupils have an enthusiasm for the school and what it has to offer and show very positive attitudes towards it.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Behaviour is very good both in and out of the classrooms. Staff have high expectations of behaviour to which the pupils respond very well.
Personal development and relationships	There is very good personal development. Pupils show initiative, independence and concern for one another. The very good relationships underpin the quality of teaching and learning.
Attendance	Attendance is very good, being well above the national average. Pupils arrive promptly, eager to start the school day.

The pupils' very positive attitudes, their very good behaviour and very good personal development have a significant impact on the quality of learning.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils in:	Reception	Years 1 – 2	Years 3 – 6
Quality of teaching	satisfactory	satisfactory	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 quality of teaching and learning in the Foundation Stage is satisfactory, but it is insufficiently focused on the areas of learning prescribed for this age group. The quality of teaching at Key Stage 1 is satisfactory and sometimes good. The quality of teaching at Key Stage 2, which better meets the needs of the pupils, is good and sometimes very good. The skills of literacy are mainly well taught, although the teaching needs to focus more on raising standards in written work. The skills of numeracy are well taught. The pupils benefit from very good teaching in music. The teaching provides well for the pupils with special educational needs and is inclusive for all pupils.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	The curriculum is broad and balanced and well planned and meets statutory requirements. The curriculum for the Reception children takes insufficient account of the Early Learning Goals.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Provision is very good. Valuable tasks are planned based on clear targets that enable pupils to make very good progress. Classroom assistants provide very good support and the school is appreciative of the external help it receives.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	There is good provision for spiritual development, together with very good provision for moral and social development. The very good provision for cultural development gives the pupils a good awareness of the wider world and of the multicultural society in which they are growing up.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Pupils are sensitively looked after in a warm, caring environment where the staff have a close knowledge of each pupil. The school assesses pupils' attainment and progress regularly, but there is a need for a whole school approach to the organisation of record keeping.

Given the size of the school, the provision for extra-curricular activities is excellent. The school works very effectively with parents, who appreciate the caring and happy atmosphere in which each individual is valued and respected.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	The headteacher is providing good leadership and clear direction for the school. She has sensitively led the school following a period of instability, well supported by all members of staff. Curriculum co-ordinator roles are being effectively developed.

How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	The governing body is effective and fulfils its responsibilities. It is enthusiastically led by its chairman and is extremely supportive of the school.
The school's evaluation of its performance	A good start has been made to self-evaluation, although the monitoring of teaching and learning needs to be further developed.
The strategic use of resources	Strategic use of resources is good. Money is well used and resources deployed effectively. Surplus income was accumulated in order to be used to part fund the recent building extension.

The school is appropriately staffed. It has good resources to cover the curriculum. Careful financial planning and resourcing have enabled the school to bring about very significant improvements to the building. Nevertheless the accommodation, although clean, bright and well cared for, is still only adequate. The new room serves as office, headteacher's room and staff room. Space is very tight in the hall for physical education and playground space is inadequate. The school gives good consideration to the principles of best value.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ The children like school and make good progress. ◆ The quality of teaching, the amount of homework set and the extra-curricular activities. ◆ The approachability of the school and the expectation that children will work hard and be helped to become mature and responsible. ◆ The school's partnership with parents. ◆ The school is well led and managed. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ A small minority believes that they could be better informed about children's progress and that the school could work more closely with them.

The judgement of the inspection team is that the school generally provides good information to keep parents well informed about progress. Overall the school works very closely with parents. Virtually all parents hold the school in very high regard; this was very clear at the parents' meeting and in the letters sent to the inspection team. The inspection team endorses the parents' positive views about the school.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and pupils' achievements

1. The judgement of the previous inspection report was that standards at the end of Year 2 and Year 6 were broadly in line with national averages in the core subjects of English, mathematics and science. Progress in reading, writing and aspects of mathematics was judged to be uneven. Significant gaps were identified in pupils' skills and knowledge in handwriting, spelling, punctuation, grammar and aspects of mathematics, mainly number. The school has addressed these weaknesses. Although there are too few pupils to make firm judgements on every discrete year group, nearly all the available data indicates that standards over time are rising and that pupils are achieving better relative to their abilities.
2. Attainment on entry to the school varies from year to year, so that some years it is higher than others; for example, for the children in the Reception year observed during the inspection, attainment on entry was higher than could be expected. Nevertheless, when considering recent year groups, overall attainment is broadly in line with what could be expected. Most children have experience of pre-school education and they start school with enthusiasm and a readiness to learn. The speaking and listening skills of most of the children are good. Children make sound and sometimes good progress in the Reception year. By the end of the current year, the children are in line to achieve the Early Learning Goals prescribed for this age group and around a third will exceed them. The children attain well across the six areas of learning, especially in communication, language and literacy, in mathematical development and in personal, social and emotional development.
3. With the small number of pupils in each year group, National Curriculum test results do not give a reliable picture of standards, as a consequence of which they are not published. The effect of one additional pupil on a school percentage measure can be considerable and, indeed, one very recent cohort contained only two pupils. Results are also influenced by differences between the year groups; for example, the number of pupils with special educational needs. At the time of the inspection there were only seven pupils in Year 2. The results will to a large extent reflect the individual abilities of the small number of pupils involved. At Key Stage 2 there were ten pupils, just one under the appropriate number for publication.
4. The pupils in Year 1 and Year 2, achieve soundly relative to their abilities in reading and mathematics but less so in writing. Notwithstanding the very small numbers in each year, using national performance data to consider results over recent years gives a tentative indication of performance compared with national averages. Taking the performance over three years from 1999 to 2001 together, the performance of pupils in reading was similar to the national average. In writing it was below and in mathematics performance exceeded the national average.
5. Progress at Key Stage 2 is more marked than it is at Key Stage 1 because of the higher expectations made of the pupils and because pupils are relatively more productive in their work. At Key Stage 2, pupils achieve well relative to their abilities. The current Year 6 pupils are likely to achieve results which are good and above national averages in English and mathematics and very good in science. National performance data needs to be considered with caution in light of the small but variable numbers involved. Nevertheless, taking the five years from 1997 to 2001 together, the overall performance of pupils in English has been similar to the national average, the performance in mathematics has been slightly below the

national average, whilst the performance in science has very significantly exceeded the national average. Standards in science at Key Stage 2 have been consistently very good over recent years. The very good teaching in science at Key Stage 2 has had a very positive impact on the standards attained. The school has set challenging but realistic targets for the period ahead. There is no significant evidence of differences between the attainment of boys and the attainment of girls at both key stages.

6. Pupils with special educational needs were judged to be making unsatisfactory progress at the time of the previous inspection. There is now very good provision for these pupils. Higher attaining pupils achieve appropriately in most subjects of the curriculum and they are usually given work with sufficient challenge, most notably at Key Stage 2. More needs to be done to extend the higher attainers in writing.

7. Subsequent to its evaluation of assessment results, the school has identified writing as an area for improvement. This is identified in the school development plan. Steps are being taken to improve standards at both key stages but much remains to be done. In Years 1 and 2, pupils attain standards that are average in reading and good in speaking and listening. Pupils listen well to adults and speak confidently, asking as well as answering questions. The vast majority of pupils read fluently for their age. Most of the pupils read, comment and answer questions about their books well; they recognise key words and the sounds of letters well. Individuals who find learning to read harder than usual receive good support which helps them to do as well as they can. By the end of the key stage, pupils can write simple sentences independently, making use of capital letters and full stops. Pupils lack sufficient opportunities to develop their written work across all areas of the curriculum and sometimes expectations could be higher so that the pupils are more productive.

8. Although progress is more marked at Key Stage 2, the standards achieved by pupils in English are higher in speaking and listening and reading than they are in writing. Pupils make good progress in speaking and listening and in reading. They join in class discussions and express their ideas and opinions clearly. They read and understand increasingly difficult books as they move through Key Stage 2. Progress in writing is less good and some pupils do not achieve as well as they might in the technical aspects. They can benefit from more well planned opportunities for them to write at length in more detail, with greater opportunities for them to make a written response in subjects such as science, history and geography.

9. Although pupils are taught spelling and punctuation rules, which most apply consistently in their own work, there are times when more corrections could be made in the work of the higher attainers. Standards of presentation and handwriting are variable across the school. The school is aware that the main area for raising standards is in written work at both key stages. This is reflected in the test results; for example, in the most recent Key Stage 2 tests, whilst the vast majority reached the appropriate or higher level in reading, the majority did not reach the appropriate level in writing. A start has been made but the school needs to continue to raise the profile of writing and provide more challenging targets for the pupils as part of the strategy to improve standards.

10. Standards achieved in mathematics by the pupils in Years 1 and 2 are sound in all aspects. By the end of Year 2, numeracy skills are developing well. Most pupils use mental recall of addition and subtraction facts to 20 in order to solve problems. Progress is more marked at Key Stage 2 and by the end of Year 6; pupils have a thorough understanding of the number system and are able to manipulate large numbers with ease. They have developed their own methods of problem solving and apply them in practical tasks.

11. In science, pupils in Year 1 and 2 achieve appropriately, relative to their abilities. Standards achieved in science are good across Key Stage 2 and by the end of Year 6, they are very good. By the end of Year 2, pupils have developed enquiry skills which enable them to carry out detailed investigations. They observe well, sort and classify appropriately for their age and record their work in a variety of ways. At Key Stage 2, pupils become more competent at carrying out a variety of investigations and at using their knowledge to make further predictions. By the end of Year 6, pupils have become very competent at designing and carrying out fair tests; they show a very good understanding of environmental issues. Standards in recent years have been consistently very good in science at the end of Year 6.

12. An issue in the previous report was concerned with raising standards in information and communication technology. Very good progress has been made since the previous inspection to address the points raised. Standards are broadly in line with those expected nationally and are well set for further improvement. Standards in religious education are satisfactory across the school and meet the requirements of the locally agreed syllabus. The evidence collected during the inspection indicates that in the other subjects, where judgements were possible, standards are sound overall across the school.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

13. Throughout the school the pupils' attitudes to learning are very good. Pupils enjoy coming to school and are keen to learn. They listen attentively to information and they respond eagerly to questions from their teachers. In the Reception and Key Stage 1 class, the pupils were observed playing and working enthusiastically, even during a morning break when wet weather kept them indoors. In the Key Stage 2 classes, the pupils work hard, maintaining very good concentration and application. In a Year 5 and 6 mathematics lesson, for example, the pupils' attitudes and behaviour were exemplary; all pupils progressed very well to complete their protractor exercises, the set work having been well matched to their individual needs. In assemblies pupils sit quietly listening carefully to the teacher and participating with enthusiasm in the singing. The concern highlighted in the previous report regarding pupil boredom and frustration has been successfully overcome by the school's improved planning of lessons.

14. The behaviour of pupils in and around the school is very good. There have been no exclusions in the period since the previous report and all the parents, who responded to the questionnaire, agreed that the pupils' behaviour is good. No instances of oppressive or inappropriate behaviour were observed during the inspection. The pupils know the school's rules and expectations and they respond accordingly. Movement around the school is orderly; with the restricted circulation areas, this is important in order to enable the school to function efficiently.

15. Relationships are very good between pupils and adults and between the pupils themselves. The pupils work well independently and they collaborate appropriately when required to work in groups or in pairs. Suitable respect is shown for property and for the feelings and views of others. The genders mix well together and pupils of all ages integrate harmoniously. The school has a genuine family atmosphere, where every one knows each other and cares for each other. During a physical education lesson for the youngest class, the older pupils gave spontaneous applause to a younger friend who demonstrated a star jump off the box.

16. Pupils' personal development is very good. The staff all work hard to give high priority to the pupils' individual and collective needs; this is particularly evident in the provision of spiritual, moral, social and cultural education. The pupils are trustworthy and courteous. Good manners were evident throughout the period of the inspection; for example, in the dining hall where the pupils' queue was orderly, they say 'thank you' and tidy away with a minimum of supervision. There are very good contributions to the pupils' personal development from the extra-curricular activities, the residential visits, the community links and the charity work. Pupils are given increasing responsibilities as they progress through the school, including acting as librarians, reading the prayer in assembly and representing their class on the school council.

17. The level of attendance is very good, being well above the national average for primary schools. This is particularly noteworthy in view of the difficulties faced by many in the local community during the previous year's foot and mouth epidemic amongst livestock. It is necessary for some families, who work in the tourist industry, to take a holiday within term time, but such absence is minimised and the school works hard to ensure that the pupils' education does not suffer adversely. There are no reported unauthorised absences. The pupils arrive promptly, eager to start the school day.

18. The school has a calm, harmonious atmosphere. Within its caring ethos, the pupils gain in confidence and in self-discipline. Their very good attitudes, behaviour, personal development and attendance have a significant positive impact on the standards that are achieved.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?

19. The staff work very hard as a team and the quality of teaching is at least satisfactory, very often good and sometimes very good. It was very good in a sixth of the lessons observed, good in three fifths and satisfactory in all the remainder. The quality of teaching and learning in the Foundation Stage is satisfactory. The quality at Key Stage 1 is satisfactory and sometimes good. The quality of teaching at Key Stage 2, which better meets the needs of the pupils, is good and sometimes very good. The majority of the teaching is effective. Where it is less effective the expectations are insufficiently high so that the pupils are not as productive and not achieving as well as they could. When this happens, work is accepted which is not of a high enough standard and insufficient progress is being made. Overall there has been an improvement in the quality of teaching since the previous inspection. The teachers work very hard with a strong commitment to the school and its pupils. The majority of the teaching observed had a positive impact on the pupils' learning and enabled pupils to achieve well relative to their abilities. In each class, there is a positive learning atmosphere where each child is valued; this enhances the pupils' self-esteem.

20. The quality of teaching for children at the Foundation Stage is satisfactory. The children are taught alongside older pupils who are successfully encouraged to be role models for the younger ones. Although there is understandably a strong emphasis placed on the development of early reading and writing skills, more time needs to be given to self-directed structured play. There is an imbalance between the formal adult led activities in numeracy and literacy and the time spent in having opportunities to learn through structured activities. The work of the youngest children benefits from the support of the classroom assistant. The teaching of the Reception children provides a solid base for moving into Key Stage 1 of the National Curriculum.

21. The staff work very hard to match the work to the wide range of age and ability within the group and to ensure that all pupils are given the same opportunities to achieve well and make progress. In most lessons there are good opportunities for the pupils to discuss their work and improve their speaking and listening skills; for example, in a Key Stage 2 science lesson when pupils talked lucidly about how, in sound, pitch depends on the length, thickness and tightness of vibrating strings. The teachers encourage the pupils to listen carefully. This was the case in each of the collective acts of worship observed. It was also the case in an information and communication technology lesson at Key Stage 1, when the pupils listened attentively while the teacher very clearly helped them to understand how they could use software to classify information and present findings on the pupils' favourite sweets. This was also the case in a very good music lesson at Key Stage 1, when the teacher made it crystal clear at the outset that 'calling out' was not acceptable. The children conformed to this, so that the pace of the lesson was excellent with no time wasted, enabling the children to maximise their learning.

22. Where teaching is most effective, pupils are given opportunities to acquire knowledge, skills and understanding in lessons which cater for the learning of pupils of different ages and abilities and which ensure the full participation of all pupils; the higher attainers are given challenging work and pupils with special educational needs are given effective support. This was the case in most of the literacy and numeracy lessons seen, where there were high expectations with regular feedback which helped pupils to make good progress; relationships were very positive and promoted the pupils' motivation.

23. Teachers give very good guidance. This was apparent in a very good mathematics lesson concerned with geometry seen at Key Stage 2. The teacher gave very clear instructions and then circulated well, assessing the pupils' work within a fifteen-minute spell to ensure that each pupil understood the work and was working effectively. The very good pace of the lesson kept the pupils' interests sustained and enabled them to make good progress. The useful plenary session reinforces the learning. 'What can you see in a house which has an acute or an obtuse or a right angle?' she asks. This very effective teaching led to very effective learning in a lesson where the pupils' behaviour was exemplary.

24. The staff show good subject knowledge, with some specialist knowledge in science. Confidence has grown in information and communication technology and although good use is made of computer software to support learning in many areas of the curriculum, there are plans to develop this further. Effective use is made of the part time specialist teaching in music and for special educational needs. Pupils with special educational needs benefit from very good quality, focused teaching. The skills of literacy are mainly taught well, although there is a need to raise standards in writing. There is good technical competence in reading skills including appropriate opportunities for pupils to build words from letter sounds. The staff make good use of the approaches in the National Literacy Strategy and use resources well to develop pupils' interests and to promote an interest in language. Teachers generally give appropriate guidance on spelling, although the emphasis placed on handwriting and presentation of work is inconsistent across the school.

25. The two national strategies have been carefully adapted to the needs of the school. The National Numeracy Strategy is helping to raise standards, especially in mental skills. The skills of numeracy are well taught. There is good teaching of mental arithmetic, with teachers placing a strong emphasis on the quick and accurate recall of number facts. Teachers make good use of skilful questioning towards the end of the lesson to ensure that pupils have understood what has been taught. Planning for literacy and numeracy is well organised and makes use of the published formats. Teachers assess work carefully and use assessments to help and

encourage pupils to overcome difficulties. Good use is now being made of assessment in English and mathematics to track the progress of individual pupils. There are some useful elements in science, information and communication technology and other subjects, although these are not used consistently across the school. Assessment in the Foundation Stage is insufficiently developed. Teachers mark work regularly and the quality of marking is usually good, helping the pupils to understand what they are doing, how well they have done and how they can make their work better.

26. This is a very caring school where the staff show a good knowledge of the pupils as individuals. The needs of the pupils, including those with special educational needs and those who are higher attainers, are generally met through the good quality teaching. Pupils are challenged and engaged in their learning, with very good relationships as an integral part of the process.

27. Parents are supportive of the homework arrangements and most take an active part in their child's learning at home. Homework activities provided offer additional opportunities to practise and reinforce skills in numeracy and literacy. The teaching needs to continue to target the development of writing across the curriculum and to further raise standards in written work. Some interesting writing tasks were observed during the inspection; more remains to be done to raise the profile of writing.

28. As part of its self-evaluation work, there has been some monitoring of teaching and learning. Although this process can be problematical in a small school with so little non-teaching time, there is a need to raise the profile of monitoring so that it is more focused. This can provide targets for improvement which can enhance teacher performance and impact on pupil attainment and progress. In this way this effective school can be made more effective.

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

29. The school provides a broad and balanced curriculum of interesting activities with a clear emphasis on the basic skills. It includes all the National Curriculum subjects and religious education and is inclusive to all pupils. It is effective in promoting pupils' intellectual, physical and personal development and prepares them well for the next stage of education. The curriculum for the very young children takes insufficient account of the newly prescribed Early Learning Goals. The school carefully plans the transition for the children from the Foundation Stage to Key Stage 1.

30. The school has worked hard to address the issues raised at the previous inspection. Provision for pupils with special educational needs is very good and the backlog of underachievement, which existed then, has been eliminated. Pupils have individual education plans which contain appropriate targets for their learning. Extra support sessions are provided at certain times of the year; for example, 'Springboard' for pupils identified as needing some extra support and 'Booster' classes and 'SATs' club for all Year 6 pupils. The school has clear plans to manage the changes ahead; the school understands its role and responsibilities in relation to the revised Code of Practice, including its duties and the legal requirements made upon it. The small size of school together with the quality of care provided ensure that all pupils are treated as individuals and this enriches the quality of provision for these pupils. The good quality additional support provided in class ensures that they make very good progress.

31. A relevant curriculum is now provided for information and communication technology. New equipment has been provided and staff are more confident in teaching the subject. Consequently attainment has risen. There is a need to provide more opportunities for work using sensors and control techniques. Information and communication technology is used well to support learning in other areas of the curriculum. Continuity and progression in foundation subjects is now good. Appropriate schemes of work and detailed medium term planning provide a progressive programme in skills and understanding. Lessons are generally now more focused, objectives clearer, expectations higher and pupils are more involved in their own learning. New resources for Key Stage 1 have enhanced learning. A specialist is employed to teach music and this is having a positive effect on the musical opportunities given to the pupils and the standards being achieved.

32. The curriculum is organised to provide a two year rolling programme of topics in all subjects except religious education which follows a four year programme. Policies for each subject are reviewed every three years and there are schemes for all subjects. The school uses nationally prescribed guidelines in conjunction with some provided by the local education authority and some devised by the school. Work in the Foundation Stage is planned separately but does not sufficiently take into account the guidelines for the six areas of learning. Long, medium and short term plans are produced to a school format. Weekly plans show how work is adapted to meet the needs of all pupils and are reviewed at the end of the week so that relevant information can be used in plans for the coming week. Adaptations have to be made to the planning process each year because the small numbers of pupils and annual variation in numbers mean that classes do not always have the same age range. Planning is particularly difficult in years when it is necessary to have pupils from both key stages in one class. The role of the co-ordinator is being effectively developed. Subject co-ordinators have some non-contact time for monitoring and evaluation. Procedures for monitoring and evaluating subject areas are gradually being introduced.

33. Clearly focused time is given to literacy and numeracy which continue to be included as priorities in the school development plan. The school makes use of a mixed age programme of work designed specifically for small schools. It is an adaptation of the national literacy and numeracy strategies devised by the local education authority.

34. The governing body is very supportive and fulfils its statutory duty to oversee the curriculum. There is a rolling programme of monitoring the curriculum involving two governors each term who then feed back to the full governing body. This useful work needs developing to include the observation of lessons.

35. Arrangements for pupils' personal development are good. The school has useful policies in place for non-curricular areas such as special educational needs, behaviour and sex education. Circle time is used effectively to explore such things as feelings, care for one another and avoiding danger. There is a structured programme of sex education and drugs awareness for Year 5 and 6 pupils, when the school uses the services of the school nurse. Teachers also cover these subjects at appropriate times during science lessons. Action plans are being drawn up for the physical education Kitemark and the healthy schools initiative. Pupils at Key Stage 2 have regular swimming lessons throughout the year. Pupils in Years 4, 5 and 6 benefit from a residential visit each year which enables them to further explore the beautiful environment in which they live. Parents are kept well informed about the work being done.

36. The school provides an excellent range of activities for pupils out of school time in which the teachers and the 'Friends of Threlkeld School' take part. A rota of courses run by people with specialist knowledge is organised. These generally run for six weeks or half a term and include dance, photography, first aid, craft activities, orienteering, golf and a website club all aimed at a particular age group. During the year there is something for all ages. In addition sports specialists are involved in coaching rugby union and cricket. Local businesses have sponsored sports' kit for the teams. The headteacher has qualifications for some of the outdoor pursuits offered. Junior pupils play musical instruments and older infants can learn to play the recorder. Pupils take part in cross-country events. They enter various competitions, including one on 'Cumbria in Bloom' of which they were the winners.

37. The school is becoming a focal point in the village. The Parent Toddler group uses the school hall once a week. Visitors to school include the vicar, a National Trust Ranger who takes the pupils on field study trips in the area and local residents. Local artists sometimes work with pupils. There are opportunities to explore the countryside and visit the theatre and various museums. Some Year 6 pupils recently went sailing. The school values the links it has with other schools and the wider community. Useful work is done to boost pupils' confidence and to try to ensure an easy transition when pupils begin the next stage of their education.

38. Pupils take work home on a regular basis, including reading, spellings, tables and sometimes simple research tasks based on topics being studied. Parents are generally happy with the amount and frequency of homework and offer good support with the tasks. The school provides parents with guidelines on how much work and what subjects should be done each day. Teachers hold curriculum events for parents.

39. The provision for pupils' spiritual development is good and for their moral, social and cultural development it is very good. It has improved since the previous inspection and is a strength of the school. A useful policy guides the work.

40. In the daily act of worship, pupils are encouraged to explore questions about themselves, their family and friends and also their place in the community in keeping with the caring, broad Christian ethos of the school. During the inspection week the pupils were exploring their relationship with the environment, a very important part of the ethos of the school. Pupils reflect, pray and share thoughts on such things as beauty, care and personal points of view. All pupils are taught The Lord's Prayer. Carefully chosen music often accompanies the assemblies and pupils' self-esteem is promoted through the celebration of achievements. In lessons, pupils are encouraged to be reflective through circle time used to explore feelings and sentiments, through music, which is played quietly in the background in some lessons, through dance and in their personal writing. Opportunities for reflective writing could be increased. Links with the church are very good. The vicar takes an assembly each week; the church is well used for celebration of Christian festivals. Support for charities such as the British Heart Foundation and one for Romanian orphans enables pupils to reflect on the lives of those less fortunate than themselves. Awe and wonder are inspired in the appreciation of the beautiful environment around them.

41. Very good provision is made for moral and social development. It is reflected in the high standard of behaviour, enthusiasm and interest shown by pupils in lessons and in their conduct outside the classroom. When pupils begin school in the Reception class, they learn to trust each other and play and work well together. This lays the foundation for the very good behaviour and attitudes found throughout the school. Older pupils take responsibility for younger ones, sometimes listening to them read. Pupils show interest and enthusiasm in their lessons and are very sociable and kind to one another, preferring to co-operate rather than

compete. New pupils are welcomed to the school and they settle in quickly. The school works very hard to fulfil its aims to provide an environment where pupils can feel happy and confident. Teachers know pupils well and have good relationships with them and their parents. Pupils are encouraged to take responsibility through the school council and by doing jobs both in and out of the classroom. Older pupils are encouraged to take responsibility for their learning in the well organised classrooms. The residential visits organised for Years 4, 5 and 6 emphasise self-reliance. Pupils walk to local Youth Hostels.

42. The ethos of the school reflects very well the importance of the cultural heritage of the area in which the pupils live. There is a very strong community spirit. All staff live in the region and are very committed to it. The school recently celebrated its 150 year history. Work in art, geography, history, music and religious education is used to promote the pupils' cultural education. Through purposeful use of the local environment, including the immediate and surrounding area, pupils gain good insight into their own local heritage. They take part in various theatrical and musical events in the area. These activities often involve working with pupils from other schools. Older pupils have e-mail partners in another school in Cumbria. Care is taken to promote the multicultural society. Older pupils have e-mail links with Sweden and New Zealand. Links have been made with Gambia and Rwanda through work done by members of the community. Pupils were involved in a joint poetry project with an American school; the member of staff who organised the project who visited rightly congratulated the school on its warm and positive learning environment.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

43. The school has a very supportive family atmosphere that is valued by parents. There is a close caring, community ethos, where all the staff know the children very well and provide good supervision. In discussions, several parents said that they had purposely chosen the school for their children because of the welcoming, friendly environment. The pupils are made to feel special and each pupil's individual view and contribution is valued. A 'worry box' enables pupils to note their problems, although concerns are quickly solved through the teachers' care and attention. The school gives pupils' welfare a high priority and pastoral matters are dealt with promptly.

44. Although, as yet, there is no formal staff handbook, the school does have many good policies and procedures to ensure that the support and guidance are appropriately provided. The behaviour policy has suitable objectives; it lists the school's rules and emphasises a positive approach to discipline, using teachers' praise, encouragement and rewards. There is a good child protection policy and staff are suitably trained. The school works hard to promote good attendance and registers are monitored in conjunction with the education welfare officer. Other external agencies, such as the school nurse and the speech therapist give good support.

45. The school has a comprehensive health education policy and an accompanying personal, social and health education policy. With its involvement in the "Healthy Schools Initiative" and the promotion of extensive outdoor activity, the school provides very well for its pupils' physical well being. First aid provision is good and the accident book is suitably completed when necessary. Safety matters and pupils' social development are significant parts of the school's education provision; in one of the assemblies observed, the teacher stressed the importance of the "Countryside Code" and in a geography lesson pupils were observed developing a list of safety equipment that would be needed by a mountain rescue

team. The pupils' academic work is enriched by the use of acronyms, such as WILF (what I'm looking for) and WALT (we are learning today).

46. Provision for pupils' personal development is good. Success is celebrated regularly; for example, each class has a weekly medal winner, which can be for good work or a particularly good deed. In the Year 5 and 6 class a small tree is adorned with 'leaves of kindness' with notes recording acts of kindness, such as the loan of equipment. In the Reception and Key Stage 1 class, a wall display records the actions of 'a friend'. The 'Big Blue Books' record the pupils' record of achievement through the school. The school has a very good health and safety policy and formal safety inspections are undertaken in addition to the ongoing safety awareness. The school is well maintained, clean and tidy, although there remains a concern regarding the slippery hall floor after wet weather.

47. There is suitable provision for equal opportunities and for social inclusion. Although the school's community is not of a diverse nature, the school promotes cultural development very well in order to ensure that the pupils are well prepared for their future life. The school is successful in meeting its aims in providing effective support and guidance for all its pupils, including those with special educational needs. This enhances the quality of education and underpins the standards that are achieved.

48. The school is committed to raising standards. Considerable work has been done to address issues about assessment raised at the previous inspection and a good improvement has been made. A useful policy now guides the work and detailed and effective assessments are made. Assessment in the Foundation Stage focuses on literacy and numeracy and needs expanding to better reflect attainment and progress in the six areas of learning. Assessment of and planning for pupils with special educational needs is now thorough, enabling an appropriate curriculum to be provided for them.

49. A published baseline assessment is used on entry and again at the end of the Reception year. It provides information which enables teachers to ensure that pupils receive any necessary extra support at an early stage. Assessments are made in all National Curriculum subjects using local education authority guidelines. This system is relatively new and its effectiveness is still to be tested. Short term planning is reviewed informally at the end of each week and used to inform the work for the following week.

50. Throughout the school, procedures for assessing and recording of attainment in English, mathematics and science are good and are used effectively to inform planning. Analysis of baseline information and results of national assessments is done mostly on an individual basis using a commercial computer software pupil tracking system. In addition to national tests other standardised tests are used in spelling, reading and mental arithmetic to monitor progress. Teachers assess samples of pupils' work in English and mathematics against national standards and check their findings by making comparisons with work of pupils in other schools. At present, teachers choose how they organise much of the information gathered and this makes it difficult to check for consistency of standards. There is need for a whole school approach to the organisation of record keeping.

51. Pupils also have a record of achievement which contains samples of work which they have chosen. They take this with them when they leave the school. Work is marked regularly, where possible with the pupil during lessons. Remarks are encouraging and designed to help pupils to improve.

52. The school analyses the results of pupils' attainment in national tests. Information from the analysis of results is used to set teaching objectives when producing the staff development plan. Individual targets are set for pupils to monitor progress. These are very important, as the small number of pupils in each year group makes it difficult to see overall progress from year to year. The school has begun to involve pupils in setting their targets for improvement but procedures are not yet consistent across the school. Good use has been made of advice from monitoring by local education authority advisers to try to explain concerns in English. The governing body curriculum working group monitors the system and its effectiveness.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

53. The school has a good partnership with its parents. Parents feel welcomed and their participation in school activities is encouraged and valued. The 'Friends of Threlkeld School' group is relatively new, but very successful. Its work in arranging events and fund-raising has become an integral part of the school life. There are many parents who help within the school; for example, accompanying the children for swimming lessons and assisting with decoration. The extra-curricular work in particular benefits from parental help, such as the excellent Internet club which has developed its own extensive website. Parents and friends within the community are invited to four school presentations each year, mainly arranged in conjunction with the local church. Parents are occasionally invited to special assemblies. There is a very high level of parent representation on the governing body.

54. The school provides good information for parents, including regular newsletters, a very comprehensive, illustrated prospectus and the governing body's annual report. Curricular meetings are arranged to keep parents informed and questionnaires are used to elicit their views on the school's policies; there is little information provided to parents regarding their children's forthcoming curricular and topic work. The induction of new children is greatly enhanced by parental meetings and school visits beforehand. There is a good home-school agreement and the majority of parents are happy with the amount of homework provided for their children.

55. There are two formal parent evenings in the autumn and spring terms, for which there is 100 per cent attendance. If the parents have any queries or concerns, informal access to teachers is available in the school yard at the end of most school days. The end of year pupil reports have been improved with regard to details of progress and attainment. Whilst parent agreement with the inspection questionnaire statements was generally very strong, a small number of parents said that they were not sufficiently informed regarding their children's progress.

56. The parents support the school well. Their contribution to their children's learning is good and the impact of their involvement on the work of the school is very good. During discussions with parents, before and during the inspection, it was clear that there have been significant improvements in the partnership with parents over the last four years. This partnership is now strong and enhances the quality of education provided.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

57. The headteacher's good leadership provides clear direction for the school which she has sensitively led following a period of instability. In this work she has been well supported by

all members of staff with whom she has developed very good working relationships. Each teacher has a number of subjects to oversee and their co-ordinator roles are being well developed. The headteacher manages her teaching and administrative duties well. The teachers are supported by a committed team of teaching assistants who make a significant contribution to the progress made by the pupils.

58. Since the previous inspection the school has made a good improvement. The issues have been substantially addressed. The rate of progress in English and mathematics has improved, although there is still a need to further raise standards of written work. The provision for pupils with special educational needs has improved significantly. Standards in information and communication technology have risen and new schemes have helped to ensure continuity and progression in the foundation subjects. The curriculum for the Foundation Stage needs further development to better reflect the Early Learning Goals. Curriculum co-ordinator roles are being effectively developed. The school now has effective procedures for monitoring its finances. The enthusiasm and commitment of the staff give the school a good capacity for further improvement.

59. The school development plan covers one year in detail and includes a brief outline of forward planning for the next two years. During the three year cycle a review is carried out of work successfully completed. The plan has appropriate targets but does not focus sufficiently well on how to achieve them or how priorities will help to raise standards.

60. Monitoring of teaching and learning is at an early stage of development and the school is aware that this is an area for improvement. The school has begun to evaluate its own performance through its assessment procedures and through regular monitoring of planning. The performance management process has been effectively introduced. Some classroom observations have been carried out by the local educational authority advisory service. There is a commitment to the development of self-evaluation with recognition of the role it plays in school improvement.

61. The governing body is extremely supportive of the school. Members bring a range of useful expertise to the school and fulfil their duties enthusiastically. Increasingly, governors are gaining a good awareness of the school's strengths and weaknesses. The chair of governors provides consistently loyal and effective support. The committees set up to consider the different aspects of school life meet on a regular basis. All are involved in contributing to the annual report to parents. They have a rolling programme of visits to monitor the work of the school. Two governors each term look at a particular aspect and feedback at the full governing body meetings. The governors need to further develop their monitoring role by observing classroom practice. The good working relationships between the headteacher, staff and governors make a very positive contribution to the quality of education in school. There is evidence of a shared determination to succeed and move forward.

62. The school manages its finances and resources efficiently. The budget reflects the objectives identified in the school development plan and the school's aims. The very considerable input from a parent who is an accountant in managing its budget is very much appreciated. Strategic use of resources is good. Money is well used and resources deployed effectively. Surplus income has been accumulated and used to part fund the recent building extension. The money from specific grants is used satisfactorily for the designated purpose. The headteacher and governors work hard to ensure that the school gets the best possible value from its budget. The secretary and clerk give good, efficient support, dealing with routine administration and contributing to the smooth running of the school.

63. The school is appropriately staffed. Careful financial planning has enabled the school to bring about significant improvements to the building. Nevertheless, although clean, bright and well cared for, the accommodation is still only adequate. The new room serves as headteacher's room, office and staff room. The library area is very small and is used extensively for small group work. Storage space is limited. The hall is barely adequate for physical education and the playground space is too small. The school has access to a local playing field but this entails leaving the premises and crossing a road. Resources are generally good for all areas of learning. They are generally of good quality and well maintained. They reflect the interests of children and present gender and cultural diversity in a positive way.

64. The ethos of the school is very strong and reflects the influence of the community it serves. The headteacher's very strong commitment to the school as a community has resulted in very good communications between staff, pupils, governing body and parents and all enjoy being part of the school. The aims and values of the school reflect the caring, Christian ethos and this is obvious in the very good relationships between adults and pupils. Staff are mindful of the need to treat and provide for everyone equally. They know their pupils very well. Pupils new to the school quickly gain confidence in the calm, caring and well organised environment. The school functions with a common sense of purpose and this has a positive impact on the work of the school and the standards achieved by the pupils, who feel secure and valued. Relationships at all levels are very good.

65. Very effective procedures are in place for identifying and supporting pupils with special educational needs. The school has responded quickly to ensure they comply with the new guidelines. An appropriate policy is in place. The relative attainment of boys and girls is considered. The recent appointment of a second teaching assistant to work with pupils has had a significant effect on the provision. The small size of the school and the quality of care ensure that all pupils are treated as individuals and this enriches the quality of provision for these pupils.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

The governors' action plan will set out how the areas for improvement identified during the inspection are to be addressed.

In order to further raise standards and the quality of education provided, the governing body, headteacher and staff should:

◆ develop and improve written work by:

- *continuing to raise the profile of writing in the school;*
- *promoting greater productivity on the part of the pupils;*
- *raising expectations of what the higher attainers can achieve;*
- *creating more opportunities for pupils to write for a variety of purposes and audiences;*
- *giving pupils more opportunities for extended writing, including the development of detail;*
- *giving pupils more opportunities to write and make a personal response in foundation subjects;*
- *further developing target setting based on National Curriculum level descriptors;*
- *continuing to provide the very good support for pupils with special educational needs;*
- *improving and making more consistent the standards of presentation and handwriting;*

(paragraphs 4, 7, 8, 9, 24, 58, 76, 78, 82, 83 and 121)

◆ improve the curriculum for Reception children by:

- *providing further staff training and professional support on the Foundation Stage;*
- *ensuring that the work takes more account of the Early Learning Goals;*
- *reviewing the children's involvement in literacy and numeracy hours;*
- *ensuring that children have access to a wider range of materials and activities;*
- *giving children more opportunities to make choices and to take part in more practical and creative work;*
- *developing the planning and assessing to ensure that it covers the six areas of learning.*

(paragraphs 20, 25, 29, 32, 48, 66, 67, 69, 72, 73 and 74)

In addition to the above areas, the following less critical area should be considered for inclusion in the action plan. This is indicated in paragraphs 28, 60 and 88:

◆ the monitoring of teaching and learning.

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	30
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	24

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Number	0	5	18	7	0	0	0
Percentage	0	17	60	23	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)	73
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	1

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs

	YR – Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	2
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	15

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	2
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	7

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	4.8
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	3	8

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	4	6	10

The number of pupils in 2001 at the end of Year 2 and Year 6 were both 10 or less, therefore the school is not required to publish its National Curriculum test results.

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	61
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)	3.1
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	23.5 : 1
Average class size	24.3

Education support staff: YR – Y6

Total number of education support staff	4
Total aggregate hours worked per week	21

Financial information

Financial year	2000/01
	£
Total income	143,685
Total expenditure	130,926
Expenditure per pupil	2,046
Balance brought forward from previous year	12,250
Balance carried forward to next year	*25,009

*Surplus income was accumulated in order to be used to part fund the recent building extension.

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	1.1

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	73
Number of questionnaires returned	47

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	59	37	4	0	0
My child is making good progress in school.	49	45	6	0	0
Behaviour in the school is good.	60	40	0	0	0
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	40	54	4	2	0
The teaching is good.	68	32	0	0	0
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	53	34	13	0	0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	72	20	6	2	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	55	39	6	0	0
The school works closely with parents.	60	25	13	0	2
The school is well led and managed.	70	30	0	0	0
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	57	41	2	0	0
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	47	51	0	0	2

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

AREAS OF LEARNING FOR CHILDREN IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

66. The Reception year starts in the September of the school year in which a child becomes five. The children join with a class containing children in Year 1 and Year 2. The provision for Reception children is satisfactory overall but can become more effective with more time given for the children to experience self-directed structured play. The nationally prescribed Early Learning Goals establish expectations for most children to reach by the end of the Reception year (Foundation Stage). This curriculum for young children prescribes ways of working which involve children learning through structured play and practical experiences. During the inspection, although some time was given to purposeful learning through activity, too much time was given to formal, adult directed activities mainly in literacy and numeracy. This imbalance is reflected in the planning. The quality of teaching which was observed was satisfactory in each of the six areas of learning.

67. The good induction arrangements have helped to ensure that the 12 children in the Reception year have all settled happily into the school and are making positive progress. The vast majority of the children are on course to meet the Early Learning Goals in virtually all the areas of learning by the end of the year, although in communication, language and literacy a small number may not reach the higher level competencies. Around a third of the children are likely to exceed the goals in each of the six areas of learning. Children attain well across the areas of learning, especially in communication, language and literacy, in mathematical development and in personal, social and emotional development. This gives a similar picture of attainment to that described in the previous report. The teacher, who is new to working with Reception children and new to the Foundation Stage, recognises the need for further development of the curriculum. Consequently there has been a very significant development in resources to support the various areas of learning.

Personal, social and emotional development

68. The combined Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1 class provides a warm and secure environment where the children's personal, social and emotional development is a priority. The staff are sensitive to the needs of the youngest children and provide for them as a separate group as well as making sure that they feel part of the class. The very good relationships help to promote the children's self-esteem. These young children usually listen and respond well. They are interested and motivated to learn and are becoming confident, independent and capable of making sensible choices. They work together as a group, working alongside one another happily. One positive feature of the work is the way that the older children provide role models for those in Reception. The approachability of the school ensures that parents gain good insights into how their children are doing.

Communication, language and literacy

69. The skills of communication, language and literacy are developing well. Children listen and join in with simple language and number rhymes. They talk confidently to adults, asking questions and making comments. They enjoy playing in the 'Threlkeld Travel Agency'. They listen attentively and show good understanding; for example, when listening to the story of 'Ozzie the Owl'. They like books and enjoy sharing them with adults. They enjoy the good quality storytelling. They are beginning to read simple words and to develop early writing skills.

Some write recognisable letters and words and most are beginning to develop good pencil control. Work is planned carefully so that children spend part of the literacy hour with the whole class and then move to a group to work at their own level, but they would benefit from less time on formal activity and more on opportunities to develop speaking and listening skills through activities such as role-play and the listening station. This area of learning is now very well resourced, although many of the resources are underused.

Mathematical development

70. Mathematical skills are developing well. The adults are skilled at using situations that arise in the classroom to promote counting, addition and subtraction; children enjoy a good variety of counting songs. They say and use number names in order in familiar contexts. They can count reliably up to 10 and beyond using everyday objects, can recognise numerals 1 to 9 and higher and can find one more or less than a number from 1 to 10. They understand concepts such as heavier and lighter than and enjoy sorting, balancing and weighing activities. There is a great deal of incidental teaching and learning in this area of development; for example, in work on sand play when positional language is used and in all the opportunities used for counting. This area is now well resourced although many of the resources are underused.

Knowledge and understanding of the world

71. When compared with the other areas of learning, this area is relatively underdeveloped. Opportunities for the children to learn about their own school and the village, with use made of maps and photographs, give valuable insights into history. They learn about their own family history. They study historical artefacts, such as toys, and enjoy a visit to Carlisle Toy Museum. They learn of the wider world through finding out about Gambia and from local visits, such as ones to Brockhole and Windermere. They plant bulbs and seeds and create window boxes. Scientific understanding is enhanced through practical work with magnets and magnifying glasses. Technological understanding is enhanced by regular access to the computer where most show good mouse skills. Children use construction materials and kits to build things, often related to the topics, although more time could be given to this. Children enjoy opportunities to bake; for example, making biscuits, soup and pizza.

Physical development

72. Children learn to handle tools, objects and materials safely. They enjoy a sound range of tasks to help develop their manual skills; for example, cutting, gluing, drawing and painting, where they demonstrate increasing control. Children climb on the apparatus in the hall and use the adventure playground in the field opposite. There are firm plans to continue to develop resources. They enjoy opportunities to dance in physical education when they move with confidence and imagination. Some use is made of the playground as there is no designated outside play area for physical development. There are no bicycles or large co-operative toys. The use of a wider range of small and large equipment can enhance learning in this area which is relatively underdeveloped compared with the others. The outdoor environment is insufficiently included in the planning.

Creative development

73. Children's creative development is soundly promoted through a range of activities, including art, music and imaginative play. Children enjoy drawing and painting and become

competent at modelling using various media. They sing a good range of songs and, through the very good teaching in music, begin to develop good musical skills using a good range of percussion instruments; they sing nursery rhymes and number songs. They enjoy playing imaginatively in the role-play area. More use can be made of different contexts to promote role-play. Role-play is a low priority activity with little or no adult intervention to promote speaking, writing and listening skills.

74. The children in the Reception year make a positive start to their schooling. They benefit from the hard work of the teacher and the classroom assistants. There are sound procedures for assessing and monitoring in literacy and numeracy but assessing in other areas is underdeveloped. Staff are warm and caring and value the children as individuals. The supportive relationships enable the children to feel secure and happy during their introduction to school life. The work planned for the children provides a solid base for Key Stage 1 of the National Curriculum but needs to focus more on the experiential aspects of the new learning goals. Currently there needs to be less time given to the formal aspects of literacy and numeracy and more given to opportunities to explore, investigate, discuss, create, practise and consolidate their developing knowledge, skills and understanding. Children need more opportunities to increase their creative and physical skills and their knowledge and understanding of the world.

ENGLISH

75. The previous inspection report judged that standards at the end of Year 2 and Year 6 were broadly in line with national averages in English. Progress in reading and writing were judged to be uneven; significant gaps were identified in pupils' skills and knowledge in handwriting, punctuation and grammar. Each of these areas has been targeted, enabling the school to systematically address these weaknesses. Although there are too few pupils to make firm judgements on every discrete year group, nearly all the available data indicates that standards over time are rising. Pupils are achieving better relative to their abilities than previously, although more so at Key Stage 2 where teacher expectations are higher and pupils are more productive.

76. National Curriculum results are not published due to the small number of pupils. There are too few pupils in Year 2 to make overall evaluations at the end of Key Stage 1, although at Key Stage 2 the number of pupils is higher, being one under the number for publication. The pupils in Year 1 and Year 2, achieve soundly relative to their abilities in reading but less so in writing. Most pupils achieve well in speaking and listening. Notwithstanding the very small numbers in each year group, using national performance data to consider results over recent years gives a tentative indication of performance compared with national averages. Taking the performance over three years from 1999 to 2001 together, the performance of pupils in reading was similar to the national average, whilst in writing it was below the national average.

77. At Key Stage 2, pupils achieve well relative to their abilities. The current Year 6 pupils are likely to achieve results which are good and above national averages in English. National performance data needs to be considered with caution in light of the small but variable numbers involved. Nevertheless, taking the four years from 1997 to 2001 together, the overall performance of pupils in English has been similar to the national average. There is no significant evidence of differences between the attainment of boys and the attainment of girls at both key stages.

78. Standards in reading and speaking and listening are higher than they are in writing and, subsequent to its evaluation of assessment results, the school has identified writing as an area for improvement; inspection findings endorse this. Strategies are beginning to be put in place to enhance pupils' skills and increase opportunities for writing. Pupils lack sufficient opportunities to develop their written work across all areas of the curriculum and sometimes expectations could be higher so that the pupils are more productive.

79. Most pupils' skills in speaking and listening are good. In Years 1 and 2, pupils speak clearly and reply confidently to teachers' questions. They express ideas and thoughts effectively. In a Key Stage 1 literacy lesson, having shown good listening and concentration, pupils were able to explain very clearly the difference between Asian and African elephants. Pupils are able to recall the detail of favourite stories such as 'We're going on a Bear Hunt'. Pupils listen attentively to stories and in assembly and take turns to contribute to discussions. Most listen well to their teachers and speak confidently, asking as well as answering questions. In Years 3, 4, 5 and 6, most pupils join in discussions confidently and answer teachers' questions with increasing clarity. They discuss their favourite writers, such as Jacqueline Wilson and Dick King-Smith, and give good reasons for their choices. Older pupils reflect on their time at the school, reminiscing and articulating about favourite events such as the residential youth hostel visits and the trips to Wigan Pier and a Victorian cotton mill. They reminisce about taking part in school productions such as 'Wilbur and the Web', about performing at Keswick Theatre and about the celebrations for the school's 150th anniversary.

80. Most pupils make good progress in reading with good support from their parents. In Years 1 and 2, pupils recognise key words and the sounds of letters and most pupils' attainment in reading is good. The younger pupils were very happy to read to their visitors during inspection week. Structured teaching of letter sounds and patterns gives pupils confidence to build up words and gain meaning from texts. Good use is made of word 'fans' to help the pupils to identify letter blends. Pupils are helped to identify initial and final phonemes. Pupils also use a variety of clues, such as context, understanding of character and story titles. As they read together in the literacy hour, pupils look for specific features such as rhyming words. Whilst the National Literacy Strategy is having a positive impact on the standards being achieved, staff are keen to listen to pupils read on a one-to-one basis.

81. Good progress in reading is made through Years 3, 4, 5 and 6. Pupils read and understand increasingly difficult books as they move through the key stage. Most pupils read well and achieve well relative to their abilities. Most are becoming reflective readers who can read a range of texts fluently and accurately, making knowledgeable reference to their favourite writers and stories. They use context cues well and recount significant ideas, events and characters in stories. They enjoy reading for information, including that accessed through the computer. Pupils with special educational needs are very well supported in reading, enabling them to achieve well and make very good progress. The classroom support assistant for special educational needs is highly effective in enabling this very good progress.

82. By the end of Year 2, pupils can write simple sentences independently, making use of capital letters and full stops. Pupils lack sufficient opportunities to develop their written work across all areas of the curriculum and expectations could sometimes be higher so that the pupils are more productive. Although progress is more marked at Key Stage 2, the standards achieved by pupils in English are higher in speaking and listening and reading than they are in writing where some pupils do not achieve as well as they might in the technical aspects. They can benefit from more well planned opportunities for them to write at length in more detail, with

greater opportunities for them to make a written response in subjects such as science, history and geography.

83. There is evidence of some valuable writing experiences, especially at Key Stage 2; for example, in extended writing on 'The Titanic', in rewriting the story of the first Christmas in chapters and in creating a play set in Ancient Egypt. Examples such as these gave evidence of personal and creative writing in exercise books and also in work on display but there is still a need for more to be done. The completion of worksheets, as observed during the inspection, can prevent pupils from having opportunities to make a personal response in writing. The school needs to continue to raise the profile of writing, including the promotion of extended writing and the development of detail. Writing tasks need to be more systematically built into work in most subjects across the curriculum. More focused target setting, building on what is already done, can help the pupils to reach higher levels in their written work.

84. The literacy hour has had a positive impact on standards and also on the quality of teaching and staff have worked hard to adapt the literacy hour to the needs of the three classes, given the wide range of age and abilities in each of them. The work is generally well planned, including good use of the local education authority's planning materials. The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory and sometimes good at Key Stage 1 and good and sometimes very good at Key Stage 2. The specialist help for pupils with special educational needs is very good and this enables the pupils to make good progress, whilst at the same time increasing their self-confidence. Where good and very good teaching was observed this has a positive impact on how well pupils achieve. The staff have a love of literature and this rubs off on the pupils.

85. Most pupils respond well to the work. They enjoy listening to stories and practising their reading skills. They enjoy discussion and sharing their experiences and do so confidently with visitors to the school. Throughout the school there are times when pupils could be encouraged to work more quickly and to produce more work. Pupils make sound and sometimes good progress, although progress needs to be more marked in writing. The best lessons were characterised by well chosen and effectively planned activities for the various groups and a brisk pace which captured the interests of the pupils and encouraged them to learn at a good rate. Teachers enjoy very good relationships with the pupils. Their enthusiasm enhances the literacy hour and good use is increasingly being made of the time to make links with, and use materials from, other subjects. There is a shared commitment and capacity to improve the teaching and learning and raise standards in English and especially in writing.

86. English is well resourced with a good range of big books and sets of books and the reference library is a valuable, well used resource. Pupils benefit from very good opportunities to develop word processing skills and access information from computer software and to enjoy e-mail correspondence with children in local schools and ones in New Zealand and Sweden. Older pupils become very skilled in the use of information and communication technology to access information using a good range of software.

87. Throughout the school, procedures for assessing and recording of attainment in English are good and are used effectively to inform planning. Analysis of baseline information and results of national assessments is done mostly on an individual basis using a commercial computer software pupil tracking system. In addition to national tests other standardised tests are used in spelling and reading to monitor progress. Teachers assess samples of pupils' work in English against national standards and check their findings by making comparisons

with work of pupils in other schools. These strategies enable the school to monitor the attainment and progress of pupils in English.

88. The school has undertaken some informal and formal monitoring and evaluation of teaching in the literacy hour; this now needs to be more rigorous, providing feedback and targets for development as part of the school's aim of raising standards of teaching and learning, especially in writing. The co-ordinator is leading the development of the subject enthusiastically and this has a positive impact on the quality of the work. The work is enhanced by visits to the theatre such as a recent one to 'The Wizard of Oz' and by practical workshops such as one on Shakespeare's 'The Tempest'. Pupils benefit from performing in the popular concerts.

MATHEMATICS

89. The numbers of pupils in each year group are small, making it difficult to make meaningful overall evaluations for attainment using national performance data for comparison. Results fluctuate from year to year, partly depending on the number of pupils with special educational needs. In the current Year 2 there are too few pupils to make secure judgements. In the Year 6 class, pupils are likely to achieve standards which are good. Indications are that most pupils are making good progress. The curriculum is inclusive for all pupils. Pupils with special educational needs make very good progress because of the high quality support they receive. There is some evidence that standards are steadily rising which may be in part attributable to the considerable improvement in provision for pupils with special educational needs.

90. Young pupils make a positive start and develop a good grasp of number. They learn to count and order numbers reliably and know the difference between odd and even numbers. They are beginning to learn strategies for quick addition; for example, starting with the larger number when adding two numbers together or doubling and halving numbers. They make up their own sums by rolling dice and recording and adding the numbers. They know the value of coins and can match prices with the correct number of coins when buying items in the class shop. They make comparisons between objects of different length and weight.

91. By the end of Year 2, numeracy skills are developing well. Most pupils use mental recall of addition and subtraction facts to 20 in order to solve problems and can see emerging patterns when solving problems. They have good recall of two, five and ten times tables and are beginning to understand the relationship between multiplication and division. They are developing a good understanding of place value which they apply to calculations, for example, when buying items and giving change or when measuring and adding distances together. They collect data and make simple graphs of such things as favourite sweets. They have an understanding of basic shapes and fractions and are developing a useful mathematical vocabulary.

92. At Key Stage 2, pupils build on these skills well. They develop strategies for quick recall and become skilled at seeing patterns in numbers. They can make accurate predictions and estimates and explain clearly the reasons for their choices. Pupils compute with large numbers and understand the relationship between fractions and decimals. In work on shape, they develop an understanding of various kinds of symmetry. They become more independent in analysing data and use their findings to create block and line graphs, choosing appropriate scales. They use measuring instruments with accuracy.

93. By the end of Year 6, pupils have a thorough understanding of the number system and most pupils are able to manipulate large numbers with ease. They have developed their own methods of solving problems and applying them in practical tasks. They use decimals, vulgar fractions and percentages in a variety of contexts and understand negative numbers. They become more independent in analysing data and use their findings to create block and line graphs, choosing appropriate scales. They use measuring instruments, such as protractors, with accuracy. Most pupils talk confidently about their mathematical experiences and can explain clearly how they found the answer. Some suggest alternative methods which could have been used. Oral skills are generally good and pupils give clear explanations of their methods and reasoning, using appropriate mathematical language.

94. The teaching seen at Key Stage 1 was satisfactory. At Key Stage 2 it was good and sometimes very good. Lessons are well planned. Emphasis is rightly placed on developing mathematical vocabulary. Throughout the school much valuable time is spent on manipulating numbers and encouraging pupils to be creative in their thinking. Teachers help to raise the quality of pupils' thinking by encouraging economical ways of doing simple calculations. They use games and challenges to help to make learning fun and the pupils respond well. In the best lessons, instruction is clear and teachers explain how learning a particular operation will be of benefit in future learning. Skilful questioning checks understanding and helps to raise the quality of pupils' thinking.

95. Teachers provide a lot of individual support during lessons. This helps pupils to stay on task when working and contributes well to the good progress they make. Where teaching is less effective, work is insufficiently challenging and the teacher's expectations of behaviour and the amount of work done are not sufficiently high. Throughout the school, there are times when pupils could be encouraged to work more quickly. Plenary sessions are used effectively to move pupils on to the next stage of learning. Teachers provide well for pupils with special educational needs.

96. Teachers try to provide opportunities for pupils to use their mathematical skills in other areas of the curriculum. Younger pupils have made simple graphs of the colour of cars in a geographical survey. Information and communication technology skills were used well to present the information. Older pupils have measured seedlings as they grow in differing conditions and have presented findings using a variety of graphs. Pupils use computer programs to reinforce learning. The school has a good range of programs which have different levels of difficulty so that pupils can work at an appropriate stage.

97. An appropriate policy is in place. A variety of schemes supplement the national guidelines so that work can be tailored to the needs of the pupils. Resources are generally good. There are good procedures for assessing and monitoring pupils' progress. Where possible, teachers mark work with the pupil, so problems can easily be sorted out and pupils get instant feedback about their performance.

SCIENCE

98. There are too few pupils in Year 2 to evaluate attainment at the end of this school year. In Year 6 attainment is judged to be very good. National performance data gives little helpful information for comparison because of the small number of pupils tested each year, but indications are that over four years, standards have been above those expected for their ages

at both key stages and that standards have risen since the previous inspection. This reflects the quality of expertise and leadership and the emphasis on science in the curriculum. Most pupils are making good progress, although progress is more marked at Key Stage 2. The curriculum is inclusive for all pupils. Pupils with special educational needs are making very good progress, reflecting the help they receive.

99. Young pupils learn to observe and describe living things and events. They know about the different habitats of animals and birds. They observe how substances change when heat is applied through watching a candle burn, making toast or cooking eggs. They observe changes made in materials when they are used to make things; for example, wood made into furniture or wool made into garments or carpets. They examine a range of materials and learn which are natural and which are man-made and carry out simple tests to find out which are waterproof.

100. By the end of Year 2, they have developed enquiry skills which enable them to carry out more detailed investigations. In work on forces, they observe which things, such as windmills, can be moved by the wind and carry out experiments to see how the incline of a ramp affects the speed at which a toy car travels. They predict what will happen then make measurements. They begin to understand the need for fair tests. They draw sketches and record their findings in simple sentences and are developing a useful scientific vocabulary.

101. At Key Stage 2, pupils study similar topics but in more detail. They learn how some changes are permanent; for example, burning and others such as heating and cooling water can be reversed. They learn how some substances change from solid to liquid to gas and back depending on conditions. They become more competent at carrying a variety of investigations and at using their knowledge to make further predictions. In an experiment to test the viscosity of various liquids, they measured the time taken to pass a marble through each of them. This enabled them to test their predictions and also to realise the importance of accurate timing.

102. By the end of Year 6, they have become very competent at designing and carrying out fair tests; for example, in an investigation seen to examine the relationship between pitch and the length, thickness and tension of a vibrating string. They are becoming increasingly aware of the need and requirements for a healthy lifestyle. Much work is done on environmental issues, such as pollution and care of the countryside, and pupils show very good understanding of the problems; their awareness has recently been increased through being in an area affected by foot and mouth disease. They carried out investigations into pollution levels by collecting leaves from gardens and the roadside, then filtering a solution made from soaking leaves in water to trap the dirt. This emphasised how pollution is worse where there are roads.

103. No direct teaching was seen at Key Stage 1. The small amount of teaching at Key Stage 2 had many very good features. The level of instruction and questioning is of a high standard. Teachers ensure pupils are clear about what is expected of them. Pupils enjoy the activities and co-operate well in groups. They readily accept responsibility for their learning when designing experiments. From an early age pupils are taught about fair tests and changing variables. Good links are made between science and other subjects, such as mathematics, geography and design and technology. The local area offers valuable opportunities for scientific and geographical investigations and the local environment is well used for fieldwork. Pupils have contact with local rangers and visit forests and farms, rivers

and moorland. Teachers seize opportunities to explore real issues which is an important aspect of the school's ethos.

104. The policy and scheme are up to date. The co-ordinator has used her considerable expertise to devise a relevant scheme and this is used in conjunction with the national guidelines. Resources are plentiful and of good quality. Pupils are assessed on a regular basis.

ART AND DESIGN

105. The previous report was critical of the art and design curriculum, describing the progress in the development of skills and techniques as uneven. The school has brought about good improvement, so that skills and techniques are taught in a more systematic way. No lessons were seen during the inspection and so no firm judgements can be made on teaching or the pupils' response to it. Nevertheless, the work on display and in the pupils' records indicates that standards are sound at Key Stage 1 and often good at Key Stage 2.

106. At Key Stage 1, pupils like to mix colours carefully and see what effect colours have on each other; this is evident in their paintings. Pupils use shape, pattern and colour. They do self-portraits and enjoy doing illustrations of stories they have been told. They look at the work of Van Gogh and create their own paintings of sunflowers in that style. Based on leaves they create their own fish prints. Using black paper on a colour wash they illustrate an aeroplane in the sky. They enjoy creating their computer generated pictures of butterflies. They create interesting collages of ladybirds and three-dimensional work depicting bears. Opportunities for observational work include paintings of flower heads. Each pupil in the school was enabled to create their own very attractive clay plaques to celebrate the opening of the school extension and these form a permanent and effective display. By the end of Year 2, they have investigated and used a variety of materials and processes to communicate their ideas, some doing so at a good level.

107. At Key Stage 2, pupils develop their skills further. In the early part of Key Stage 2, pupils further develop their observational work, drawing the school and St. Mary's Church and its stained glass windows; they create careful observational drawings of daffodils. They produce colourful collages depicting animals from a rainforest. Inspired by the work of Monet, they paint poppies creating interesting effects with acrylic paint. Through good use of computer software, they use Andy Warhol's 'pop art' technique to take digital camera portraits and then explore how a shape can be copied and resized with multiple copies.

108. Older pupils often undertake activities in art and design that have good links to the other areas of the curriculum; for example, they study photographs of clay amphorae and then create their own in clay with designs based on myths and legends from Ancient Greece. They create pottery work of Greek urns and paint carefully observed vases. They work with fabric to create outfits for Victorian people using peg dolls and make models of Victorian houses. They decorate plate surfaces with paper cut outs to create their own 'decoupage' effect. Some good quality work on the theme of animals in their environments, together with some very effective pencil drawings of household items from the Victorian era are featured on the school's very high quality website.

109. The subject is well resourced and soundly led. Making use of the nationally prescribed scheme of work, a school scheme of work is being developed to guide the work across the

various strands. Assessment is generally on an informal basis. There is an appropriate balance between two and three-dimensional work. The work makes a good contribution to the pupils' cultural development; for example, through a recent visit to a local gallery to view an 'Art as an illusion' display. The quality of art display enhances the school building and reflects its positive ethos in the way it celebrates pupils' achievements.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

110. Insufficient lessons were seen in design and technology to make judgements about standards or the quality of teaching. This was so at the previous inspection, so no direct comparisons can be made with learning then. Evidence from scrutiny of work, teachers' planning and photographic evidence, suggests that pupils are receiving a relevant curriculum covering the required programmes of study and that they make sufficient progress. Indications are that improvements have been made since the previous inspection in continuity and progression.

111. Design and technology is used well to support other areas of the curriculum. Young pupils use construction kits, textiles and recycled materials to make models of the outdoor play area. They have learnt how to choose appropriate materials and to join components to make windmills as part of a science topic on forces. They made piggy banks out of papier mâché. Year 2 pupils made felt teddy bears when studying toys and Indian elephants in work on the multicultural society. They also designed passports for a topic on holidays.

112. Pupils at Key Stage 2 use more complicated leverage and linkage systems to produce moving skeletons. They designed and made book covers for storybooks about St. George. The oldest pupils have made Victorian scenes, including a terrace of houses and peg dolls dressed in appropriate clothes. They have designed and made slippers and model trucks. The park ranger helped them to make bird boxes. In a lesson on the design of a wheeled vehicle for carrying aliens on the moon, pupils showed a good understanding of the problem of rotation of wheels and axles and were able to offer a variety of solutions to the problem. Their investigations were enhanced by the good quality instruction and the way the teacher constantly made them refine their ideas.

113. Throughout the school, pupils have the opportunity to cook and bake in food technology lessons. Older pupils are sometimes required to find their own recipe using the Internet. They have assessed the quality of design on food wrappings and given reasons why people would, or would not, be encouraged to buy the product. Greeting cards are made at appropriate times of the year. The school has a good range of resources but plans to review needs in conjunction with the policy review. Use is made of the nationally prescribed scheme of work, which is adapted to meet its specific needs. Simple assessments are undertaken on a regular basis.

GEOGRAPHY and HISTORY

114. No lessons were seen in history and geography at Key Stage 1 and only one in history and one in geography at Key Stage 2. Evidence from discussions with pupils, scrutiny of work, teachers' planning and displays, suggest that pupils are receiving a relevant curriculum of interesting topics covering the required programmes of study and that they make appropriate

progress. In some of the work seen, there were insufficient opportunities for pupils to make a personal response in writing in their history and geography work. Schemes of work now provide a firm basis for continuity and progression in learning. Standards are judged to have improved.

115. The school is situated in a region of great beauty which is rich in historical and geographical interest. Teachers use the area very well to enrich learning and to make pupils appreciative of the environment in which they live. Young pupils are introduced to history and geography through a study of the local area. In geography, they watch the changing seasons and carry out weather watches. They have mapped the journey from home to school and have carried out a survey of traffic through the village. The school has close links with the Gambia and during the inspection pupils were comparing their own lifestyle with that of the children there. The teacher was making them aware of the differences; for example, the weather, kinds of food and the living conditions.

116. In history, they again explore differences by comparing their toys with those from long ago. They designed questionnaires for their parents to fill in so that they could find out about the childhood toys which they had. Pupils are introduced to people from the past who have been specially remembered for the work they have done. Older people from the village visit the school and talk about village life in days gone by. By the end of Year 2, pupils are developing a good knowledge of life in the local area and are aware that life changes with time and with location around the world. Work is enhanced by visits to local places of interest such as the toy and model museum in Carlisle.

117. At Key Stage 2, the concepts of difference and change are explored in more detail. In history, pupils are beginning to compare and contrast different civilisations such as the Egyptians and Romans and to study life in Britain through the centuries. The village of Threlkeld can be traced back to the middle ages and so provides a good first hand source of information. Pupils gain an insight into the ideas, beliefs and values of people and begin to understand the reasons for changes which have taken place in history. They know that the area in which they live was once a mining area. They have visited Wigan Pier to give them some insight into what life was like in Victorian times and what working conditions were like in the mines.

118. The school building is a useful resource, dating back 150 years. A lesson on Henry VIII was well used to show how one powerful person was able to make major changes for his own purposes. The teacher explained carefully that a king on the throne was considered preferable to a queen and this led to an interesting discussion. The teacher skilfully used this to alert the pupils to the difference between fact and opinion. Pupils were then asked to consider whether information they were given was true and false.

119. Studying why people live in certain places, how conditions affect their lives and why they leave their homes and move to other places links history and geography. The study of weather patterns is used effectively to answer some of these questions. Pupils study weather in various locations around the world. They know that the ancient Egyptians had three seasons, flood, growth and harvest. They learn how temperature affects plants and animals and lifestyle and why people take holidays in different places. They are alerted to the dangers of living in places with extreme weather, such as deserts and arctic regions.

120. The oldest pupils are given instruction in orienteering and have produced an orienteering map of the playground paid for by the British Orienteering Federation after a visit by one of its members. In a very good lesson the teacher challenged pupils to be members of

a mountain rescue team planning a rescue. They had to study the weather conditions, list the necessary equipment and map a quick but safe route using an Ordnance Survey map. This taught them about the dangers involved such as the changeability of the weather in the mountains and the difficulty of carrying a stretcher in high winds over rough and dangerous ground. Work was enhanced by the fact that the exercise was based on a real rescue attempt and by the expert knowledge of the teacher.

121. Teachers make good use of information and communication technology in lessons. Pupils access relevant information from CD-ROMs and the Internet and have useful e-mail connections with other countries; for example, Sweden and New Zealand. Good use is made of the countryside and the various museums in the area. A policy is in place and the school uses nationally prescribed guidelines when planning work. New topics are covered during the two years. An assessment system has recently been introduced. Resources are good although a review is needed of books for geography. There is a box of resources for each of the periods covered in history and these are supplemented by artefacts from the local museum loans services and other schools. A target for the future is to use work in history and geography more effectively to reinforce and improve literacy skills, by giving pupils more opportunities to make a personal response in writing their work.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

122. Pupils' overall attainment in information and communication technology is what is expected for pupils at the end of Years 2 and 6 although a few older pupils achieve beyond this. Good progress has been made since the last inspection to address the issues raised. The school has an up to date policy and useful guidelines ensure that skills are now systematically acquired. Information and communication technology is used well to support other areas of the curriculum. All strands of the curriculum are being taught although there is a need to further develop the use of sensors and controlling, monitoring and modelling. The school recognises the growing importance of information and communication technology as a core subject and its role in helping to raise standards across the curriculum.

123. The limited amount of direct teaching and learning seen was good. Teachers have worked hard to increase their expertise. They take care to ensure that pupils understand what is required of them. Each class has a weekly lesson where a skill is taught and then pupils practise during the week. Good records are kept of visits to the computer and of skills learned. All pupils have equal access to the curriculum.

124. The youngest pupils are given a good start in their learning. They operate simple programs, follow instructions and use keyboard commands. They 'paint' simple pictures. By the end of Year 2, most pupils can use the arrow keys and the mouse and have developed some word processing skills which they use to reinforce language work. They write simple stories and poems and can change the style, size and colour of their writing. They use art programs to make pictures; for example, trains painted during a topic on toys. They make pictograms, bar charts and pie charts of data they have collected on car colours. They give simple commands to make a programmable vehicle move in various directions. They use programs to reinforce work done in English and mathematics.

125. By the end of Year 6, pupils have experienced all the required areas of information and communication technology. Teachers use information and communication technology well to support learning in other areas of the curriculum. Pupils can draft and edit written work, using text, graphics and sound. Imaginative work included 'If I were five feet tall'. They produce

advertisements and posters for cheap holiday flights. They use CD-ROMs to gather information on a variety of subjects; for example, Anglo Saxon and Victorian life.

126. Pupils are competent at using a digital camera. One class scanned pictures of each other into the computer and then turned them into images in the style of Andy Warhol's work. The oldest pupils used spreadsheets to plan a party choosing and changing food items and amounts to keep within the budget they had been given. A range of interesting games and challenges are used to reinforce work in literacy and numeracy and to improve keyboard skills. They are competent in some aspects of control but this is an area for development. Pupils are competent at using the Internet to download information and to keep in contact with e-mail partners in another school locally and in Sweden and New Zealand.

127. Throughout the school pupils enjoy their information and communication technology sessions and this ensures that they usually concentrate well on the tasks. They are willing to share and take turns and keen to show what they can do. Using computers at home helps a significant number of the pupils. Pupils with special educational needs receive good support which helps them to make good progress. The school has a very good website created as an extra-curricular activity with the help of the chair of governors who is also a parent.

MUSIC

128. As at the time of the previous inspection, just one lesson was observed and there was insufficient evidence to make judgements on standards. Parents and teachers are aware of the major impetus to the work since the appointment of a music specialist at the start of the school year. During the inspection, a very good music lesson was observed taken by the school's part time music teacher who is employed for half a day a week to teach music to each of the three classes. The planning indicates that pupils experience a good range of activities involving performing, composing, listening and appraising. This input is at an early stage but all the signs augur well for the future.

129. Pupils learn a wide range of interesting and imaginative songs which they sing tunefully and enthusiastically. They enjoy novelty songs such as 'Lazy Mary'. They develop an awareness of pulse through clapping, movement and playing percussion instruments. They can recognise and make long and short sounds and loud and soft sounds. They start to use musical vocabulary and develop good listening and remembering skills.

130. The pupils observed responded very enthusiastically, showing good listening skills. They sang with enthusiasm and enjoyment and co-operated well with one another. Pupils made good progress in the activities observed. Pupils across the school are confident in performances and enjoy taking part in concerts such as 'Whoops a daisy Angel' and in the joint primary schools' annual Christmas concert.

131. The quality of teaching and learning observed was very good. The teaching observed encouraged full involvement by all the pupils with an instrument for everyone. The teaching moved at a good pace, showed high expectations of what pupils could achieve and provided good support for all pupils, including those with special educational needs. The teacher managed the pupils very skillfully establishing straightaway that 'calling out' was not acceptable. The groups for composition were well managed, with one child nominated as conductor who signalled when who would play and whether the playing would be loud or quiet. 'Did they follow instructions?' asked the teacher and the pupils answered in the affirmative.

The quality of the teaching had a clear impact on the quality of the pupils' response, the good levels of attainment and the progress being made.

132. In the lesson observed at Key Stage 1, the high quality of the musicianship of the teacher had a strong impact on the lesson; for example, through playing the guitar and the mandolin to enable the pupils to make comparisons. All the appropriate skills are developed through Key Stage 2 where pupils are regularly encouraged to appraise pieces of music; for example 'Concerto for Two Violas' by J.S. Bach and 'Symphony in Waves' by A. Kerwin.

133. The subject is well resourced with untuned percussion instruments, including a number of unusual ones. The work is guided by the teacher's own scheme of work. Simple assessments are planned. The teacher leads a weekly choir meeting with plans to form a band. A number of pupils benefit from peripatetic music lessons in brass, clarinet and saxophone. The work benefits from the very good leadership of the co-ordinator who has firm plans to develop and raise the profile of the work. The school is currently well placed to enjoy the full benefits being provided by an exciting music curriculum.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

134. At the time of the previous inspection standards were judged to be in line with what could be expected and the evidence of this inspection endorses that judgement. The work is disadvantaged by the limited space of the school hall for gymnastics lessons and by the very small playground area. Nevertheless, the staff go to a great deal of trouble to enable the pupils to have a curriculum which covers the appropriate areas; for example, occasionally older pupils make visits to the local high school to use their resources. The pupils benefit from a very good range of sporting extra-curricular activities. Pupils enjoy using the 'climbing wall' which has recently been created.

135. At Key Stage 1, pupils develop and practise the skills of travelling with, and sending and receiving a ball. They learn to play simple games and follow rules. They travel in the hall using different speeds, heights and directions; they balance on 'pads' and 'points'. In dance, they listen and move to music with different moods and rhythms; they create a dance based on 'The Pearl'. By the end of Year 2, they are able to remember, reproduce and explore simple actions with control and co-ordination.

136. At Key Stage 2, pupils develop their gymnastic skills and improve their ball skills. All pupils are given good opportunities to develop their swimming skills through weekly visits, over two terms, to the local pool, where most achieve good standards. They enjoy invasion games and athletics activities. Working in pairs, they use the floor and apparatus to create and perform sequences of movement. Pupils develop netball skills concerning attack and defence and the football skills of dribbling and controlling the ball. Linked to topic work, the older pupils use music and movement to create a rainforest dance. By the end of Year 6, pupils have experienced a good range of activities, especially bearing in mind the constraints of the accommodation.

137. The quality of teaching and learning, which was disadvantaged by the limited space in the hall, was satisfactory in both the lessons observed. There was good emphasis on work on different sorts of jumping. The Key Stage 2 pupils showed positive attitudes and good behaviour when developing their gymnastic sequences. They made sensible appraisals of their own work.

138. The work is well resourced with small apparatus but not with larger equipment. The curriculum is guided by the nationally prescribed scheme of work. In dryer weather, good use is made of the playing field opposite which includes an adventure playground. Pupils benefit from many seasonal extra-curricular sports clubs such as ones for dance, golf and netball. Through the local cluster of school, pupils take part in competitive tournaments in sports such as football, netball and orienteering. Valuable support is provided by parents in the sporting activities and they help with the supervision for swimming lessons. The pupils benefit from occasional specialist coaching in rugby, football and cricket.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

139. Just one lesson was observed in religious education during the inspection and consequently there is insufficient evidence to make firm judgements on the quality of teaching and learning. The evidence collected, including a scrutiny of work displayed, pupils' work, teachers' planning and observations of acts of collective worship, indicates that pupils' attainment at the end of Year 2 and Year 6 meets the expectations of the locally agreed syllabus. This judgement endorses the findings of the previous inspection. The previous report criticised the school for the lack of awareness by pupils of faiths other than Christianity. This point has been addressed, enabling pupils to gain good awareness of other world faiths, most notably Judaism, Hinduism and Buddhism.

140. At Key Stage 1, pupils gain insights into the Bible and know that people of other faiths have their own ways of celebrating their beliefs. They consider what it is like to belong. Pupils learn about significant events in the Christian calendar by listening and responding to the stories of Christmas and Easter. They learn the story of the creation and that other cultures have creation stories. They enjoy illustrating the story of Noah's Ark. By the end of Year 2, pupils have good insights into the significance of the major Christian festivals and they are beginning to learn about other world faiths.

141. At Key Stage 2, pupils show increasing understanding of festivals and celebrations in Christianity and other major faiths. They learn about the rites of passage as they relate to Hinduism, Judaism and Christianity. A visit from a Buddhist helps the pupils to learn of the 'Four Noble Truths' and the significance of meditation. Pupils consider the meaning of Jesus' parables such as the Prodigal Son and the Good Samaritan. They consider Bible stories reflecting Jesus' power to change lives such as those of Zacchaeus and Bartimaeus. They discuss the Ten Commandments and make up their own ten rules. Pupils are helped to learn that each religion has its own holy books and that religions offer guidance on how to live life, so that elements of religion can be applied to their own lives. By the end of Year 6, pupils have gained a deeper understanding of the celebrations of the church year, with appropriate emphasis being given to harvest, Christmas and Easter.

142. Pupils, including those with special educational needs, are making sound progress in developing their knowledge of Christianity and other faiths and willingly express their ideas and opinions. They begin to understand that religion can teach people about respect, tolerance and understanding.

143. Collective acts of worship make a positive contribution to the work. They are well organised and complement the work in class with appropriate use of shared themes and celebrations. Teachers use both their own and the pupils' experiences to teach about nature

and Christianity and qualities such as caring, tolerance and responsibility for others. They are helped to appreciate the beauty of the natural world, including their own environment. Weekly collective acts of worship led by the vicar emphasise that the school is a focal part of the community with its own caring, Christian ethos. Good use is made of the school's close links with St. Mary's Church.

144. Good use is made of the local diocese resource centre which provides very useful resources for each of the world faiths studied. The school has valuable links with The Gambia and Rwanda. The subject co-ordinator is beginning to give good leadership. The scheme of work is based on materials from the locally agreed syllabus and on the nationally prescribed scheme. Religious education makes a significant contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.