

# INSPECTION REPORT

## **ST MARY'S CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL**

Whitehaven

**LEA area: Cumbria**

**Unique reference number: 112353**

**Headteacher: Mr David Maron**

Reporting inspector: David Byrne  
28076

Dates of inspection: 26<sup>th</sup>-28<sup>th</sup> June 2000

Inspection number: 198540

Inspection carried out under section 10 of the School Inspections Act 1996

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## INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

|                              |  |
|------------------------------|--|
| Type of school:              | Nursery, Infant and junior   |
| School category:             | Voluntary Aided  |
| Age range of pupils:         | 3 - 11   |
| Gender of pupils:            | Mixed  |
| School address               | High Road,<br>Kells,<br>Whitehaven<br>Cumbria  |
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| Appropriate authority:       | Governing Body   |
| Name of chair of governors:  | Mrs. Eileen Kilbride   |
| Date of previous inspection: | 10 <sup>th</sup> November 1997   |

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

| Team members     |                      | Subject responsibilities                                   | Aspect responsibilities  |
|------------------|----------------------|--|--|
| David Byrne      | Registered inspector | Science<br>Information technology<br>Design and technology | What sort of school is it?<br>How high are the standards?<br>Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development<br>How well are pupils taught?<br>What should the school do to improve further?<br>How well is the school led and managed? |
| Barbara Sinclair | Lay inspector        |  | How well does the school work in partnership with parents?<br>How well does the school care for its pupils?  |
| Peter Isherwood  | Team Inspector       | Mathematics<br>Music                                       | Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development<br>Special educational needs   |
| Jenny Oliver     | Team Inspector       | English<br>Physical Education                              | The under-fives  |
| Cicely Deloughry | Team Inspector       | Art<br>Geography<br>History                                | Equal Opportunities<br>How good are curricular opportunities?  |

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## **PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT**

### **INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL**

St. Mary's Catholic Primary School serves the areas of Kells, Woodhouse and Greenbank in the West Cumbrian coastal town of Whitehaven. The area has high levels of unemployment and currently 41% of pupils are entitled to free school meals which is well above the national average. There are 142 boys and girls on roll, aged from 4 to 11 and thirty children who attend the nursery part-time. There are 35 pupils, (25%) on the special educational needs register. The percentage of pupils with statements of special educational needs is well above both the national and the county average with six pupils (4.2%) of pupils with statements of educational need. The attainment of the majority of children when they start school is below average, especially in their language and literacy, mathematics and knowledge and understanding of the world. Virtually all pupils are of white ethnicity and none speak English as a second language.

### **HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS**

This is an improving school which provides its pupils with an effective education. Pupils start school in the nursery with mostly below average standards, and they make good progress and reach standards which are close to expectations by the age of five. The standards in the school are improving in English, mathematics and science. In Key Stage 1, pupils make good progress and whilst in Key Stage 2 progress slows, it remains satisfactory overall. The quality of teaching is satisfactory with strengths in Key Stage 1 where it is mostly good or very good. Pupils benefit from the strong leadership and management by the headteacher, who is backed by a committed and hardworking governing body. The Senior Management Team contributes positively to the management of the school although there is a limited contribution to school management by the deputy headteacher. The school has well managed finances and the school gives satisfactory value for money.

#### **What the school does well**

- In English and mathematics, pupils achieve well for their ability.
- As a result of good provision by the school, pupils with special educational needs make good progress
- Good strategies exist for teaching Literacy
- Good links are established with parents and the local community.
- The school monitors its own performance accurately so that areas for improvement can be identified.
- Good leadership by the headteacher and governing body ensures that the school is steadily improving.
- Wise spending of the budget provides good accommodation and effectively deployed staff.

#### **What could be improved**

- Standards and the rate of pupils' progress in science in Key Stage 2 especially in the development of investigational skills.
- Standards and the rate of pupils' progress across the school in information and communication technology.
- The impact of the deputy headteacher upon the management of the school
- The school's personal, social and health education programme
- Procedures for monitoring absence and promoting good attendance

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

## **HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION**

Since the last inspection in November 1997, the school has made great improvements in the quality of education given to its pupils. Under the strong and visionary leadership of the headteacher and governing body the self-esteem of staff, pupils and parents has been raised. There is a growing sense of pride in the school which is beginning to improve standards in all aspects of school life. Staff have worked hard to create a broad and balanced curriculum which meets National Curriculum requirements and standards in English and mathematics have improved, particularly by the end of Key Stage 1. The quality of teaching is now much better, procedures for assessing, recording and reporting pupils' attainment and progress are now satisfactory and better use is made of homework. Links between the school, parents and the local community have improved greatly and are now good. The financial situation of the school is much better. The introduction of rigorous monitoring of all aspects of the budget and wise decisions about spending have resulted in bringing the budget back into balance. All statutory requirements are now met.

## **STANDARDS**

The table shows the standards achieved by 11 year olds based on average point scores in National Curriculum tests.

| Performance in: | compared with |      |      |                 |
|-----------------|---------------|------|------|-----------------|
|                 | all schools   |      |      | similar schools |
|                 | 1997          | 1998 | 1999 | 1999            |
| English         | E             | E    | C    | A               |
| mathematics     | E             | E    | C    | A               |
| science         | E             | E    | E    | C               |

|                    |   |
|--------------------|---|
| <b>Key</b>         |   |
| well above average | A |
| above average      | B |
| average            | C |
| below average      | D |
| well below average | E |

The table shows that by the end of Key Stage 2 standards in 1999 were well above average compared with similar schools in both English and mathematics and close to the average in science. In comparison with all schools nationally, standards were close to the average in English and mathematics but well below average in science. The results in 1999 in English and mathematics show an improvement on those achieved in the previous three years. Inspection findings are that the current Year 6 class is a below average group with almost a third of pupils having special educational needs. Standards in Year 6 are below the national average in English, mathematics and science, but across the key stage, the progress of this class has been satisfactory considering the low standards with which pupils began school and the low results these pupils gained at the end of Key Stage 1. In other subjects, pupils make satisfactory progress except in information technology where, despite great improvements recently, progress has been unsatisfactory and pupils do not reach the expectations of the National Curriculum by the age of eleven. Progress in design and technology is also unsatisfactory.

By the end of Key Stage 1, pupils' performance by the end of 1999 was close to the average compared with similar schools in reading and writing and above the average in mathematics. When compared to schools nationally, the results at the end of Key Stage 1 were well below the national average in reading and writing and below the national average in mathematics. The Year 2 group which took these tests included a number of pupils with serious learning

difficulties, almost a quarter of the class, which depressed results. The inspection findings are that by the end of Key Stage 1, standards have improved greatly and are now better than normally found and are above average in reading, writing and mathematics. Standards of speaking, however are below those expected for pupils aged seven. In science, attainment is close to the national average but pupils could be better at independent work. Progress in design and technology and information technology is unsatisfactory.

Children begin school with below average attainment but by the age of five, they reach standards which are close to average in all areas of their development except speaking. In this aspect of Language and literacy, most children have a limited vocabulary. Across the school, pupils with special educational needs make good progress towards their individual education plan targets. The pupils with special educational needs usually have positive attitudes to their work and this helps their progress in lessons.

### PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

| Aspect                                 | Comment  |
|--|--|
| Attitudes to the school                | In Key Stage 1, pupils are particularly enthusiastic and show good levels of interest and attention. In Key Stage 2, attitudes vary and are satisfactory overall. Pupils in Year 6 can show signs of being disaffected and loss of interest. |
| Behaviour, in and out of classrooms    | Behaviour is satisfactory overall but in Key Stage 1 it is good. In Key Stage 2, a minority of pupils can be mildly disruptive. This is particularly the case in Year 6 and occasionally Year 3.   |
| Personal development and relationships | In Key Stage 1, pupils are independent and able to use their initiative but in Key Stage 2 there are too few opportunities for them to develop their independence and pupils do not take responsibility as well as they could.               |
| Attendance                             | Attendance is well below the national average and has declined in the last two years. The level of authorised absence is high and is above the national average.   |

### TEACHING AND LEARNING

| Teaching of pupils:     | aged up to 5 years | aged 5-7 years | aged 7-11 years |
|-------------------------|--------------------|----------------|-----------------|
| 35 lessons seen overall | Good               | Good           | Satisfactory    |

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

Teaching has improved greatly since the last inspection. The quality of teaching is now satisfactory overall but is better in Key Stage 1 than Key Stage 2. Of the lessons observed, the quality of teaching observed across the school was satisfactory or better in 97% of lessons. It was very good in 20% of lessons, good in 31% of lessons and satisfactory in 46%. There was one unsatisfactory lesson observed in Key Stage 2. In Key Stage 1, the quality of teaching was almost entirely good or very good. The teaching of pupils in the nursery is currently satisfactory.

Teachers in Key Stage 1 and 2 have a good knowledge of how to teach basic skills of literacy and numeracy which is contributing to improving standards in English and



mathematics across the school. Great emphasis is placed upon teaching reading and writing and promoting the ability to apply mathematics through mental activities. Teaching in science is satisfactory in Key Stage 1 but in Key Stage 2, not enough attention is given to developing pupils' independent learning skills. The use of information technology varies. It is well used in Key Stage 1 but in Key Stage 2, only one class makes regular use of the computer. In other subjects the quality of teaching is satisfactory but very little time is given to design and technology. In Key Stage 1, lessons are well organised and managed so that pupils of all ages and abilities are given work which matches their needs. Teachers work closely with Learning Support Assistants so that pupils with special educational needs are well supported. The quality of teaching for under-fives is good overall. It is satisfactory in the nursery and good in reception.

## OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

| Aspect  | Comment  |
|---|--|
| The quality and range of the curriculum   | The curriculum for under-fives is good. In Key Stage 1 and 2 the curriculum meets the requirements of the National Curriculum and a good emphasis is placed upon literacy and numeracy. The programme for personal and social education is weak.   |
| Provision for pupils with special educational needs   | Provision for pupils with special educational needs is good. The quality of support from Learning Support Assistants is good and pupils have good individual education plans with appropriate targets.   |
| Provision for pupils' personal development, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development | The provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is satisfactory overall but planned provision is weak for developing spirituality and for raising pupils' awareness of cultures other than their own   |
| How well the school cares for its pupils  | The school provides a safe and caring environment for all pupils. Pupils' academic and personal attainment and progress is satisfactorily monitored and recorded. The National Curriculum assessment results are carefully analysed so that ways of improving the effectiveness of teaching and the curriculum can be considered. Procedures for monitoring attendance are unsatisfactory. |
| How well the school works with parents and carers.  | There are good links with parents. Induction procedures for preparing children when they begin school are very good. Parents are kept well informed through workshops, regular newsletters and parents' evenings. Parents of children with special educational needs are closely consulted about all aspects of their child's development.   |

## HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

| Aspect   | Comment  |
|--|--|
| Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff | The headteacher provides good leadership and provides a clear vision for the future but the impact of the deputy headteacher is weak. Key Stage 1 is well co-ordinated and the nursery is very well managed. The provision for pupils with special educational needs is very well managed. |
| How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities             | The governing body fulfils its responsibilities. It is committed to improving the school even further and makes great efforts to support the headteacher and staff in raising standards.   |
| The school's evaluation of its performance                       | The school has effective systems for evaluating its performance. The headteacher and governing body are accurate and honest in their evaluations.  |
| The strategic use of resources                                   | Space is used well and staff are deployed wisely to the best benefit of pupils. All spending is targeted at raising standards across the school  |
| Staffing, accommodation and learning resources                   | Accommodation is good. Staffing and learning resources are sufficient to meet the needs of pupils and the curriculum although the number and range of library books and resources for music need to be improved.   |

## PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

| What pleases parents most  | What parents would like to see improved   |
|--|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• There are high levels of satisfaction with the school, its leadership and management.</li> <li>• Parents believe that their child makes good progress in school.</li> <li>• The close links exist between the school and the local community and parents state that communication is good.</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The range of extra-curricular activities.</li> </ul> |

Inspectors agree with the positive views of parents. The range of extra-curricular activities is narrow but the school recognises this and is committed to improving opportunities for after school learning.

## **PART B: HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?**

### **THE SCHOOL'S RESULTS AND ACHIEVEMENTS -**

1. The natural ability of year groups differs greatly from year to year and consequently results can vary greatly depending upon the number of pupils with special educational needs. For example, in the class which took the National Curriculum assessment tests at the end of Year 2 in 1999 almost a quarter of the pupils had severe learning difficulties. In the current Year 6 class almost a third of its pupils are on the special educational needs register. Despite these variations, standards in the school have improved since the last inspection.
2. In 1999 pupils at the end of Key Stage 2 did very well in English and mathematics. When compared to similar schools, the results by the end of Key Stage 2 in English and mathematics were well above average and in comparison with all schools nationally, results were close to the national average. Standards in science were close to the average for similar schools but well below the national average. The 1999 results indicate an improvement when compared to the performance of pupils since 1996. Taking the four years together, pupils' performance in English was below the national average and well below in mathematics and science. There was no significant difference in the performance of boys and girls over the same period.
3. Inspection findings are that standards in the school across Key Stage 2 are improving. The standards of the current Year 6 class however, are below the national average in English, mathematics and science. The high percentage of pupils with special educational needs is a key factor which contributes to the low standards. The class obtained poor results in their Key Stage 1 National Curriculum assessment results and when this is taken into account, the class has made satisfactory progress across the school in English and mathematics. In science, standards could be better and progress has not been as good as it could be, even allowing for the high percentage of special educational needs. Pupils in other classes Years 3, 4 and 5 make satisfactory progress in their work and are performing as well as they can although a small number of higher attaining pupils in Year 4 could be given greater challenge. The improvements in English are a result of the successful support provided by the Local Education Authority which has contributed to a shared commitment amongst staff to raise standards. In mathematics, improvements have occurred as a result of the impact of the implementation of the National Numeracy Strategy which has provided a clear framework and expectations for each year group for the teaching of mathematics across the school.
4. In English, pupils make satisfactory progress in Key Stage 2 although progress could be better in improving speaking skills. At Key Stage 2, standards in reading are broadly average although a minority of pupils in Year 6 have below average reading skills and there are few higher attaining pupils. By the end of Key Stage 2, most pupils produce written work which is of a satisfactory standard which is mostly interesting and varied in content. The standard of handwriting is mostly good with a neat, cursive style. There is a shortage, however, of examples of extended writing. In mathematics, pupils by the end of Key Stage 2 make steady progress and have a satisfactory knowledge and understanding of solving mental calculations expected by the National Curriculum although the percentage of higher attaining pupils is very low. Progress in science, could be much better in Key Stage 2. The range of recorded work is very narrow and expectations are not high enough for pupils to work independently in order to apply and deepen their knowledge through experiments and investigations.

5. Standards by the end of Key Stage 1 have improved greatly although variations occur from year to year. The Year 2 group which took the National Curriculum assessment tests had a very high percentage of pupils with special educational need but despite this, the results were close to the average for similar schools in reading and writing and above the average in mathematics. When compared to all schools nationally, however, standards were well below the national average in reading and writing and below average in mathematics. In science, teachers' assessments show that standards were below the national average with the percentage of pupils reaching above the expected standard of level 3 being low. Taking the results over the last four years, between 1996-1999, figures show that in comparison with all schools nationally, results have been below the national average in reading and writing and close to the national average in mathematics. There was no significant difference in the performance of boys and girls over the same period.
6. By the end of Key Stage 1 inspection findings are that standards are above average in English and mathematics. In reading and writing, standards are above what is normally found for seven year olds. Although pupils' listening skills are satisfactory, many lack the confidence to speak in front of others. Their vocabulary is comparatively limited and only a few are articulate in expressing their views and ideas. In mathematics, standards are above expectations for seven year olds. As a result of good teaching and high expectations, pupils use numbers well in order to solve problems, both mental and written, and they make good use of mathematical vocabulary. In science, pupils have a knowledge which matches what is expected by the end of Key Stage 1, but the skills of investigation are a comparative weakness with not enough opportunity being provided for such work.
7. By the end of both key stages, standards in information and communication technology are below the expectations of the National Curriculum for seven and eleven year olds. The school recognises the weakness in standards and has recently improved its quality and range of computers and is training staff to use them. The co-ordinator is skilled and knowledgeable. She has accurately identified the weaknesses and skilfully set about finding ways of rectifying these. In other subjects, progress across both key stages has been satisfactory in most subjects except in design and technology where it is unsatisfactory because the subject has not been a priority for school development. In history and geography, although progress across the school is satisfactory overall, pupils in Year 6 have a limited knowledge and understanding of each of these subjects.
8. The majority of children begin school with standards of literacy, numeracy and knowledge and understanding of the world which are below those expected for their age. As a result of very good management in the nursery combined with high expectations and good teaching in the Reception class, pupils make good progress and by the age of five they reach standards which are expected for their age. In Key Stage 2, the school has made good use of government grants to provide pupils with extra support for pupils prior to taking the National Curriculum assessment tests at the age of 11. By wisely deploying support staff, the size of pupil groups was reduced so that much more individual support was possible, thereby raising the standards of many pupils.

## **PUPILS' ATTITUDES, VALUES AND PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT**

9. Parents are pleased with the attitudes, behaviour, personal development and relationships in the school and inspection findings are that they are satisfactory overall but are good in Key Stage 1.

10. Children under-five in the nursery and Reception class benefit from a well organised and stimulating environment and behave well. Children relate well to each other and work in small groups, effectively developing good levels of collaboration and co-operation. Children are courteous, polite and well behaved. They have good levels of attention and make good progress in being aware of others during discussions, for example when talking about African artefacts, children learnt to talk in turn and tolerate the views of others. Relationships between children under-five and between adults and children are good.
11. In Key Stage 1, pupils receive a well organised and stimulating curriculum in which high standards of work are expected and good levels of support are given. Pupils are challenged well and therefore behave well and take an interest in their work. Good teamwork between the teachers and Learning Support Assistants makes sure that pupils of all abilities are given appropriate work and are never given time to be disruptive. By the age of seven, pupils are happy to work on their own and capably set out equipment for others and help with classroom jobs. Their levels of co-operation are good. More able pupils willingly help less able ones and pupils are sensitive to the needs of others. During one literacy lesson, Year 1 pupils were challenged to plan their own story using a story board by sharing ideas. This was done very well and in so doing pupils showed how well they can work together and tolerate the views of others. Although all pupils in Key Stage 1 make good progress in developing independence, there are not enough planned opportunities for pupils to plan and perform simple investigations and this reduces the progress some pupils make in this area of their education.
12. In Key Stage 2, behaviour and attitudes, although satisfactory overall, vary between year groups. Higher attaining pupils in lower Key Stage 2 can lose concentration in some lessons because not enough attention is given to challenging their skills and knowledge and, at times, the teacher's directions and expectations are unclear. During a design and technology lesson, pupils showed good levels of enthusiasm for the challenge of designing a poster and for making healthy sandwiches for a picnic, but instructions were unclear which resulted in some pupils being confused and therefore becoming inattentive. In Year 4/5, pupils are consistently well behaved and have good or very good attitudes to the lessons. They respond to the well organised and well planned lessons and to the successful efforts of the class teacher to provide appropriate and challenging work for pupils of all abilities. During a numeracy lesson about symmetrical shapes and angles, pupils worked diligently with very good levels of behaviour and motivation because they were provided with a good range of interesting work. The work was set at the right level for each group and the lesson moved with good pace so that pupils were not given time to be bored or restless. In Year 6, however, behaviour is frequently challenging. Many pupils are on the special educational needs register and during lessons, a significant number of pupils are disruptive because they are not appropriately challenged. The temporary teacher found it difficult to provide suitably challenging work in some lessons and pupils became restless, began walking around and talking. During an art lesson, however, the same pupils' imaginations were captured which motivated them to work hard and learn about the style and work of the artist Heaton Cooper. Relationships are satisfactory overall and good in Key Stage 1.
13. In Key Stage 2 especially there is a lack of planned opportunity for pupils to develop and use independent learning skills and for them to develop personal responsibility. Opportunities which require pupils to act for themselves by carrying out jobs and duties are limited. There is no personal and social education programme to guide teachers in

developing this aspect of school life and pupils do not make enough progress in this regard.

14. Attendance is well below the national average and has declined in the last two years. The level of authorised absence is high and is above the national average. There have been no exclusions in the last year.

## **HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?**

15. Teaching has improved greatly since the last inspection. The quality of teaching is now satisfactory overall but is better in Key Stage 1 than Key Stage 2. Of the lessons observed, the quality of teaching observed across the school was satisfactory or better in 97% of lessons. It was very good in 20% of lessons, good in 31% of lessons and satisfactory in 46%. There was one unsatisfactory lesson observed in Key Stage 2.
16. During the inspection, two of the six teachers were employed on temporary contracts to cover for permanent staff taking maternity leave. In the Year 6 class, many temporary teachers had taught the class in the last academic year although until very recently the headteacher taught the class regularly to prepare the pupils for the National Curriculum assessment tests.
17. Standards of teaching for the under-fives and Key Stage 1 are good overall. Teachers have a good knowledge of English and mathematics and this informs well planned lessons which are organised well so that all available resources are effectively used to benefit pupils of all abilities including those with special educational needs. Teachers use very good strategies to teach the basic skills of reading and writing and present literacy lessons well. Skilful use of questioning makes sure that all pupils are included in class discussions. During shared text sessions in literacy lessons, pupils are encouraged to contribute their own ideas and good use of support staff and GNVQ students gives pupils working in small groups good levels of support and guidance so that they make good progress. In mathematics, the numeracy lessons are planned well. Work is set at different levels to meet age differences in classes. Good use is made of mathematical vocabulary at an early age. In one lesson on data handling the teacher's use of words such as horizontal and vertical axes set high expectations for pupils to which they responded well and made good progress as a result. In Year 2 very high expectations are set which are driving pupils' progress forward rapidly and contribute to improving standards at the end of Key Stage 1. A good brisk pace keeps pupils on their toes and they are never given time for concentration to wander. Good relationships exist in Key Stage 1 between pupils and staff. A secure and stimulating learning environment is provided for pupils which contributes to the good progress now occurring across the key stage in most subjects. The use of information technology is improving, and improved equipment is now benefiting pupils greatly but teacher's subject knowledge also needs to be raised for maximum progress to be achieved. Science is competently taught in terms of knowledge and understanding but more emphasis could be given to promoting independent learning skills.
18. Throughout Key Stage 1, pupils are very well managed and high standards of behaviour are maintained because of the good relationships between pupils and adults and the provision of work which inspires and interests pupils. Lesson aims and objectives are shared with pupils to add purpose and impetus to lessons. Teachers know the strengths and weaknesses of all pupils and they are asked to set targets for improvement. This system is effective in involving pupils in evaluating how well they are doing and for developing a sense of ownership in their learning.

19. In Key Stage 2, the standard of teaching varies from class to class and is satisfactory overall. Lesson planning is usually useful and effective although in lower Key Stage 2, not enough attention is given to planning challenging work for higher attaining pupils. The literacy hour is satisfactorily taught across the key stage. In mathematics, the numeracy lesson is implemented satisfactorily although in Year 4 /5, teaching of numeracy is good. In this class, lessons are planned and taught with a good awareness of the needs of all pupils including higher attaining pupils and those with special educational needs. There are weaknesses in the teaching of science and information technology. Not enough time is given to science in Year 3/4 and expectations for pupils' independent recording and investigations are low across the key stage. The use of information technology is improving but until recently, poor equipment and teachers' insecure subject knowledge have meant that information technology is not used as much as it should be to support learning. The management of pupils varies. In Year 6, pupils' challenging behaviour is not always well managed and at times, a lack of appropriately challenging work causes some disruptive behaviour during lessons. Teachers use assessment better in Key Stage 1 than in Key Stage 2 and the practice of target setting is not yet fully implemented.
20. The provision for pupils with special educational needs is good and individual education plans, which are mostly detailed and carefully monitored, are used to guide planning and assist in monitoring pupils' progress. Teachers and support assistants work together very effectively. The only weakness is in the planned support for disruptive pupils in Key Stage 2.
21. Marking across the school varies between key stages. The marking in Key Stage 1 is often carried out alongside the pupils and involves guiding them to improve their performance. In Key Stage 2, there is no consistently applied model. At times, work is only given a cursory tick and in one class, spelling mistakes are frequently not corrected. In Key Stage 2 comments are rarely phrased in such a way as to set out ways that pupils might improve their work.
22. Homework is given regularly. It contributes significantly to the rate of learning in reading, writing and mathematics and occasionally to the development of pupils' research skills.

#### **HOW GOOD ARE CURRICULAR AND OTHER OPPORTUNITIES OFFERED TO PUPILS?**

23. The quality of the curriculum has improved greatly since the last inspection. The curriculum for under-fives is now good and matches the needs of such pupils as defined by the desirable learning outcomes. In Key Stage 1 and 2, The National Literacy Strategy and National Numeracy Strategy have both been introduced successfully. Very good support has been given by the Local Education Authority in literacy over the last twelve months which has contributed significantly to the improved standards in English across the school. The National Numeracy Strategy has been successfully implemented and is raising standards and in the next year, 2000/2001, the Local Education Authority intends to give additional support to the school for numeracy. Other subjects now have satisfactory policies and schemes of work in place which are based upon the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority guidance. They provide pupils with a curriculum which enables them to systematically build upon their knowledge, skills and understanding year by year. This is particularly the case with information and communication technology but there is a weakness in planned provision for design and technology. Many of the schemes for foundation subjects have been introduced recently and are only just beginning to have an impact upon standards.

24. As a result of the improved curriculum schemes, the quality of long term, whole school planning is much better than it was and is satisfactory overall. Plans have clear objectives but planned links with literacy, numeracy and information technology, although often occurring in practice are not always planned for, which decreases opportunities for the basic skills to be applied across the curriculum. Equality of opportunity is evident in all aspects of the pupils' education. The staff are working hard to make sure that the curriculum is successfully adjusted to match the requirements of the Curriculum 2000 and the Foundation stage for children under six years of age.
25. Pupils with special educational needs now receive a much better deal. The school ensures that all pupils on the school's code of practice receive their full entitlement to a broad and balanced curriculum and this has a positive effect upon their learning. The special needs Code of Practice is fully implemented.
26. Although there is a personal, social and health education programme in place it is weak and does not plan systematically for developing pupils' knowledge and awareness of issues such as drugs education and personal hygiene and development. Planned opportunities are also limited for pupils to improve their speaking skills, develop independent skills and to promote use of initiative and responsibility. The headteacher and governing body recognise this as an area for improvement and have appointed an enthusiastic governor as the personal and social education governor. The curriculum is enriched in Year 2 and Year 6 where pupils learn a great deal by attending residential visits. Day visits are regularly planned to support class topics. For example, pupils in Years 1 /2 went to Haig Pit museum as part of a local study and in Year 3 /4 pupils travelled to Ravenglass and Hardknott Fort as part of their Roman topic. Pupils also benefit from a range of visitors to the school such as the local fire service, the local Groundwork trust and a visiting musical show.
27. Pupils in Key Stage 2 benefit from being able to attend a small number of extra-curricular clubs including rugby, soccer, bridge, choir and an Internet club. Pupils in Key Stage 1 are able to take part in country dancing. Plans exist to improve after school provision for study and homework clubs.
28. Links with the community are good. Pupils are encouraged to get involved in a wide range of local and parish events. Close links with the church enable pupils to prepare for first communion and perform the Nativity play. The local Catholic club provides a venue for school discos. Local shops and businesses have contributed to the costs of decorating the school foyer, donated gifts to the Christmas raffle and paid for the stripping of the piano. Good links exist with the local pre-school group, and eleven year olds are involved in good liaison activities with St. Benedicts High School and good professional relationships are being forged with two nearby primary schools. There is a good partnership with the nearby Further Education College which confidently works with the school in supporting and training GNVQ Early Years students.
29. The provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is satisfactory overall. There has been some progress since the last inspection in providing for pupils' spiritual development but the planned opportunities for developing pupils' spirituality could still be better. Pupils are able to appreciate the beauty and wonder of the natural world through their studies in science. The art curriculum appreciates the work of some great artists and there are times when pupils appreciate music. Overall, however, the development of spirituality is incidental and not systematically developed. In terms of moral development, satisfactory provision has been maintained. Good use is made of school and class rules to teach right from wrong. There are opportunities to discuss



moral issues as part of the religious education curriculum. Opportunities for pupils to develop self-discipline, however, are not fully exploited. Satisfactory provision has been maintained since the last inspection in social development. In Key Stage 1, pupils are expected to set out physical education equipment and help in classrooms and teachers expect pupils to work in pairs and small groups. At times older pupils work with younger ones in paired reading and pupils with good information technology skills frequently support less competent ones. Team games and the school choir enable pupils to share and work together with a joint aim. The residential visits are very effective in promoting pupils' skills of co-operation and team work. In Key Stage 2 especially, not enough thought is given to developing pupils' independent learning skills and expectations for pupils to take responsibility are comparatively low. In cultural development, satisfactory progress has been made since the last inspection except in the area of giving pupils the chance to appreciate the richness and diversity of other cultures. Not enough use is made of music, art and dance to develop such an appreciation or of geography and literature.

### **HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?**

30. This is a caring school. All aspects of health and safety provision are well provided for with effective procedures for first aid, child protection and fire and safety maintenance. Teachers know pupils well and are fully aware of the needs of individual pupils, both in terms of physical, emotional and intellectual needs. There are effective procedures in place for identifying how well pupils are doing academically in English and mathematics and for tracking their progress over time. In science and information technology, however, procedures could be better. Good use is made of National Curriculum assessment results to identify ways of improving the curriculum and of providing appropriate challenge for all pupils. Satisfactory procedures exist for pupils' personal development to be recorded and recognised using a Records of Achievement system for each pupil. A good feature which is evolving is the increased use across the school of involving pupils in setting their own targets for improvement which are regularly evaluated to assess whether or not their targets have been reached. This is a particular strength in Key Stage 1 and is beginning to influence teachers in Key Stage 2.
31. Although behaviour in the school is mostly good, the behaviour policy is not consistently applied and can result in some disruptive behaviour by a significant minority of pupils in Key Stage 2. Procedures for monitoring attendance are unsatisfactory. Absence is not checked systematically enough and not enough thought has been given to establishing ways of immediately checking on absence or of finding ways of rewarding good attendance.
32. The needs of pupils with special educational needs are identified at an early stage. Teachers consult with the special educational needs co-ordinator. If the action taken is not successful, the school liaises well with local support services. The school has regular contact with the educational psychologist, speech therapist and behavioural support services so that pupils' needs can be met. The school and support services work effectively as a team to provide a good quality service for the pupils. There is a special educational needs register which is regularly reviewed.

### **HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH THE PARENTS?**

33. The school has established a good partnership with parents. Since the last inspection this has been improved. Parents who attended the meeting prior to the inspection and

most of those who replied to the questionnaire, expressed the views that the headteacher and staff show a high level of dedication, support and care for the children throughout the school. Parents feel confident to approach staff if they have any concerns knowing that they will be listened to and any appropriate action taken. They are kept informed of all decisions and actions and feel that a true partnership is in place. The vast majority of parents feel the school is well led and managed, that teachers are dedicated and their children make good progress. Inspection findings indicate that in general parents are kept well informed and that the school works hard to develop and maintain strong links between home and school.

34. The quality of information provided for parents is satisfactory. The school prospectus is well detailed and presented. The end of year reports show an individual knowledge of each child and the progress they have made. Parents are invited to comment either verbally or in writing and this option is appreciated by many parents. Parents of children with special educational needs are consulted at an early stage and are fully involved and kept informed of all progress. There is regular dialogue and access between parents, external agencies and the special needs co-ordinator.
35. Parents appreciate the regular information they receive about future topics. There is a regular newsletter sent to all parents each half term which keeps them informed of activities, information and achievements. Whilst this is factual and informative, consideration could possibly be given to alternative layout styles. There is a Home-School agreement in place which is working satisfactorily.
36. Meetings for parents are held twice during the academic year and felt to be useful occasions for parents to discuss their children's work and progress. Parents also appreciate the fact that the school ensures that they feel welcome to come in at any appropriate time to discuss with class teachers or the headteacher any concerns they may have.
37. There is an extremely active Home School Association (HSA) which has been highly successful in raising funds for the school by the organisation of various events throughout the year. The Association works consistently and tirelessly in its task and the efforts by all concerned are fully appreciated by the school. A group of committed parents along with the governors and headteacher spent a considerable amount of time painting the inside of the school. Several parents help in school with a wide variety of tasks and activities and feel well supported and guided by class teachers at all times. Many parents are involved with the work their children undertake at home.
38. Overall, it is felt that school and parents are to be congratulated on the efforts they have made to improve their partnership and that a firm foundation is now in place for continued development and success.

#### **HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?**

39. Since the last inspection in November 1997, substantial improvements have been made in the management and efficiency of the school. The school is well led and managed. The headteacher provides a clear vision for the future and promotes high standards and levels of commitment amongst most staff. He leads by example and, by accurately identifying the strengths and weaknesses of the school, has created good strategies for improving the school. Despite having a clear job description, the impact of the deputy headteacher, is not clearly evident and the contribution to the management of the school is weak. A Senior Management Team has been established

which has supported the headteacher in managing the changes of the last few years. It is particularly effective in providing children under-five with a good introduction to education and in promoting good progress and standards in Key Stage 1. Across the school, procedures for monitoring teaching and learning have been successfully implemented which include careful analysis of available test data such as the results of National Curriculum tests at the end of Key Stage 1 and 2. An effective school development planning model is now in place which involves consulting with all involved in the school, including pupils, staff and parents, and then creating a realistic management plan. The plan recognises that many aspects of the school still need to be improved although good progress has occurred in the last three years.

40. The provision for pupils with special educational needs is now good. The school has improved this provision significantly since the last inspection and is now good overall. All aspects of the Code of Practice recommendations are implemented and pupils are provided with good quality individual education plans. Pupils' progress towards the targets in their individual education plans is carefully monitored and all of the requirements of educational statements are met. The staffing for pupils with special educational needs is well deployed and the co-ordinator successfully manages the staff so that the maximum benefit is gained by the pupils.
41. The governing body fulfils its responsibilities. There have been significant changes in the governing body in recent years and the current governors display a determination to respond to action planning arising from the last inspection. They work closely with the headteacher and staff to identify and implement ways of improving the school and many are regular visitors to classes. This close involvement gives governors a good understanding of the strengths and weaknesses within the school and promotes good relationships with the staff. There are governors responsible for a range of curriculum areas plus personal and social education and special educational needs. The governors involved are committed to supporting the school in their chosen area. Governors carefully monitor the impact of all decisions upon improving standards across the school and appraise the work of the headteacher and the Senior Management Team.
42. The governing body, headteacher, Senior Management Team and staff work together closely to monitor and evaluate whether or not the school's performance is good enough. Accurate and honest evaluations of the impact of teaching are made by staff so that methods and strategies can be improved. The headteacher knows his staff well and is aware of their strengths and weaknesses. This knowledge is used to direct staff training and development so that pupils receive the greatest benefit. Any significant needs are included in the school development plan so that progress in improvements can be monitored.
43. Financial management in the school is good. The governing body and headteacher have been decisive in spending decisions and have managed to return the school to a balanced budget this year from a large deficit budget three years ago. When this is placed in the context of improving standards, very good financial management is occurring. The day-to-day school finances are well managed by an efficient secretary. The governing body makes sure that all spending decisions are taken in the interests of pupils and in raising standards and strives to seek best value for money.
44. The accommodation has improved greatly since the last inspection. The standard is now much better and the school has a pleasant library which offers pupils the chance to develop library skills. The classrooms are bright and airy and the displays are of a high standard which create a rich and stimulating learning environment. The hall,

although of a suitable size, has poor acoustics which can hinder the progress of pupils with Hearing Impairment. Outdoor facilities are satisfactory overall. With the exception of the range of books, the resources in the school are sufficient in terms of quality and quantity to enable all aspects of the curriculum to be taught. Although improvements have been made since the last inspection through developing a pleasant library, the number and range of books is small and needs continued expansion.

## **WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?**

45. The school is improving rapidly and its strengths outweigh its weaknesses. The school development plan accurately identifies many areas for improvement but in order to maintain the improvement the headteacher, staff and governing body need to:

**1) raise standards in science by the end of Key Stage 2 by:**

- improving the quality of teaching in Key Stage 2, so that an appropriate amount of time is spent upon science and each element of the programmes of study is taught
- making sure that lessons systematically build upon the knowledge and understanding that pupils have acquired in Key Stage 1
- improving ways of monitoring the teaching and learning in science in each class so that ways of rectifying weaknesses can be planned for

*(paragraphs 72-79)*

**2) raise standards in information technology by:**

- pursuing current plans to ensure that each element of the National Curriculum programmes of study for information technology is regularly taught across the school
- improving staff confidence by maintaining the current training programme
- enabling the subject co-ordinator to continue to monitor what goes on in the school and give support where necessary so that computers are used across the curriculum

*( paragraphs 80-85)*

**3) further improve the management of the school by:**

- developing the role of the deputy headteacher so that the expectations and responsibilities defined in the job description are fulfilled.
- implementing plans for the deputy headteacher to co-ordinate staff development and undertake appropriate professional development.

*(paragraph 39)*

**4) develop and improve the school's personal and social education programme by:**

- implementing a planned programme of work which is timetabled regularly

*(paragraph 13, 26)*

**5) improve attendance in the school by:**

- systematically monitoring absence and strengthening the way in which absences are checked and recorded
- developing ways of rewarding good attendance

*( paragraph 31)*

**In addition to the key issues above, the following less important issues should be considered for inclusion in the action plan**

- Continue to find ways of improving the provision for developing pupils' spirituality and appreciating the richness and diversity of cultures other than their own *( paragraph 29)*
- When resources allow, improve the range and quality of books across the school *(paragraphs 44, 62)*



## PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

### Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

|  |    |
|--|----|
| Number of lessons observed   | 35 |
| Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils | 28 |

### Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

| Excellent | Very good | Good | Satisfactory | Unsatisfactory | Poor | Very Poor |
|-----------|-----------|------|--------------|----------------|------|-----------|
|           | 20%       | 31%  | 46%          | 3%             |      |           |

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

### Information about the school's pupils

#### Pupils on the school's roll

|  | Nursery | YR – Y6 |
|--|---------|---------|
| Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils) | 15      | 142     |
| Number of full-time pupils eligible for free school meals        | 0       | 51      |

FTE means full-time equivalent.

#### Special educational needs

|   | Nursery | YR – Y6 |
|---|---------|---------|
| Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs       | 0       | 6       |
| Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register | 0       | 35      |

#### English as an additional language

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

#### Pupil mobility in the last school year

|  | No of pupils |
|--|--------------|
| Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission | 3            |
| Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving           | 11           |

### Attendance

#### Authorised absence

|                           | %    |
|---------------------------|------|
| School data               | 8.5  |
| National comparative data | 5.4% |

#### Unauthorised absence

|                           | %   |
|---------------------------|-----|
| School data               | 0.5 |
| 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

|  |      |      |       |       |
|--|------|------|-------|-------|
| Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year | Year | Boys | Girls | Total |
|  | 1999 | 13   | 9     | 21    |

| National Curriculum Test/Task Results       |          | Reading | Writing | Mathematics |
|---|----------|---------|---------|-------------|
| Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above   | Boys     | 8       | 8       | 12          |
|   | Girls    | 7       | 6       | 7           |
|   | Total    | 15      | 14      | 19          |
| Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above | School   | 71 (87) | 67 (87) | 90 (93)     |
|   | National | 82 (74) | 82 (81) | 87 (83)     |

| Teachers' Assessments                       |          | English | Mathematics | Science |
|---|----------|---------|-------------|---------|
| Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above   | Boys     | 9       | 12          | 9       |
|   | Girls    | 7       | 7           | 7       |
|   | Total    | 16      | 19          | 16      |
| Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above | School   | 76 (87) | 90 (93)     | 76 (93) |
|   | National | 82 (80) | 86 (83)     | 87 (86) |

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

### Attainment at the end of Key Stage 2

|  |      |      |       |       |
|--|------|------|-------|-------|
| Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2 for the latest reporting year | Year | Boys | Girls | Total |
|  | 1999 | 13   | 13    | 26    |

| National Curriculum Test/Task Results       |          | English  | Mathematics | Science |
|---|----------|----------|-------------|---------|
| Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above   | Boys     | 6        | 6           | 5       |
|   | Girls    | 12       | 12          | 11      |
|   | Total    | 18       | 18          | 16      |
| Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above | School   | 69 (63)  | 69 (33)     | 62 (50) |
|   | National | 70 ( 65) | 69 (59)     | 78 (69) |

| Teachers' Assessments                       |          | English | Mathematics | Science |
|---|----------|---------|-------------|---------|
| Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above   | Boys     | 5       | 6           | 4       |
|   | Girls    | 11      | 10          | 10      |
|   | Total    | 16      | 16          | 14      |
| Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above | School   | 62 (54) | 62 (29)     | 54 (50) |
|   | National | 68 (65) | 69 (66)     | 75 (71) |

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



### ***Ethnic background of pupils***

|                                 | No of pupils |
|---------------------------------|--------------|
| Black – Caribbean heritage      | 0            |
| Black – African heritage        | 0            |
| Black – other                   | 0            |
| Indian                          | 0            |
| Pakistani                       | 0            |
| Bangladeshi                     | 0            |
| Chinese                         | 0            |
| White                           | 99.1         |
| Any other minority ethnic group | 0            |

*This table refers to pupils of compulsory school age only.*

### ***Exclusions in the last school year***

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

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

### ***Teachers and classes***

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

|  |       |
|--|-------|
| Total number of qualified teachers (FTE) | 6     |
| Number of pupils per qualified teacher   | 21.16 |
| Average class size                       | 25.4  |

#### **Education support staff: YR – Y6**

|   |     |
|---|-----|
| Total number of education support staff | 5.0 |
| Total aggregate hours worked per week   | 133 |

#### **Qualified teachers and support staff: nursery**

|  |    |
|--|----|
| Total number of qualified teachers (FTE) | 1  |
| Number of pupils per qualified teacher   | 15 |

|   |    |
|---|----|
| Total number of education support staff | 1  |
| Total aggregate hours worked per week   | 22 |

|                                |     |
|--------------------------------|-----|
| Number of pupils per FTE adult | 7.5 |
|--------------------------------|-----|

*FTE means full-time equivalent.*

### ***Financial information***

|                |           |
|----------------|-----------|
| Financial year | 1999-2000 |
|----------------|-----------|

|  | £      |
|--|--------|
| Total income                               | 303965 |
| Total expenditure                          | 302756 |
| Expenditure per pupil                      | 2132   |
| Balance brought forward from previous year | -312   |
| Balance carried forward to next year       | 897    |

**Results of the survey of parents and carers**

**Questionnaire return rate**

|                                   |     |
|-----------------------------------|-----|
| Number of questionnaires sent out | 157 |
| Number of questionnaires returned | 54  |

**Percentage of responses in each category**

|  | Strongly agree | Tend to agree | Tend to disagree | Strongly disagree | Don't know |
|--|----------------|---------------|------------------|-------------------|------------|
| My child likes school.   | 52             | 40            | 6                | 0                 | 2          |
| My child is making good progress in school.  | 46             | 48            | 6                | 0                 | 0          |
| Behaviour in the school is good.   | 38             | 52            | 2                | 0                 | 6          |
| My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.                              | 36             | 38            | 12               | 0                 | 14         |
| The teaching is good.  | 70             | 22            | 0                | 0                 | 8          |
| I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.                          | 38             | 50            | 8                | 1                 | 2          |
| I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem. | 80             | 20            | 0                | 0                 | 0          |
| The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.              | 53             | 42            | 2                | 0                 | 4          |
| The school works closely with parents.   | 74             | 24            | 2                | 0                 | 0          |
| The school is well led and managed.  | 62             | 31            | 0                | 0                 | 7          |
| The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.                      | 67             | 24            | 4                | 0                 | 4          |
| The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.            | 29             | 31            | 20               | 0                 | 20         |

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

### AREAS OF LEARNING FOR CHILDREN IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

46. The school's nursery and reception classes provide a good start to education for the children and prepare them well to start working from the programmes of study of the National Curriculum. At the time of inspection there were 29 part-time pupils in the nursery and 17 full-time pupils who are taught as part of the reception/ Year 1 class with extra support given for the younger pupils' specific needs. When children enter the nursery class their attainment is below that expected for their age, particularly in language with a significant number of children being reluctant speakers. The children make good progress particularly in the reception class where expectations are high and by the age of five most children attain standards which are in line with those expected for their age although speaking skills remain below average.
47. The quality of teaching is always satisfactory and in the reception class it is nearly always good or very good. The teachers have a good understanding of the developmental needs of the age group. Nursery and reception staff plan together and the standard of long term planning is very good. Activities are interesting and challenging with the tasks well matched to the pupils' needs. During the inspection the teaching in the nursery was satisfactory and was well supported by the nursery assistant. In both classes the teachers and classroom assistants work well together to ensure that pupils make good progress in all six areas of learning. All staff are friendly, approachable, and committed to the pupils in their care. The pupils' attainment is well monitored and assessment procedures are very good. Pupils with special educational needs are identified and supported at a very early stage. The high level and quality of adult support the pupils receive are important factors in the good progress which is made. The NVQ students make a particularly valuable contribution to the good quality of education that is provided.
48. Good provision is made to nurture pupils' **personal and social development** and pupils make good progress and attain the standards expected nationally by the age of five. Most of the four year old pupils can change their own clothes after a dance lesson and children are actively encouraged to relate positively to others and soon learn what is expected of them. They learn in discussion times, for example, when passing African artefacts around that it is their turn to speak. In lessons the children usually work in small groups, which effectively promotes collaboration and co-operation and most of them are courteous, polite and well behaved. Relationships are good between the pupils themselves and between the pupils and all staff.
49. Good quality teaching enables the children to make good progress in **language and literacy** and overall the majority attain the nationally expected standards by the age of five although speaking skills remain a weak area. Children listen eagerly to nursery rhymes and stories such as "Handa's Surprise" and "Billy Duck". Most pupils can recognise their own name and many high frequency words. They enjoy looking at books or photographs with adults and are developing good early reading and writing skills. Almost all the children copy their own names legibly and form letters correctly. They enjoy books and most pupils can read simple words and sentences. They are good listeners but many pupils are quiet and have limited vocabularies. Standards of spoken language remain below average by the age of five although the children are encouraged to talk about themselves and the activities they are involved in. They talk

about counting cars in the car park and participate in role-play in the “Fruit Shop” and when using the “Roadmaster” equipment.

50. Wide ranging activities and opportunities are provided for **mathematical development** including counting activities, pattern and shape recognition. The quality of teaching is good and the children make good progress and attain the desirable learning outcomes by the age of five. The children sing rhymes and use finger play in counting songs such as “Alice the Camel.” They learn to form numbers to record their counting activities and recognise numbers when using dice and in matching activities in nursery and counting forward and back in tens in reception. They have a good knowledge of shapes and can understand halves, quarters and repeating number patterns. They make good progress in sorting and ordering and can count from their wall displays and number lines. Most can place objects in order using ordinal numbers such as fourth and fifth. They use a counting computer programme and know why it is easier to count using plastic building blocks than it is to count bubbles or the teacher’s blinks. In their activities the children use specific mathematical vocabulary such as “more than” and “share by” and make good progress in developing numeracy skills.
51. The pupils make good progress in improving their **knowledge and understanding of the world** around them and by the age of five have a satisfactory level of understanding and knowledge. The quality of teaching is good. In the nursery they learn about life in Africa and they often go on walks in the immediate vicinity followed by appropriate opportunities to ask questions and to talk, draw, paint or model what they see or find using a range of materials. In reception the children sequence photographs of their school in the order they see them when walking from the foyer to their classroom and draw simple maps to record their findings. The pupils know how to use the computer’s mouse and some of its keys and in reception they use a wide range of programmes with a good degree of competence.
52. Pupils make good progress in their **physical development**. They develop good control and co-ordination of their bodies. They make good use of indoor and outdoor apparatus when participating in dances such as “Polly Perkins” and when learning simple games skills such as dribbling with large balls. Good use is made of the accommodation with both classes having access to sand and water, large play equipment and safe outdoor areas. Physical development is well provided for and ensures that the children attain the desirable learning outcomes by the age of five. Children develop finer manipulative skills through careful handling of small objects such as jigsaw pieces, in constructional play, when painting and block printing or when baking. They use pencils, crayons and scissors and learn how to hold these implements and tools correctly.
53. The good quality teaching enables the children to make good progress in **creative development**. Most children have attained the desirable learning outcomes by the age of five. They demonstrate good creative and observational skills when drawing and painting or making tissue paper collages. They can use paints to create bold illustrations for stories they have enjoyed such as “Rainbow Fish”. They learn the words and melodies of simple songs such as “Dipped” when they clap and shake hands in a circle. They enjoy imitating the teacher’s clapping rhythms and using the African drums in a music lesson. Pupils are effectively developing the use of their imagination by creating actions which suit the mood of their role-play or the words of their songs. They carry out a wide range of practical activities with increasing confidence and obvious enjoyment and make a variety of objects with media such as play dough and large bricks.

## English

54. By the end of Key Stage 1, inspection evidence indicates that standards in English are above the national average. By the end of Key Stage 2 inspection evidence shows that standards are below the national average because of the high percentage of special needs pupils in Year 6. National test results in the last two years and inspection evidence show that the majority of pupils both this year and in the two preceding years attained standards in line with national averages. This represents a considerable improvement in standards since the last report. Strengths in the subject are reading and handwriting whilst speaking remains an area of comparative weakness.
55. In Key Stage 1, pupils make good progress in their English lessons whilst in Key Stage 2 the pupils make satisfactory progress. Standards attained indicate that overall progress over time is good. Pupils who have special educational needs are well supported and make similar progress to other pupils of their age group.
56. Attainment in speaking is below average by the end of Key Stages 1 and 2. Although many pupils come to school with poorly developed speaking skills and limited vocabularies the pupils at both key stages are capable of making better progress in this aspect of English. By the age of seven, pupils are beginning to communicate with each other clearly although not all of them are keen to express their views and opinions during class discussions. Good progress is made in extending their vocabulary when participating in literacy hour plenary sessions and in other subjects such as science and geography. The pupils discuss characters from stories in the “Big Books” and the higher attainers can re-tell and sequence stories that they hear such as fairy stories, myths and legends with a good degree of accuracy. By the age of eleven, although some pupils are confident and articulate speakers, many pupils still have limited vocabularies and some are rather quiet and prefer listening to speaking. Although speaking skills are improving pupils rarely offer detailed explanations using a wide vocabulary and with clear sentence construction. Throughout the school a significant number of pupils are reluctant speakers and are unable to put forward their own point of view effectively. All teachers encourage pupils to talk about their work and experiences but literacy sessions usually involve a very high percentage of time when only the teacher talks. There is only limited evidence of pupils being involved in confidence boosting activities such as debates, choral or public speaking and drama is rarely mentioned by pupils or noted in teachers’ planning.
57. At both key stages, pupils show a satisfactory understanding of what is said and demonstrate good listening skills. In Key Stage 1, they have many opportunities to listen to stories and to evaluate written work and the opinions of their peers. For example, Year 2 pupils listen carefully when the teacher explains about letter blends or reads the rhyme “In the land of the Bumbly Boo”. Older pupils in Years 3 and 4 listen carefully whilst the teacher reads excerpts from “Red Eyes at Night” and their written response shows that they are thoughtful listeners. Nearly all pupils are attentive listeners in assemblies, class discussions and in the final sessions of the literacy hour when they share their work with other members of the class. Pupils enjoy listening to the ideas and views of others and most pupils can listen carefully and pay close attention to what others say and they make good progress in developing their listening skills.
58. By the end of Key Stage 1, reading standards are above average and this is a strength of the school. By the age of seven, most pupils have built up a good sight vocabulary and read with good understanding of the text and use contextual and pictorial clues to help them with unfamiliar words. Teachers and classroom assistants hear pupils read

frequently and much attention is given to phonic work such as blending letter clusters and sounding out words. At Key Stage 2, standards of reading are broadly average although a minority of pupils in Year 6 have below average reading skills and there are few high attainers in this age group. However, most pupils in Key Stage 2 can identify story themes, plots and characters and comprehension skills are at least satisfactory. All pupils participate in reading activities during the daily literacy hour and most show a real enjoyment of books. At Key Stage 2 most pupils can make inferences and predictions from a variety of texts such as when Year 6 identify features of leaflets. Most pupils read accurately in group and class reading sessions and can use the text to extract evidence, for example Year 4/5 pupils scan through letters and newspaper reports. Overall the school places much emphasis on reading and pupils at both key stages make good progress. Pupils with special educational needs receive good support and make good progress towards the reading targets set in their individual education plans.

59. By the end of Key Stage 1, standards of writing are above average and reflect the good standards of reading that most pupils attain. By the age of seven nearly all pupils are independent writers and write using capital letters and full stops. Pupils recognise word patterns and understand technical vocabulary such as verbs, editing, syllables and alliteration. Year 1 pupils know the difference between a vowel and a consonant. They sequence events, for example, when writing about the stages used when making a jam sandwich or when using cue cards to retell the story of "How Billy Duck Learned to Swim." Pupils in Year 2 produce good quality nonsense rhymes, book reviews and character profiles. By the end of Key Stage 2, most pupils produce written work that is of satisfactory standard and most of it is interesting and varied in content. Year 3/4 pupils compare the styles of two authors, Years 4/ 5 write letters to a newspaper and Year 6 pupils write in persuasive language. Pupils produce writing in a variety of genres such as stories, prayers, riddles, letters and information leaflets and a range of poetry that includes haiku, kennings and odes. Some examples of planning, drafting and re-drafting of work are evident but there is a shortage of examples of extended writing. The school has a very good handwriting policy and pupils as young as six write in a neat, joined cursive script. Throughout the school standards of handwriting are above average and standards of grammar, punctuation, spelling and the use of conventional English are above average at Key Stage 1 and satisfactory at Key Stage 2. Overall, pupils, including those who have special educational needs, make progress in writing that is at least satisfactory and in Key Stage 1 progress is good.
60. Most pupils have a positive attitude to their work and generally maintain good levels of concentration and perseverance. Throughout the school, pupils are well behaved in their lessons, are helpful to each other and collaborate well in their groups. Pupils show enjoyment of reading activities and a keen interest in writing. However, pupils' levels of initiative and independence are not well developed and few pupils can speedily retrieve information for themselves from reference books or by using information and communication technology skills.
61. The quality of teaching is always satisfactory and in Key Stage 1, it is very good. Two very good lessons were seen in Key Stage 1 with both teachers planning interesting and challenging group activities. Throughout the school lessons are well structured and carefully prepared and all teachers give their pupils good support and encouragement. The group activities are usually well controlled and teachers manage their pupils well. All teachers plan using the National Literacy Strategy and this has given the curriculum good structure. The subject is well managed by a knowledgeable co-ordinator and intensive support has been given by the local authority. When teachers' expectations are high such as in Year 1, the pupils respond well to the challenge as seen when they

create their own story plans. Throughout the school good features are that teachers pay good attention to extending pupils' understanding of the structure and conventions of English and work very hard to reinforce and extend vocabulary. Good use is made of the new materials such as the "Big Books" and the group reading materials and resources overall are satisfactory although there is a shortage of fiction books for the older pupils. Key Stage 2 teachers have an appropriate focus on the literacy objectives and make satisfactory use of the whole class time and group sessions. They give good support in lessons but occasionally, some of the written tasks that are set for the groups working independently are not challenging enough, for example, there is not sufficient difference between the work set for different age and ability groups in some Key Stage 2 classes.

62. The school uses an appropriate assessment calendar and teachers use satisfactory on-going assessment procedures to monitor individual progress. The marking of work is weak in Key Stage 2 and does not help pupils to identify areas where they can improve their work. The use of information technology equipment to support the subject is unsatisfactory throughout the school and pupils are only just developing capability in using their information and communication technology skills in a wider range of applications. The new school library is a positive feature and the school is slowly building up a stock of quality reference and fiction books although the number and range of books remains unsatisfactory.

## **Mathematics**

63. Inspection evidence shows that at the end of Key Stage 1 the pupils' attainment is above national averages. All the pupils, including those with special educational needs are making good progress in their learning. By the end of Key Stage 2, inspection evidence shows that standards in the Year 6 class during the inspection were below the national average. This is because of the high proportion of pupils with special educational needs. The class is of low natural ability and pupils achieve as well as expected. Since the last inspection, results have been improving. The National Numeracy Strategy has been effectively implemented and this is starting to have a positive effect, particularly in the areas of mental mathematics and number skills. Analysis of assessments and test results has enabled the school to identify and address areas of weakness, for example shape and space and data handling.
64. By the end of Key Stage 1 the average attaining pupils use numbers well, for example they carry out repeated addition sums such as  $10+10+10=30$ . They subtract two digit numbers and carry out multiplication problems, for example  $6 \times 5=30$ . The lower attaining pupils also show good understanding of number. They add two digit numbers and take units from tens and units. Almost all pupils understand the concept of a half. The higher attaining pupils have good knowledge and understanding of place value in tens and units, for example that 15 is made up of one ten and five units. They understand the concept of multiples of ten. Pupils of all attainment levels recognise patterns such as odd and even numbers.
65. In the area of shape and space, all pupils recognise and name regular two and three-dimensional shapes including squares, circles, rectangles, triangles, cubes and cuboids. The pupils describe the shapes by the number of sides and faces. Most pupils understand that a right angle is a quarter turn. In measurement the pupils measure and weigh with increasing accuracy as they pass through the key stage. In data handling all pupils, including those with special educational needs collect information and record it. Block graphs are produced after pupils gather information on their favourite fruits.

Information and graphs are used to answer 'real life problems', for example the pupils were given the statement 'More pupils stay for school lunch in Year 1/2 than any other class' Is this true? The pupils constructed a graph using information from registers and found the statement was false. All pupils show an increase in their use of mathematical vocabulary for example they use terms including addition, subtraction and multiply. In data handling the pupils talk about and understand block graphs and pictograms.

66. In Key Stage 2 the pupils build on the knowledge that they have developed in Key Stage 1, the rate of progress slows but it is satisfactory. The pupils are developing their mental mathematical skills when they add and subtract two-digit numbers in their heads. By the end of the key stage most pupils are confident in multiplying and dividing numbers by 10 and by 100. The higher attaining pupils multiply decimals by 10, for example  $2.3 \times 10 = 23$ . In the area of shape and space most pupils recognise a wide range of two and three-dimensional shapes and they measure the area and perimeter. The pupils plot simple co-ordinates. The higher attaining pupils measure angles accurately. There are a number of pupils who find this difficult. A minority of pupils confuse acute and obtuse angles. In data handling the pupils record using a variety of methods including straight-line graphs. They answer questions based on the information. In work on averages pupils have some understanding of the various terms used but they find it difficult to explain the difference between mean, median and mode. Pupils are developing an understanding of probability and talk about something being impossible, unlikely or possible.
67. Although mathematics is used in other areas of the curriculum, for example in producing graphs in information technology, there is no systematic planning of the use of the subject across the whole curriculum. As a result the pupils' opportunities to apply their mathematical skills in a wide variety of situations is limited.
68. The quality of teaching is satisfactory overall. It is always at least good and at times very good in Key Stage 1.
69. In Key Stage 1 the teachers plan their lessons very well. The work challenges the pupils and as a result they show good improvement in their mathematical skills. Work is set at different levels to meet age differences within the classes, for example in a number lesson younger pupils work on adding two numbers while older pupils work on adding three numbers. Teachers have good subject knowledge and they use this well to develop pupils' learning. In a lesson on data handling the teacher's use of words including axis, horizontal and vertical extends the pupils' mathematical vocabulary and their understanding of recording data. Very good relationships and class control mean that the teachers are able to spend the full lesson imparting knowledge and giving help where necessary. Opportunities are given to pupils to work without direct adult supervision and this helps the pupils to develop their independence skills. There are however, a small number of occasions when the supporting adults give the pupils too much support and this restricts their development slightly. The support assistants, students and volunteers make a positive contribution to the lessons. The teachers give clear guidance and this enables the supporting adults to help pupils move on in their learning. The pupils in Key Stage 1 respond very well to the high quality teaching. They enjoy their lessons and listen eagerly to the teachers. They work very well together in groups. In a lesson on sorting sweets by colour the pupils organise themselves very well and share the task. They work without the direct supervision of an adult. In discussions the pupils explain clearly what they are doing. The high quality teaching and positive attitudes of the pupils lead to all pupils, including those with special educational needs making good progress throughout the key stage.



70. In Key Stage 2 the quality of teaching is satisfactory overall, with a small amount of good teaching. The lessons are soundly planned based on the National Numeracy Strategy. When setting work the teachers plan well for pupils with special educational needs. The work is set at appropriate levels and additional adult support is well used. The work for higher attaining pupils is not always demanding, for example in a mental mathematics test higher attaining pupils easily completed the test and they had to wait for other pupils to finish. In a lesson on time the higher attaining pupils finished an exercise quickly and were not given any extension work. There are however times when work is well matched to meet the needs of all pupils, for example in a lesson on symmetry the higher attaining pupils in Year 4/5 were challenged by the work set. The use of marking is not well developed and at times is unsatisfactory. The teaching of pupils with special educational needs is satisfactory in Key Stage 2. The individual educational plans include clear measurable targets. The majority of pupils in Key Stage 2 show good attitudes to mathematics but a small minority need reminding to concentrate and this slows progress slightly. The pupils make satisfactory progress throughout the key stage.
71. There is a very recently appointed co-ordinator for the subject who has made a good start in her role. She is committed to raising standards and is working hard and has monitored both plans and classroom teaching. The school has satisfactory assessment procedures and these are used to set targets for pupils. These are not yet fully developed to move individual pupils on to the next stage of learning. The school is aware of this and is addressing the issue.

## **Science**

72. By the end of Key Stage 1, inspection evidence indicates that standards in science are close to the national average although standards in pupils' skills of performing experiments and investigations are comparatively weak. By the end of Key Stage 2, standards in science are below the national average, mostly because of impact of the high percentage of pupils with special educational needs in Year 6. Teachers do not, however, give enough time to the systematic teaching of independent investigations which restricts the progress pupils make.
73. In Key Stage 1, pupils make satisfactory progress in their science work although during the lessons observed during the inspection, progress was good. Pupils in Year 1 know the basic parts of the human body and accurately label drawings with terms such as knee, nose and head. They can sort pictures into the correct order in which we grow up. Some good use of information technology has been made to represent the eye and hair colours of pupils and shoe sizes in the class as simple block graphs and comparative measurement have been made of parents and their young. Pupils learn the properties of magnetic materials and the way some magnets "like" some things but do not "like" others. There is an awareness of different sources of light, for example, the sun, candles and torches. As part of investigation into the way things move by pushing and pulling, Year 1 pupils learnt about the basic ideas of forces and their effects. Pupils are familiar with the basic idea of making predictions and then performing simple activities to test out whether what they say is true. Simple reasoning occurs such as "The Mobilo car went faster because it had smoother wheels", and pupils can draw simple conclusions such as "the magnets like metals but do not like string".
74. In Year 2, progress remains satisfactory. Pupils extend their knowledge of living things. They know about the major groupings of foods e.g. fruit. Meat, vegetables etc. and

have created a graph showing the favourite foods of pupils in the class. Whilst learning about the needs of a baby, pupils learnt about the needs of living things, especially humans. They also extend their knowledge of materials and can sort a range of them by their characteristics such as rough, smooth, hard and soft. They develop their knowledge of light by learning about shadows and light and dark. Their knowledge of forces and their effects is extended through simple activities involving looking at the way a ball moves and stops and the way wind can move things. Ideas related to friction are introduced as part of fun activities in which pupils roll toy vehicles down slopes onto different surfaces and to find which materials have the least friction. Although each element of the programmes of study for science are taught, the progress made by pupils in independent work could be even better.

75. In Key Stage 2, progress slows and is unsatisfactory overall. A particular weakness is the slow rate of progress in developing of independent investigative skills. In Year 3/4 progress is very slow in both their investigational work and in their knowledge and understanding. Barely one piece of recorded work per month exists in pupils' books. Some progress is made in the study of materials when pupils learn about different rocks and the way some materials are absorbent, porous or heat resistant as well as classifying solids, liquids and gases. Pupils have measured temperature using a thermometer. Pupils have created their own simple electrical circuits and know about the way a switch controls a circuit.
76. In Year 4/5, progress increases greatly and is satisfactory overall in the development of knowledge but not in independent work. In this class science is taught regularly and pupils extend their knowledge. Some higher attaining pupils learn about solids, liquids and gases and know about basic particulate theory to describe how each state differs from another. They learn about sounds and the way in which they are made and how they can be stopped. The meaning of key words such as pitch and frequency are learnt. Pupils develop a secure knowledge of the Earth, moon and Sun. In Year 6, progress dips again with a small range of recorded work evident in pupils' books. The work is appropriately challenging and emphasises the use of key vocabulary in preparation for the National Curriculum assessment tests. Pupils develop a knowledge and understanding of terms such as evaporation and the meaning of terms such as condensation. They are aware of the differences between animals and plants and can name food groups such as proteins, fats, vitamins and carbohydrates but the level of understanding is less than normally found for pupils of this age.
77. In Key Stage 1, many pupils have a positive attitude to science. During lessons pupils benefited from well planned lessons with work planned to match the differing needs of pupils. In one Year 2 lesson, pupils responded well to being expected to complete simple planning sheets which expected them to make predictions about how they thought butter would change when it was heated. They co-operated well with other pupils and with the parent helpers in the lesson. Good standards of behaviour and positive attitudes were evident throughout. In Year 1, pupils enthusiastically entered into tasks in which pupils used their senses to explore the way different materials felt for example, sticky or hard and looked on in glee on seeing the way a liquid changes materials. They eagerly answered questions. In Key Stage 2, pupils' attitudes depend upon the quality of teaching. In Year 4/5 pupils were interested in the process of pollination and the observations they made of different flowers. In Year 6, interest levels were satisfactory and behaviour was acceptable as a result. Pupils worked quietly and with sound levels of attention during a task which involved them in drawing the parts of a flower.

78. The quality of teaching in science is satisfactory overall in Key Stage 1 although in the two lessons observed it was good. Planning for the development of pupils' knowledge and understanding is good and lessons are well organised so that pupils are given tasks which suit their needs. Higher attaining pupils are challenged and those with special educational needs given appropriate support and relevant work. Although use is made of investigative skills, the emphasis could be greater so that pupils develop higher levels of independent skills involving planning fair tests, carrying out simple tests and then recording what is done. In Key Stage 2, teaching was satisfactory during the inspection although evidence from analysing books shows a weakness in the planned development of scientific ideas and skills across the key stage. There is a very narrow range of recorded work in two classes and very little evidence of independent work. Repetition of similar work at different ages occurs at times and in Key Stage 2, work is rarely matched to the different stages in each class. Some use is made of information technology in Key Stage 1, but very little in Key Stage 2 and whilst literacy and numeracy skills are applied in some lessons, the skills are not planned for.
79. The school has placed its emphasis in curriculum development upon English, mathematics and information technology over recent years. This has reduced the attention given to science especially in Key Stage 2, so standards and progress are not as good as they could be. Assessment procedures for the end of key stage tests are satisfactory, but day-to-day procedures for monitoring and recording pupils progress and attainment in science are underdeveloped. The importance of the role of the co-ordinator has been reduced by the emphasis upon Literacy and numeracy and consequently less priority has been attached to managing this curriculum area. The subject leader is aware of the strengths and weaknesses in science and has worked hard recently to develop and adapt the school's scheme for science. There is a need, however, for procedures for monitoring what goes on in each class to be strengthened so that the science curriculum is better balanced and pupils improve the progress made in developing their investigative skills. .

### **Information technology**

80. The progress made by pupils in information technology across the school has been unsatisfactory until very recently and consequently, standards by the end of both key stages are below those expected by the National Curriculum. The school has recently improved its range of computers and accompanying software and progress is improving as a result.
81. Pupils in Key Stage 1 are learning the basic skills of using the computer. Pupils in Year 1 benefit from a teacher with good subject knowledge and great enthusiasm for improving standards in information technology. During one information technology lesson, pupils successfully learnt to create their own pictograms from information transferred from a tally chart about favourite animals. During the activity, pupils showed confidence in using a mouse and to quickly identify from the graph the most popular and least popular animals. In Year 2, pupils are developing confidence in writing simple texts on screen and can create simple graphs including using vocabulary such as horizontal and vertical axes. As part of studies of the artist Mondrian, pupils used a computer programme to create simple pictures in the style of the artist. Overall, skills of pupils by the age of seven are below expectations in communicating information, modelling and control.
82. Pupils in Key Stage 2, have only limited knowledge and understanding of how to use the computer to support learning. The progress across the key stage is dependent

upon the confidence of the teacher. Although most pupils can use the computer to create simple texts and graphs, pupils skills at desk top publishing, using and creating pictures with logo and using an interface to monitor the environment are well below expectations. Progress in Y4/5 improves. The computer is used here to support learning across the curriculum. Pupils have used logo to create shapes and patterns and created symmetrical drawings as part of mathematics work. The pupils who attend the Internet club are beginning to understand the values of using the computers for accessing and sending information.

83. When pupils are given the opportunity to use the computer, they enjoy it and learn quickly. In Key Stage 1, pupils are attentive and keen to try out new skills and they work well together in pairs to support each other. In Key Stage 2, when opportunities are presented to use the computer, pupils are enthusiastic in its use, but overall pupils do not view the computer as an important and integral part of their learning.
84. The quality of teaching is improving rapidly now that the school has better resources, good support from the subjects leader and planned training for staff. In Key Stage 1, teachers are more secure about the computer than most staff in Key Stage 2. In lessons observed in Key Stage 1, activities were well planned so that the pupils rate of learning was good. Well organised rotas and simple but effective records of pupils' experiences make- sure that all pupils have equal access to the computers so that skills can be developed. In one Key Stage 2 class, the teacher is comfortable with using the computer and this shows in its regular planned use across the curriculum. A very recently acquired interface box is providing Year 6 pupils with the opportunity to gather information about the environment using sensors, but this initiative is so new that its impact upon standards in this area of science is not yet felt. Information technology is not currently used to its best to support learning and is not consistently included in teacher's short term plans.
85. The subject leader is knowledgeable and very determined to raise standards across the school. She has worked hard to implement a framework for planning based upon good Local Education Authority advice and Qualifications and Curriculum Authority guidance. The recently introduced curriculum plans for information technology across the school are good. The subject leader has developed good monitoring procedures to measure the impact the quality of teaching and learning in each class and is introducing a manageable assessment and record keeping system to record the progress and attainment of pupils. There is a great deal yet to be done. The school recognises this and with the very good leadership by the co-ordinator and new equipment coupled with staff training, the school is very well set to put right its weaknesses in this subject.

## **Art**

86. Standards in art, in both Key Stages, have improved since the previous report and most pupils, including those with special educational needs, make satisfactory progress, so that, by the ages of seven and eleven their work is broadly in line with expectation. The main reasons for the significant improvement, is that the pupils are now being taught skills and techniques and are being introduced to the work of different world artists.
87. The pupils in Key Stage 1 learn how to use paint effectively, mixing colours and shading from light to dark. They use different brushes and pencils to creative various effects. The youngest pupils demonstrate their competence with paint in their

classroom display of self portraits, which are of a good standard. In Year 2 the pupils experiment with different materials to print repeating patterns. They use paint or ink with a variety of vegetables or polystyrene shapes and rollers to create designs.

88. In Key Stage 2 pupils gain experience in observational drawing, both indoors and out, using different kinds of pencils, but these skills are not being systematically taught or practised in their sketch books, which limits their value. Good use is made of the work of famous artists, especially in Year 6. The pupils have learned, by reproducing works by Picasso, Mondrian and Riley how to effectively combine different materials and processes, using, for example, paint, pastels, paper and marvin.
89. The teaching of art, in the lessons observed, was good and very good. The lessons are well planned and the teachers' organisation of pupils and resources is good. The teachers have a good knowledge and understanding of the subject and demonstrate the skills confidently and well. The pupils respond with enthusiasm and use the materials and tools with care, taking pride in the finished product. They listen with attention and accept ideas and suggestions from the teacher on how to improve.
90. Although there has been considerable progress in the quality of art in the school since the previous report, there remain some weaknesses. The scheme of work needs updating to ensure that all skills are being taught systematically and that a full range of experiences are being offered to the pupils. Most teachers do not make optimum use of the sketch books and the pupils are not using them to experiment and try out different ideas of their own in order to plan and make decisions before they begin their work. A further weakness lies in the fact that much of the work is teacher led and the pupils are not being given enough opportunities to investigate their own ideas and to make choices from a range of different materials.
91. The teachers use the pupils work to create attractive displays around the school. The work is well mounted and demonstrates to the pupils that their efforts are valued and celebrated.

## **Design and technology**

92. During the inspection, one lesson was observed. The range of evidence for design and technology in the school was limited to a small number of classroom displays or three dimensional models and drawings. Scrutiny of pupils' books and the school planning documents indicate that currently design and technology has a very low profile in the school. The co-ordinator agrees that the subject is not as well developed as it could be and that progress in the subject is currently unsatisfactory overall. The school plans to look at ways of strengthening the subject as part of its review of the curriculum in the light of the curriculum 2000.
93. In the lessons observed, pupils in lower Key Stage 2 demonstrated a satisfactory knowledge of the design process when they planned and created a poster advertising a healthy diet. Another group worked co-operatively to make their own healthy sandwiches for a picnic and demonstrated a satisfactory awareness of health and hygiene in food preparation. The quality of teaching was satisfactory. Resources were prepared well and good support was provided by the Learning Support Assistant and a parent-helper.

94. Overall, the evidence base is limited and it is not possible to make defined judgements about how well pupils are doing except to state that the lack of evidence infers that standards could be better than they are.

### **History and Geography.**

95. No history lessons were taking place during the period of the inspection, but discussion with pupils and scrutiny of their work shows that satisfactory progress occurs in each subject.
96. The pupils in Key Stage 1 have a clear understanding of then and now. They begin to develop an awareness of the passage of time, by sequencing memories of events in their own lives. They are able to differentiate between old and new objects such as teddy bears and irons. Their visit to the Toy Museum is well planned to help them consolidate this concept. Pupils also begin to look at the lives of people from the more distant past, such as Florence Nightingale, and compare these with modern times. These are well chosen experiences, which interest the pupils and prepare them well for the next stage of learning.
97. Activities which focus on helping pupils to develop a concept of chronology and changes over time are less well developed in Key Stage 2. The Year 6 pupils, for example, have some knowledge of aspects of life in ancient Egypt and Greece and the Roman and Viking invasions of Britain, but they have little concept of the chronology of these events. The pupils have some awareness of the influence of ancient Greek language on English words used today, but their knowledge of cause and effect and change over time is vague and scanty. The history lessons in the Year 3 and 4 class are enriched by model making, utilising some of the pupils' design and technology skills. They have made, for example, Viking ships and a long house as well as life size figures of Roman soldiers. Pupils in Year 5 use their literary skills well to write interesting empathetic accounts as soldiers in the Battle of Marathon.
98. Much of the geography taught in Key Stage 1 arises from the pupils own experiences and a study of the local environment. They are taken for walks in order to look at different buildings and local facilities. They record their journey to school and the main features they pass. They write and send post cards addressed to themselves which increases their understanding of the way the postal system works and helps them to learn their home address. These activities are often photographed and used in attractive classroom displays. The youngest pupils are able to compile simple maps of the school, using photographs they have taken, thus making the experience more meaningful. By Year 2 they are conducting traffic surveys and are forming opinions on the good and bad features of their locality.
99. Further studies of Whitehaven are carried out in Key Stage 2. The pupils in the Year 4/5 class conduct surveys in the town centre developing good field work skills by collecting information regarding the facilities, checking the traffic and talking to local people. At the end of the Key Stage, however, the pupils' knowledge of people and places throughout the world, is fragmented and lacking in breadth and depth. They can name most of the countries in Europe but have difficulty in identifying continents and finding them on a world map. Their knowledge of keys and the depiction of physical features on maps is sound. They have, however, only a very limited insight into the effects geographical features and climatic conditions have on the lives of people in different countries.

100. The teaching of history and geography is, overall, satisfactory, but there are wide variations between classes. This impacts on the learning. Some good and very good teaching was observed during the inspection, but the quality is, generally, better in Key Stage 1 than in Key Stage 2. In the most effective lessons the teachers plan well, focusing attention on the key skills and specialist vocabulary of the subject. The tasks set are challenging and well matched to the interests of the pupils, so they become actively engaged and well motivated. In these lessons the pupils attitudes and behaviour are good and sound levels of learning are achieved.
101. There are however, weaknesses in both subjects. The breadth and the depth of the knowledge taught is limited and not all teachers place enough emphasis on historical and geographical skills, or provide enough opportunities for independent learning. In one lesson, however, the pupils displayed their ability to discover information for themselves when they were using leaflets from the Windermere Tourist Board in order to discover facts about the region, in preparation for a visit. The quality of the teachers' marking is inconsistent, and sometimes poor work is accepted and praised, when a critical suggestion would guide the pupil towards a new target and improvement. Good opportunities are being provided for pupils to use their literacy and numeracy skills especially when they are encouraged to record information in a variety of ways, such as writing a curriculum vitae for a famous person in ancient Greece.
102. The curriculum is positively enhanced by visits to museums and the residential visit to Gillithwaite for Years 2 and 6, and by the attractive and informative wall displays in most classrooms. There is a shortage of artefacts for both subjects but the school is gradually building a supply of reference books to support both subjects.

## **Music**

103. Only one music lesson was observed during the inspection period. There is insufficient evidence to make judgements on the pupils' progress throughout school and the quality of teaching. In the lesson seen the standards were in line with those expected for the pupils ages. Singing observed in the hymn practices was at the expected level in Key Stage 1 but better than expected in Key Stage 2.
104. In Key Stage 1 the pupils sing tunefully and show a developing sense of rhythm when they sing the song 'Jump Up'. Pupils who accompany the song with untuned percussion instruments handle the instruments well and most stay in time with the singing. In Key Stage 2 the pupils are starting to understand that there are layers in sound. In the lesson observed the pupils used tuned percussion to produce the chord of G. The quality of singing both in the lesson observed and particularly in the Key Stage 2 hymn practice is of a high quality. The pupils sing with expression and take notice of phrasing. They sing very well unaccompanied. When singing the hymn 'Ask and It Shall Be Given' a group of pupils sing descant and the whole song is sung beautifully. The music co-ordinator makes excellent use of her voice in music sessions and hymn practices.
105. The school has a range of untuned and tuned percussion instruments but these are not sufficient to develop pupils' musical skills fully. Some of the instruments need repairing and there is a lack of instruments from other cultures. There is a school choir, which performs locally and has been successful in local music festivals. A small number of pupils receive additional tuition in flute playing. An 'instrument awareness' course at lunchtime enhances learning for a number of pupils. The school has made satisfactory

progress in music since the last inspection overall, it has made particularly good progress in raising standards in singing.

## **Physical Education**

106. Attainment by the end of both key stages is good as expected in an average school. Strengths in the subject are games and the swimming programme whilst discussion with teachers and pupils indicates that gymnastics is an area of comparative weakness. Overall, the progress of pupils of all ages, including those who have special educational needs is satisfactory.
107. In Key Stage 1, pupils develop their physical skills in lessons either on the playground or in the school hall. They use the grassed area in playtimes to experiment with a wide variety of equipment. They practise and refine their skills when using hoops, bats, skipping ropes and balls of different sizes. The pupils learn to control the equipment and develop their skills of dribbling, catching and throwing. They learn to co-operate with each other in their groups and develop concepts about team games such as netball and football. The pupils enjoy warm up games such as "Spin" and "Traffic Lights." They make good progress in developing body management skills, agility and co-ordination and although overall physical skills are at the level generally expected for pupils of this age, their games skills are above average.
108. In Key Stage 2, pupils learn about the importance of health and fitness. They work hard to practise and refine their skills and they participate well in a variety of games and athletics activities. In a games lesson for Year 4 and 5 pupils they refine their fielding, throwing and striking skills when using tennis equipment and try to improve their forehand and backhand techniques. Year 6 pupils are encouraged to practise their relay changes in an athletics session and most pupils follow instructions well and link movements in response to set tasks although a minority of pupils are disruptive and unco-operative. As the pace of this lesson quickened and the pupils were involved in more sustained activity their attitude and involvement improved.
109. The school has a well planned programme for swimming. Discussion with teachers and pupils confirms that by the end of Key Stage 2, nearly all pupils exceed the minimum expectations of the National Curriculum to swim 25 metres unaided. Most pupils acquire a variety of swimming certificates and these indicate good competence in swimming, water safety and personal survival.
110. The quality of teaching is satisfactory. Some teachers are heavily dependent on notes and this can slow down the pace of lessons. When teachers are more confident as in a good lesson observed in Year 1/2 the brisk change of activities and good pace increase the challenge and pupils make good progress in skill development. The school makes good use of its quality resources for games although the gymnastics equipment is not well used. All lessons are planned with due attention to health and safety and good levels of encouragement are given. Warm-up and cool-down activities are incorporated into planning and pupils are helped to understand the short-term effects of exercise on the body.
111. Pupils have positive attitudes to lessons, they are interested, keen and responsive. They follow instructions well and try to develop and improve their performance. They show enjoyment of the activities and are well behaved and responsive as in Year 1/2 when they squealed with delight at the end of their cool -down story. With the exception of a few older pupils in Years 5 and 6 they work well with partners and



behaviour in lessons is good. Pupils are sensible and responsible when handling equipment and resources and they particularly enjoy working outdoors with the good surfaced area and the spectacular views.