

INSPECTION REPORT

BOWNESS ON SOLWAY PRIMARY SCHOOL

Bowness on Solway, Wigton

LEA area: Cumbria

Unique reference number: 112414

Headteacher: Mr C Rafferty

Reporting inspector: Mr M J Mayhew

22197

Dates of inspection: 11 – 14 March 2002

Inspection number: 222022

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Infant and junior
School category:	Foundation
Age range of pupils:	4 to 11 years
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Bowness on Solway Wigton Cumbria
Post code:	CA7 5AF
Telephone number:	016973 51384
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Appropriate authority:	The governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mrs C Bartlett
Date of previous inspection:	February 2000

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members			Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
22197	Mr M Mayhew	<i>Registered inspector</i>	Foundation Stage; Equal opportunities; Mathematics; Music; Physical education; Religious education.	How high are standards, results and achievements? How well are pupils taught? How well is the school led and managed? What could the school do to improve further?
9974	Mr D Singh	<i>Lay inspector</i>		How high are standards? Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development. How well does the school care for its pupils? How well does the school work in partnership with parents?
14842	Mrs S Cook	<i>Team inspector</i>	Special educational needs; English; Science; Design and technology; Art and design; Information and communication technology; History; Geography.	How good are curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils?

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

The school is situated in the village of Bowness-on-Solway, on the southern aspect of the Solway Firth. There are 94 girls and boys aged from four to eleven on the school roll, which has risen from 82 pupils at the time of the previous inspection. Although the school serves the village, most pupils travel to the school from further afield. Pupils come from a wide variety of backgrounds, and many of them from families involved in farming. Twenty-two pupils (22 per cent) are on the school's register of pupils with special educational needs. No pupils have been assigned Statements of Special Educational Need. Similarly, there are no pupils who speak English as an additional language. Only five per cent of pupils are currently known to be eligible for free school meals, a proportion that is well below the national average. Attainment on entry to the school varies considerably from year to year because of the relatively small numbers of pupils in each year group. However, assessments made of those children soon after they started school last September indicate that their attainment is close to that normally expected of children of their age in communication, language and literacy, mathematics, and personal development.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

The school provides a sound education for its pupils, although there are several areas that need improvement. The standards achieved by pupils at age 11 are below the national average in key areas of the curriculum, notably in English and science, and largely because the more able pupils are not achieving as well as they might. There are aspects of the curriculum that need attention. Teaching is of at least satisfactory quality; nearly half of it is good, or very good. The school is now led and managed well, an improvement on the last inspection, but one that has not had sufficient time to impact on overall standards. Given all these features the school provides satisfactory value for money.

WHAT THE SCHOOL DOES WELL

- The headteacher has put in place some good strategies that bode well for raising standards. These include a number recommended by Her Majesty's Inspectors, who visited the school six months after the headteacher's appointment.
- There is a strong team spirit amongst the staff. They are determined to work together to raise standards.
- The system for monitoring the quality of teaching and learning is beginning to have a good effect on the standards that pupils achieve.
- Most pupils behave well and have good attitudes to their work and the school, partly as a result of the good provision the school makes for their moral development.
- Teachers have high expectations of all pupils to listen and to take part in lesson activities.
- Most parents are very supportive of the school, and of what it does for their children.

WHAT COULD BE IMPROVED

- The standards pupils achieve by the age of 11 in English, mathematics, science and information and communication technology.
- The proportion of pupils who achieve higher than expected levels of attainment in the core subjects.
- The breadth and balance of the curriculum, to ensure pupils have more scope to develop their knowledge and understanding, and to practise and extend their writing skills.
- The expectation that pupils will consistently produce finished work of high quality.

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

The school was last inspected in February 2000, when it was deemed to have serious weaknesses in the way that it was led and managed. Standards rose in English, mathematics and science that year, but fell again in 2001, particularly in mathematics and science. Nevertheless, the quality of leadership and management has improved under the tenure of the current headteacher, who was appointed to the school in January 2001, and there are strong indications that standards are set to improve. A considerable amount of teaching was unsatisfactory in 2000; this is not now the case. Indeed, there is no unsatisfactory teaching, and much of it is of good quality. While the school has successfully dealt with most elements of the issues raised in 2000, some still remain. These relate to writing skills and to the richness, variety and pace of pupils' learning in many subjects. There was an issue about planning for children's learning in the Foundation Stage. This issue has now been resolved. Overall, this represents satisfactory improvement. With an almost entire change of teachers since the last inspection two years ago, including the appointment of two teachers since January of this year, the school is virtually undergoing a fresh start. However, much still needs to be done to achieve consistently high standards.

STANDARDS

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

Performance in:	compared with				Key
	all schools			similar schools	
	1999	2000	2001	2001	
English	C	D	D	E	<i>well above average</i> A
Mathematics	C	A	C	D	<i>above average</i> B
Science	B	B	E	E*	<i>average</i> C
					<i>below average</i> D
					<i>well below average</i> E

The table above shows that, over the past three years, the school's test results have varied considerably, from well above average in mathematics to well below average in science at the other extreme. Some caution should be exercised in the interpretation of results in comparison with national data because the school has comparatively few pupils eligible to

take the tests. Nevertheless, whilst the majority usually attains the expected Level 4 in all three subjects, too few attain the higher Level 5. This factor is borne out in the findings of the inspection, evidence for which shows that pupils who have the potential for attaining higher than expected levels do not achieve as well as they might.

Test results for pupils aged seven have been similarly variable over the past three years, but with a slight upward trend in reading and mathematics. Again, however, it has often been the case that the proportion of pupils who achieved the level expected of them, Level 2, was close to or above the national average, whilst the proportion reaching the higher than expected Level 3 was below average. The changes in the teaching staff, and the resultant improved quality of teaching that these have brought, have been too recent to effect the required raising of standards. Currently, standards in Year 2 are satisfactory in the core subjects, while those in Year 6 are below expectations in English and science. However, there is one constant feature; the more able pupils in the school should be doing better. The school sets challenging targets, but the trend in results is below the national one.

There have been positive movements of pupils' achievement in most aspects of information and communication technology. Nevertheless, overall attainment in this subject at 11 is still below expectations because the school does not have the necessary resources to teach all the required programmes of study. In the other subjects, pupils at seven achieve what is normally expected of them in history, art, physical education and religious education. The same judgement obtains for 11 year olds in these subjects, but achievement is below expectations in geography. There is not enough evidence to make secure judgements about pupils' achievements in design and technology, and in geography at age seven.

Children in the Reception Class, who are in the foundation stage of their education, make expected progress. By the time they enter Year 1, in the infants, most children currently in the Reception Class are likely to achieve the early learning goals in communication, language and literacy, in mathematics, and in personal and social development. Their speaking skills are particularly good.

Pupils with special educational needs make satisfactory progress towards the clearly set targets in their individual education plans.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Good: the majority of pupils are willing to learn. They respond well to their teachers and to the tasks set for them.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Good: pupils are generally well mannered and respectful of one another. They respond well to the strategies used to raise their self-esteem.
Personal development and relationships	Good; most pupils act responsibly. They relate well to each other and to the staff.
Attendance	Satisfactory. Attendance levels are close to the national average, and the school works well to keep it that way. Most pupils enjoy school.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

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

All lessons seen in the Reception Class were at least satisfactory, and some were good. The teacher has a good understanding of the needs of the children and has done much to improve the provision for them since the last inspection. The quality of teaching is considerably better than it was at the previous inspection, and bodes well for raising standards over the longer term. The teachers' classroom management skills are effective, and all have high expectations of pupils to listen and to take a full part in lessons, with substantial success. However, in some subjects the quality of learning is sometimes hampered by long periods between lessons and occasional overlong lessons. Teaching in English and mathematics is satisfactory, with some good, and very good, lessons in the case of mathematics. Teachers make good use of teaching assistants to support pupils of all levels of attainment, including those with special educational needs. There are some very good examples of lesson planning which identifies work for the full range of pupils' prior attainment, but this is not always the case.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	The curriculum for children in the Reception Class is satisfactory and they make good progress in some aspects of their learning. The curriculum is unsatisfactory in the rest of the school because it does not fully meet statutory requirements, and because there are not enough resources to support teaching and learning across all the subjects of the National Curriculum.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Provision is satisfactory and these pupils make sound progress.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Satisfactory overall. There is good provision for pupils' moral development.
How well the school cares for its pupils	The school provides an adequate level of care for its pupils. The school monitors well pupils' standards of behaviour. There are satisfactory systems for assessing pupils' attainment and progress.
How well the school works with parents	Parents have very positive views of the school. The headteacher and his staff work hard to meet and work with parents, who hold the school in high esteem.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	The school is well led by the headteacher. He has conducted a full audit of the school's strengths and weaknesses, and has drawn up an appropriate list of priorities for the school to tackle in order to raise standards. The staff and the governors strongly support him in his desire to improve the school's provision.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	The governors are taking a more active role in shaping the school's future. The recently appointed chair of governors and some other members of the body bring particular expertise to their posts. They are now aware of the areas in which the school has weaknesses.
The school's evaluation of its performance	The headteacher, other staff, and governors have a realistic view of the school's current performance, and have devised a useful development plan to help overcome a number of weaknesses. This plan is beginning to have the desired effect.
The strategic use of resources	Funding has been used sensibly to maintain reasonable class sizes. The move to a single age range in the Foundation Stage was both sensible and prudent. The governors now need to budget carefully in order to purchase the resources necessary to teach the full requirements of the National Curriculum. The school is beginning to apply the principles of best value.
The adequacy of staffing, accommodation and resources	There are sufficient staff with the required expertise to teach primary age children. The accommodation is satisfactory and is well used. However, in important areas of the curriculum there are not enough resources for teachers and pupils to use.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<p>Ninety per cent of parents who returned the questionnaires feel:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • their children like school and make good progress; • teaching is good; • their children are expected to work hard; • the school is well led and managed; • the school helps their children to become mature and responsible. 	<p>Ten to 20 per cent of parents who returned questionnaires would like:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • an adjustment in the amount of homework; • more information about how their child is getting on; • more out-of-school activities.

The inspectors agree with most of the positive statements made by parents, and feel that, whilst the quality of teaching is satisfactory overall, much of it is of good quality with some significant strengths. Inspectors also believe that there is an appropriate, and developing, range of out-of-school activities, that the homework is of the right amount and helpful to pupils' learning, and that the school keeps parents well informed of their children's progress.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and pupils' achievements

1. Test results have varied considerably over the past few years, and were dependent upon a number of factors. In broad terms, the results for pupils at age seven in reading, writing and mathematics have varied from well above average in all three subjects, to below average in mathematics. In 2001, they were average in comparison with those of all schools nationally in reading and writing, and below average in mathematics. However, in comparison with those of similar schools, they were well below average in all three subjects. The main reason for this is that, despite most pupils reaching the expected Level 2 for their age, too few reached the higher than expected Level 3 to match the average.
2. There has been a similar variation in results at the end of the juniors, although the results last year in science were well below the average for all schools, and very low in comparison with those of similar schools nationally. As with the results at the end of the infants, most pupils reached the level expected of them (Level 4) in mathematics, and the proportion reaching Level 4 in English was close to the average. This was not so in science, where the proportion reaching the expected level, or above, was below the national average. There is, nevertheless, one common feature; the proportion of pupils reaching the higher than expected Level 5 at age 11 is consistently too low.
3. However, some caution needs to be exercised in interpreting and comparing the results with those of larger schools, particularly in a single year. This is because there are very small numbers of pupils who take the tests each year. For example, only 12 pupils took the tests in 2001, and in 2000 there were just six. The underperformance of just one pupil in such situations can have a negative impact on the school's overall results. The converse can also apply. Nevertheless, the findings of the inspection confirm that, whilst the majority of pupils currently in Year 6 are likely to attain the expected level in English, mathematics and science, their attainment overall is below expectations in English and science, and average in mathematics. Evidence shows that pupils who have the potential for attaining higher than the expected Level 4 do not achieve as well as they might. This is a common feature across all three subjects. For example, there is evidence from the school's own tests in English and mathematics, taken by last year's Year 6 pupils when they were in Year 4, that they made little progress in these subjects from age seven to age nine. They did well to make up much ground when they were in Years 5 and 6.
4. The changes to the teaching staff, and the higher quality of teaching now evident when compared with the findings of the last inspection, have come too late to raise the current Year 6 pupils to the desired levels of attainment. This is despite some very effective lessons, where learning moves forward at a good pace. The major factor in some pupils' under achievement is their lack of ability to write to the required standard. The school is fully aware of this and is currently focusing on improving this skill, which includes raising the standard of spelling, handwriting and the ability of pupils to write expressively at length. Similarly, the attention the school now gives to improving pupils' skills in scientific and mathematical investigations is having a positive effect on the progress and learning that takes place.

5. Children enter the school in the Reception Class with generally expected levels of attainment in language and literature and in mathematics. However, with such small numbers year on year (11 this year), this can change significantly. Children make satisfactory progress overall in all the key areas, so that by the time they enter Year 1, most have achieved the early learning goals in all the expected areas of learning.

6. Pupils currently in Year 2 are likely to reach levels of attainment expected for their age in reading, and in speaking and listening, but below expectations in writing. Nevertheless, standards are improving because the teaching is now better. Pupils at age seven attain satisfactory standards in mathematics and science. Similarly, the impact of the better teaching on the juniors is evident in the work they produce, particularly in Year 6, although there has been too little time for the new teaching strategies to take full effect.

7. In the other subjects of the curriculum, pupils in Year 2 make sound progress and achieve what is normally expected of them in information and communication technology (ICT), history, art and design, physical education and religious education. There is too little evidence to make secure judgements about their achievements in design and technology and geography. By the end of Year 6, most pupils reach expected standards in design and technology, history, music, art and design, physical education and religious education. Their achievements in ICT and geography are below what is normally expected, mainly because of lack of resources and the way the curriculum is planned.

8. Pupils with special educational needs (SEN) receive satisfactory teaching and make sound progress against the targets set for their learning, and they sometimes achieve as well as their peers. For example, with support from a classroom assistant pupils make similar progress to their classmates in art and in some spelling activities.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

9. Behaviour and attitudes were good or better in 80 per cent of the lessons seen, and at least satisfactory in all lessons. Pupils' behaviour in and out of classrooms and their attitudes to work are good overall. Of the parents who returned the pre-inspection questionnaire, 95 per cent confirmed that their children like school. Inspection evidence, including many conversations with pupils, endorses the parents' view. Overall, the quality of pupils' attitudes, behaviour and relationships matches that found at the previous inspection.

10. Children in the Reception Class learn positive attitudes because the teacher sets them a good role model, and has high expectations of them to be responsible and to learn good social traits. They are polite and well behaved, and relate well to adults, but do not always listen to them attentively.

11. Most pupils come to school enthusiastically. In most lessons they listen attentively because the teachers have high expectations of them to do so, and the work is usually interesting. However, a few pupils in the infants find difficulty in concentrating, and selfishly seek their teacher's attention even when she is busy talking to the whole class. Nevertheless, where teaching is good or very good, most pupils answer enthusiastically and enjoy demonstrating their knowledge. This is particularly noticeable in the Years 5 and 6 class where, often, the pupils' application to learning contributes well to their progress by allowing lessons to continue without frequent pauses or distractions. For example, in a very good geography lesson, which had the attributes of high levels of interest and challenge, pupils worked for a long period with concentration and determination to carry out the teacher's instructions. In most classes, pupils work well in pairs, where they readily exchange ideas and often make good use of available time.

12. Nearly all pupils consistently behave well, and conform to the school code of conduct. This is displayed in each classroom, and acts as a point of reference for teachers to use as a reminder when necessary. This was seen on a number of occasions, and pupils responded well to teachers' exhortations. Behaviour is friendly in the playground, and pupils enjoy their leisure activities. During the inspection, bullying and other anti-social behaviour were not seen. Just occasionally, there is some inappropriate behaviour from some pupils. For instance, in a personal and social education lesson about bullying, a small minority of older pupils displayed immature and silly behaviour during a role-play session to explore bullying. The teacher employed entirely appropriate strategies to correct them, but the overall effect of their behaviour was to degrade the quality of all the pupils' learning.

13. Attitudes are good in extra-curricular activities, and the sports clubs are well supported. For example, girls and boys taking part in netball and football practice sessions had mature and enthusiastic attitudes to their activities. Pupils with SEN show the same good attitudes to their work as other pupils. They try hard and persevere with the tasks they are given.

14. Relationships in the school are good overall, and have a positive impact on the quality of learning. Most pupils, when required to do so, work well together in groups, and share ideas, information and resources. This happened, for example, in a Year 6 mathematics lesson, when the teacher set challenging word problems that required pupils to think hard and to use a range of sources of evidence. Teachers establish good relationships with their pupils, promoting mutual respect and a good working ethos. This was evident, for example, in the Reception Class, when the children happily discussed with the teacher, and with each other, the sounds and spelling of common, simple words. However, there are times when some pupils find it difficult to work in mixed gender groupings, such as when asked to form groups in physical education lessons.

15. The school supports well the pupils' personal development through giving them responsibilities, and most pupils fulfil them sensibly and with enthusiasm. For instance, older pupils act as helpers at lunchtimes, or become 'buddies' to younger ones. Pupils have worked within the community, for example by helping to make the school and village millennium banner. This had the dual purpose of developing their artistic and design skills, and of raising their sense of responsibility within the local community.

16. Levels of attendance have fallen slightly since the last report, but are still satisfactory overall. The fall in attendance last year was beyond the control of both the school and the parents, and was due to the foot and mouth epidemic in the area. Additionally, some parents continue to take their children on family holidays during term time, and this adversely affects the overall levels of attendance. Nevertheless, the rate of unauthorised absence is below the national average and most parents continue to support the school's policy for good attendance. Almost all pupils are transported to school, many by coach from outlying villages and farms, and there is no issue about punctuality.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS OR STUDENTS TAUGHT?

17. The teaching of children in the Foundation Stage is satisfactory overall. Of the five lessons observed, three were satisfactory and two were good. It is in the planning of activities that there is much improvement since the time of the last inspection. The teacher now has the benefit of teaching only children in the Foundation Stage, with the result that she can give her attention solely to the required curriculum for this age group. As a result, there is a good balance between teacher-directed activities and those that are chosen by the children themselves, and the range of activities is well planned in both cases. This ensures

that children's learning moves forward in carefully planned steps, matched closely to their individual needs. The number of children in the Reception Class is small (11). Consequently, children have the benefit of a favourable teacher-pupil ratio. The teacher has good expectations of children to take part in activities, with the result that most children meet the early learning goals in all areas of learning by the time they enter Year 1.

18. The quality of teaching in the rest of the school is also satisfactory overall, but has several strengths across all classes. In the current inspection, there were no unsatisfactory lessons. Indeed, 36 per cent of lessons were good, and seven per cent were very good. This is a considerable improvement since the time of the previous inspection. On that occasion, 15 per cent of teaching was judged to be unsatisfactory, and only a further 15 per cent was good, and there was no very good teaching.

19. Excluding the Foundation Stage, all the teachers in the infants and juniors were appointed to the school since the last inspection. They bring with them a breadth of experience of teaching in primary schools, from recently newly qualified to 25 years. Two of the teachers have taken up their appointments since the beginning of the year, one of whom began only two weeks before the inspection. What all the teachers have in common is enthusiasm for their work and a sincere commitment to the raising of standards. Nearly all parents who responded to the pre-inspection questionnaire (96 per cent) agreed that teaching in the school is good, and that the school expects their children to work hard. The inspectors agree that the significantly higher proportion of good, and very good teaching has a positive effect on pupils' learning in most subjects.

20. Teachers' expectations of pupils to listen to them and to take a full part in the tasks they are set are qualities common to most lessons. The expectations meet with the greatest success in the juniors, and the rate of success is also improving in the infants. Here, there are a few pupils who demand personal attention even in whole-class discussions, such as at the beginning of literacy lessons, or in the hall during physical education. In those lessons where teachers get the full attention of their pupils, often through good use of questioning, then no time is wasted and learning is good. For example, pupils in a Year 4 mathematics lesson learned how to quickly multiply numbers by 9, using an alternative method from the multiplication tables. This was because the teacher successfully maintained their close interest through lively discussion and the use of questions to help them to build on their learning.

21. Teachers use the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies to good effect, in that they prepare well for them and follow the expected format. Where expectations of progress are high, all pupils are challenged appropriately, and they make good strides in their learning. However, sometimes there are not sufficiently high expectations of pupils to make good progress, because the tasks are not well matched to all pupils' prior levels of attainment, especially the higher attainers. These pupils finish their work quickly and waste time because there is no extension work of the right degree of difficulty for them to tackle, as happened in an infant literacy lesson. Additionally, teachers do not often remind pupils to present their written work to the best standard, despite the use of regular handwriting practice, nor set time targets in which pupils are expected to finish their work. In those lessons where the latter strategy was applied, the pupils had a good pace of learning.

22. Teachers have adapted the three-stage format of the Literacy and Numeracy Strategies to lessons in some other subjects. This helps to give pupils confidence in their lessons. However, sometimes the final part of lessons is too brief, and pupils do not have enough time to consolidate their learning. This happened in an otherwise satisfactory, and

highly challenging, music lesson in the juniors, when the lesson ran out of time. Conversely, some lessons are too long, for example in art, and can take a whole afternoon. In these lessons, a few pupils become restless and uninterested because they do not have the ability to concentrate for such long periods.

23. All teachers make clear to pupils what they are going to learn in lessons and then, when time allows, review with them at the end of lessons the progress they have made. Both of these qualities were apparent, for example, in a very good mathematics lesson in the juniors. The teacher helped pupils to recall what they had already learned about how to interpret written money problems, and then to select the correct computational methods. After a challenging session, in which all pupils worked on a range of problems selected according to pupils' abilities, the class discussed their problems and confirmed their further learning.

24. Teachers make good use of support staff to enhance pupils' learning. In a mathematics lesson, in the infants, the teacher planned the lesson carefully with her assistant, who took charge of a small group of lower attaining Year 1 pupils. They made good progress in understanding how to subtract numbers because they learned from a practical approach in small steps. The assistant then reinforced their learning through ensuring that each pupil took an active part in the processes.

25. Teachers use marking of pupils' work to good effect overall in English, although more attention should be given to the marking of misspellings. They mark work in other subjects regularly, but seldom give direction to pupils about how they can improve their work.

26. Pupils with SEN are satisfactorily taught. Work is usually targeted to pupils' needs, and adults offer effective support and help. Pupils who have behaviour problems usually behave well, but occasionally in the infants and lower juniors the teachers do not have sufficiently effective strategies to ensure that these pupils make good progress.

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

27. The curriculum for children in the Foundation Stage, in the Reception Class, has improved since the last inspection and is planned according to government guidelines for children of this age. There is an appropriate balance between activities directed by the teacher and those chosen by the children.

28. The curriculum for English, mathematics and science is broad and balanced overall but is unsatisfactory for most other subjects. This is because:

- Higher attaining pupils are not always sufficiently challenged by the tasks they are given;
- some lessons are over long and lead to a loss of momentum when the second part of the lesson follows the afternoon break;
- there is not enough equipment to satisfactorily teach all the subjects, especially elements of the technology subjects. In these two subjects statutory requirements are not met;
- some subjects, namely art and design, design and technology, history and geography, are taught for either half a term or a term at a time, followed by long periods when they are not taught. This means that skills in each subject are not developed systematically;
- planned work in Years 5 and 6 in geography has not been taught, and until very recently these pupils have received very little teaching in the subject since September.

29. Standards, particularly in geography, suffer because there is too long a gap when the subject is not being taught. Pupils forget what they have learned, their skill development suffers, and the pace of their learning is lost. The curriculum was judged unsatisfactory at the time of the last inspection and remains so.

30. The school places a satisfactory emphasis on the development of literacy and numeracy skills. The national strategies for literacy and numeracy have been appropriately introduced and teachers are consistent and effective in their approach. Pupils in Years 5 and 6 are separated for English. This practice works well because it allows the work the pupils are set to be better matched to their particular needs. Although numeracy is put to effective use across the curriculum, writing at some length is not used as much as it could be.

31. The school has adopted the Government's guidance for most subjects, and this has been adapted to suit the needs of the pupils. Plans for science are good and those for ICT are developing well. They show in some detail what pupils should learn. However, this level of detail is not yet available for all the other subjects, and this means that pupils are not building systematically on the skills they gain over time. Teachers identify what they want pupils to learn in each lesson, but there is no consistently used common planning format that identifies what is to be provided for the pupils of different abilities and ages in the class. Planning for religious education has improved since the last inspection and is now done in accordance with the locally Agreed Syllabus. Legal requirements for acts of collective worship are fulfilled.

32. Pupils with SEN have full access to the curriculum, and they make satisfactory progress. Their needs and targets are clearly identified in individual education plans (IEPs), and work provided for them is usually appropriate for their needs. Class teachers are aware of these pupils' needs, although little reference is made to them in lesson plans, a point noted at the previous inspection. Good use is made of trained teaching assistants to work with these pupils on a one-to-one basis or in small groups.

33. The school provides a good breadth of experience through regular visits to centres of educational interest, for example in history and field study. Visitors to the school, such as Japanese drummers, make good contributions to the curriculum through their knowledge and expertise. The number and range of extra-curricular activities has improved, and the school provides for these satisfactorily. These activities, such as guitar, netball and football, are popular with the pupils, and attendance is good. The school plans to form a choir in the near future. Pupils are taught about health matters, including sex education and drugs awareness, as part of a planned programme. The school plans to improve the provision it makes for the teaching of these aspects and has started a programme for personal and social education.

34. The school has developed satisfactory links with members of the community and local businesses, which teachers use effectively to broaden pupils' experience and bring their learning to life. The school has several visitors to school, such as the local minister, and local artists who worked with pupils to produce a millennium banner. Pupils visit local museums, the local nature reserve, and other small schools in the area, both as social activities and to enrich and support the learning that takes place in school. A visit to a Buddhist temple is planned to take place soon. Good links are established with the local playgroup. These links with the community have a good effect on positively on pupils' learning.

35. Overall, the school provides satisfactorily for pupils' personal development. It has done well to maintain this level of provision since the previous inspection, despite some turbulence and an almost complete change of staff. Indeed, there are strong indications that this aspect of the school is set to improve. At times, for example during assemblies, there is a strong sense of whole-school community. Moreover, initiatives such as identifying individual pupils as 'Star of the Week' in classrooms are positive steps towards raising pupils' sense of worth and appreciation of others' efforts.

36. There is good provision for pupils' moral development. Parents are pleased with the values and attitudes that the school teaches their children. Class rules are well known by pupils, and referred to by teachers when necessary. Adults quickly rectify occasional misbehaviour by a few pupils.

37. Religious education lessons and assemblies contribute well to pupils' spiritual and cultural development. Singing in assemblies is of high quality, and has a spiritual dimension in itself. A series of whole-school assemblies 'transported' pupils in their imagination to other parts of the world through the playing of music, for example from Peru and India, and the use of original masks from these and other countries. The assemblies successfully challenged pupils to consider their own place in the world and the diversity of cultures, and promoted friendship for others and a school ethos of community. The midday meals always begin with the saying of 'Grace', which instils in pupils the notion of a higher being. Studies of a range of world religions, and their customs and practices, successfully teach pupils about cultures of other peoples, whether they live in faraway countries or are inhabitants of the local area. From work such as the planned visit to a Buddhist temple, and from regularly reminding them of the school's code of conduct, pupils learn to distinguish right from wrong.

38. There is satisfactory provision for pupils' social development. Teachers and other adults encourage pupils to work together, with considerable success. Discussions in lessons in the junior classes are often of good quality, and teachers have the skills to involve those pupils who might otherwise be too shy to take part. The increasing number of visits to places of educational interest also promotes pupils' social development, as do the out-of-school activities, in which most pupils take some part. The curriculum is open equally to all pupils, who take advantage of the opportunities available to them. However, boys and girls in the juniors do not mix as well as they should in lessons. For example, there is seldom a gender mix when pupils tackle lesson tasks together, both in the classroom and at other times, such as in physical education lessons. The staff need to be more aware of this deficiency when they arrange seating or small-group tasks.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

39. The school has dealt satisfactorily with the few concerns raised at the previous inspection about provision for pupils' welfare and safety, which is now satisfactory. Sound procedures are established both for child protection and for ensuring pupils' welfare, including those with SEN, who are well supported in classes and when occasionally working with teacher assistants on an individual basis. The Reception Class teacher is the responsible, trained person for child protection. This is a quite satisfactory arrangement, but the governors should ensure, and the headteacher agrees, that all staff should undertake training in order to raise their understanding of child protection guidelines set by the local authority.

40. Provision for health and safety is given priority, and inspection evidence indicates that there are sound procedures for recording accidents. The school has dealt well with the matters raised in the last report about supervision of pupils on the playground, and when they arrive at school in the mornings. Fire equipment and electrical equipment are checked

regularly, and the school keeps a record of all safety checks, enabling the management to take appropriate action to ensure that all pupils are taught in a consistently safe environment.

41. Midday assistants are conscientious and attentive, and they take a close interest in pupils' activities. Pupils receive good individual care and support from class teachers, and from the headteacher, who is accessible and reassuring. Teacher assistants develop good relationships with pupils, and are skilled in curriculum and personal support. There are good procedures for monitoring pupils' personal development. The information is used to put into practice strategies which prepare pupils for opportunities and responsibilities in later life. A developing personal, health and social education programme includes topics such as bullying, the dangers of drugs, healthy eating, hygiene, and sex education through the medium of the science curriculum. Circle time and role-play are used to raise pupils' confidence in themselves, and to give them stimulating learning opportunities. Additionally, pupils are given rewards in the form of stickers or 'Star of the Week' acclaim, and these opportunities further add to the raising of pupils' self-esteem.

42. The behaviour and discipline policy is under review, but continues to provide teachers and support staff with good guidance. Pupils understand the need for school rules, which are prominently displayed around the school, and they are aware of the need to follow them. In most of the good lessons seen, it was noticeable how the teachers referred to these rules when the need occasionally arose. In each case, the resultant improved behaviour showed that pupils know the rules and understand them.

43. There are sound procedures for monitoring and discouraging anti-social behaviour, including bullying. Pupils are encouraged to report all inappropriate behaviour and to discuss their concerns with staff. All known incidents of anti-social behaviour are investigated, recorded, monitored and reported to governors and parents. Parents at the pre-inspection meeting were quick to confirm that the headteacher and/or his staff quickly deal with any such anti-social behaviour.

44. The school has developed sound procedures for assessing and monitoring pupils' learning and achievements, particularly in the key subjects of English, mathematics and science. Assessments are carried out in most subjects and are generally being used to inform teacher's planning. However, the procedures are not yet embedded to the point that they enable the staff to see what is working well, what needs to be improved and how far pupils have moved toward their targets. A start has been made to identify gaps in the curriculum by using assessment information gained from test papers. The school recognises the need to do this and to use the information to target individuals and groups of pupils. Teachers plan for the differing range of abilities in their classes but their daily plans are not detailed enough to be helpful in planning the next stage in pupils' learning, particularly the higher attaining pupils. Accurate assessments are made of the attainment of pupils with SEN and the information is used effectively to plan for the next stage in their learning.

45. The procedures for monitoring pupils' attendance are sound, and are better than they were at time of the previous inspection. Information is used well to record, to investigate where necessary, and to ensure that action is taken to raise existing levels of attendance. The school has in place appropriate strategies, which are supported by most parents and the education welfare officer. Together, they ensure the current satisfactory level of attendance.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

46. The relationship the school has with parents is good, and is better than at the time of the previous inspection.

47. Most parents make a good contribution to their children's learning, and they have very good views of the school. At the pre-inspection meeting, all the views expressed by parents were very positive, and were confirmed by most responses to the pre-inspection questionnaire. However, over ten per cent indicated in the questionnaire their concerns about the level and quality of information the school provides, the amount of homework given, and the provision of out-of-school activities. The inspectors looked closely at these areas, and concluded that provision in each is at least satisfactory and, in the first concern, it is good.

48. Parents know that they can approach the school when they have any concerns about their child, and are comfortable to do so. They are happy that any complaints are dealt with quickly and efficiently. At two formal consultation evenings each year, parents are clearly informed about their child's progress. Annual written reports to parents are of good quality, showing in some detail what children know and can do in each of the subjects. They are readily understandable, enable parents to monitor their child's progress, and help them to take an active part in the child's learning. This guidance is supplemented by information that parents receive about the school in regular newsletters, which often relate what topics are to be studied in the classes.

49. The school's prospectus and governors' annual report are detailed and informative, and fully comply with requirements. The school actively encourages parents to support their children's learning, both at home and in the classrooms, and parents agree that the school has improved in this respect since the previous inspection. As a result, parents support well the work of the school. Most were happy to sign the home/school agreement. They see it as an important document designed to develop a strong partnership that actively supports the children's progress, for example by recognising the important part that parents have to play. Several parents play a valuable role as partners in promoting pupils' learning. Some are members of the governing body, and some work in the school on a regular basis, for example to help pupils use computers. Additionally, most parents help their children's progress by ensuring that homework tasks are completed. Indeed, parents of pupils in Year 5 are pleased with the current trialing of a new homework system, and hope that it will be extended to all pupils in the juniors.

50. Parents of pupils with SEN are kept informed of their child's progress. However, the school feels, and inspectors agree, that the links between home and school should be strengthened, so that parents of these pupils can be better involved in their children's planned development.

51. Most parents actively support the work of the parent association. An enthusiastic and hardworking committee arranges frequent opportunities for parents to meet socially and to support fundraising activities, which in turn provide much-needed funds for school resources.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

52. The leadership and management of the school were unsatisfactory at the time of the previous inspection. This is not now the case. Those responsible for management have a clear sense of purpose and are beginning to move the school forward. This is happening because the staff and governors are strongly committed to improving the school, and because the staff in particular bring a range of expertise that they are using to the pupils' advantage. Since his appointment to the school one year ago, the headteacher has established with his governors an achievable vision for the school. This vision highlights the need for standards to improve, and is based on his accurate assessment of the school's strengths and weaknesses.

53. The staff are enthusiastic, are wholly supportive of the headteacher, and work together as a team to promote the changes necessary to raise standards. Since a visit by Her Majesty's Inspectors six months ago, the school has adopted some important initiatives, led well by the headteacher, which are beginning to make an impact on the standards that pupils achieve. These include:

- A more clearly focused development plan that sets out the priorities necessary to effect improvement, and the means to achieve them. For example, in conjunction with local authority advisers, the school has arranged curriculum support and set targets for pupils' achievement in literacy;
- the appointment of two new teachers to the school, one who took up her appointment in January, the other only two weeks before this inspection (this means that there has been an almost complete change of teachers since the headteacher's appointment);
- better lesson planning, which clearly lays down what pupils are to learn and includes tasks more appropriate to pupils' levels of prior attainment. However, some lessons still lack challenge for higher attaining pupils;
- regular monitoring of teaching and learning by the headteacher, although this needs to focus more specifically on what works well in terms of promoting pupils' learning;
- strategies to deal with the remaining unresolved issues from the previous inspection, notably standards of writing, and the richness, variety and pace of pupils' learning in the foundation subjects.

54. Good progress has been made with curriculum planning for children in the Foundation Stage. Provision is now satisfactory with the result that most children reach the early learning goals by the time they are seven. Similarly, there is better provision for science. Although current Year 6 pupils are not likely to reach the average level of attainment in science by 11, there is no doubt that pupils across the school make better progress in this subject than they did.

55. There is still some work to do in giving a better balance to the curriculum overall. Certainly, the development by the headteacher and governors of a school mission statement and a more suitable set of school aims reflects their intentions. The appointment of subject co-ordinators, with specific responsibilities and a good measure of independence in taking action, is a good move. For instance, even after a very short time in post at the school, the co-ordinator for history, music and physical education has conducted an initial audit of the subjects, and drawn up action plans. Nevertheless, there is a need to review the timetabling of lessons for the foundation subjects, and to acquire urgently more learning resources in a number of subjects.

56. The governors are now fully aware of the school's position because the headteacher keeps them well informed in regular meetings, and because several governors are involved in the work of the school on a day-to-day basis. The governors bring a useful range of expertise

to their posts. The chair of governors has a history of working at a promoted level in schools, and she has meetings with the headteacher each week. As a result, she has good oversight of the work of the school, and takes an active part in some of its practices. For example, she has reviewed the provision of religious education, an issue raised in the previous inspection report, and receives information from the headteacher about the quality of teaching and learning. Other governors have responsibilities for oversight of SEN provision, literacy and numeracy, but these are relatively new appointments.

57. Most statutory requirements are fulfilled, although the school does not teach the full requirements for ICT, and for design and technology. There has recently been good progress in developing the curriculum for ICT, notably through purchasing and installing up-to-date equipment and some software, and teachers are about to start on relevant training. There are modern computers in each classroom, and a further three in a small annex, used by small groups of pupils who work with a knowledgeable, specialist adult. The school should consider whether this is the most beneficial use of these computers, initially by analysing the progress that these pupils make. Generally though, there is still a need for more resources, not only for the school to comply with requirements, but also the better to support pupils' learning in subjects such as art, design and technology, geography and history.

58. Provision for pupils with SEN is satisfactory, and all systems meet the Code of Practice. The SEN co-ordinator is new to the post but has already made plans for the future. She has reviewed the pupils' IEPs and these are now more specifically targeted at pupils' needs. She is becoming familiar with the new Code of Practice and has plans to further improve provision.

59. The school sets targets for pupils to achieve, but these are challenging for the current Year 6 pupils. With a small number of pupils in the cohort the results can vary considerably even if only one pupil leaves the school or another joins it. The headteacher has developed a good system for tracking pupils' attainments, which is based on the results of statutory assessments and tests given to pupils at points between the ages of seven and eleven. The system gives the staff and governors a clear picture of pupils' progress over time, and helps to set the agenda for the action needed to raise standards. Targets for school development as a whole are appropriate, and achievable within the timescale set in the school development plan.

60. The school makes good strategic use of its resources, including specific grants and other funding. Short-term financial planning is sound, and best value principles are applied to the purchase of goods and of services, and in terms of comparing the school's performance with the national and local pictures. Initial budgeting is the responsibility of the headteacher. The governors' finance committee, led by an experienced chairperson, plays an essential part in critically analysing the use of the finances available to the school, and in overseeing the effectiveness of spending. The full governing body is provided regularly with budget updates. The school has a balanced budget, with little room for manoeuvre. However, the headteacher, staff and governors understand the need to divert more of the school's budget to the purchase of much needed learning resources.

61. Administrative routines are good and the school office functions smoothly. Good use is made of modern technology, for example to deal with financial matters and to produce analyses of pupils' assessments. The secretary is a welcoming 'first face' and 'first voice' to those who visit or telephone the school.

62. There is an adequate number of suitably qualified, experienced and competent teachers to teach the National Curriculum to pupils of primary age, including those in the Foundation Stage of their schooling. Both the new and longer established staff already form a committed team, and work enthusiastically to improve the quality of education for the school, and so raise standards.

63. The accommodation is adequate overall, and includes a large hall that lends itself to a range of activities. Displays of pupils' work are generally sound and attractive, but there is a lack of pupils' written work, art and ICT work around the school, a point noted by Her Majesty's Inspectors when they came to visit. The library is inadequate; it has too few non-fiction books, and is also inappropriately placed in the building. Hardly any pupils were seen using it during the inspection. The playgrounds and field are ideally placed, and are well used by the pupils and staff.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

64. The headteacher, staff and governors should work together on the following issues:

- Raising standards in English, particularly writing, and in science and ICT. This will involve:
(Paragraphs: 2, 82, 85, 86, 103, 104, 121, 125, 126)
 - * placing a greater emphasis on provision for pupils to write independently and at length for a range of purposes, not only in English but in other subjects of the curriculum;
 - * building in opportunities for pupils to draft and redraft their writing, and to make better use of ICT;
 - * insisting that pupils always apply the skills they have learned in the literacy lessons to all their writing;
 - * resolutely pursuing strategies to improve the standard of spelling;
 - * ensuring that there is a better balance in pupils' learning about all the required aspects of science;
 - * making better use of pupils' ICT skills by including the use of computers in most subjects, especially in English and science.

- Increasing the proportion of pupils who achieve higher than nationally expected levels of attainment in the core subjects. This strategy should include the following features:
(Paragraphs: 2, 21, 28, 44, 53, 87, 88, 94, 104)
 - * using the results of assessments consistently to identify clearly the skills and knowledge that all pupils have achieved, and
 - * always providing work that more accurately matches pupils' prior levels of attainment, so that they do not waste time by doing work that is too easy for them.

- Improving the breadth and balance of the curriculum, especially in the juniors, by:
(Paragraphs: 28, 29, 115, 125, 126)
 - * as a matter of some urgency, improving the range and quantity of resources for ICT, art, geography, history, design and technology;
 - * relocating the library and improving its range and quantity of non-fiction books;
 - * reviewing the structure of the curriculum for the foundation subjects, in particular to provide a better balance, so that pupils have more regular opportunities to develop their knowledge and skills in each of the subjects, and to apply their skills both within and across subjects.

- Improving the quality of pupils' finished work by, initially, raising teachers' expectations for pupils always to do their best. These expectations should include:
(Paragraphs: 25, 106, 113, 118, 140, 142)
 - * insisting that pupils always apply their developing handwriting skills, acquired in the regular practice sessions, to all their writing tasks;
 - * planning carefully the layout of mathematics work to make best use of the work books provided;
 - * consistently setting and applying time targets for pupils to finish their work;
 - * improving the quality of marking by ensuring, as a matter of course, that pupils are shown how they can improve their work, and by checking that these improvements are both achieved and maintained;
 - * making better use of displays to celebrate and to share work of good quality produced by pupils.

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	30
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	33

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Number	0	2	11	17	0	0	0
Percentage	0	7	36	57	0	0	0

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

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll	YR-Y6
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	94
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	5

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs	YR-Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	0
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	18

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

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	7
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	5

Attendance

Authorised absence	%
School data	6.2
National comparative data	5.6

Unauthorised absence	%
School data	0.1
National comparative data	0.5

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

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

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year:	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2001	3	9	12

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC Level 2 and above	Total	11	11	11
Percentage of pupils at NC Level 2 or above	School	92 (92)	92 (92)	92 (100)
	National	84 (83)	86 (84)	91 (90)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC Level 2 and above	Total	10	11	12
Percentage of pupils at NC Level 2 or above	School	83 (92)	92 (100)	100 (100)
	National	85 (84)	89 (88)	89 (88)

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

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

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2 for the latest reporting year:	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2001	6	6	12

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC Level 4 and above	Total	8	10	9
Percentage of pupils at NC Level 4 or above	School	67 (43)	83 (86)	75 (71)
	National	75 (75)	71 (72)	87 (85)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC Level 4 and above	Total	8	10	10
Percentage of pupils at NC Level 4 or above	School	67 (50)	83 (57)	83 (100)
	National	72 (70)	74 (72)	82 (79)

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

Ethnic background of pupils

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	0
Black – African heritage	0
Black – other	0
Indian	0
Pakistani	0
Bangladeshi	0
Chinese	0
White	82
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	2	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)	4.5
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	20.9
Average class size	23.5

Education support staff:

YR–Y6

Total number of education support staff	3
Total aggregate hours worked per week	38

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Financial information

Financial year	2000/2001
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	£
Total income	215,041.00
Total expenditure	205,949.00
Expenditure per pupil	2,315.00
Balance brought forward from previous year	9,092.00
Balance carried forward to next year	9,092.00

Recruitment of teachers

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	3
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	3

Total number of vacant teaching posts (FTE)	0
Number of vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of a term or more (FTE)	0.5
Number of unfilled vacancies or vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of less than one term (FTE)	0

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out
Number of questionnaires returned

94
43

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	44	51	2	0	2
My child is making good progress in school.	44	49	5	0	2
Behaviour in the school is good.	37	51	5	0	2
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	33	44	19	2	2
The teaching is good.	47	49	2	0	2
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	14	63	19	2	2
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	72	26	2	0	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	60	37	0	0	2
The school works closely with parents.	33	53	9	0	5
The school is well led and managed.	47	44	2	2	5
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	51	44	2	0	2
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	28	44	12	7	9

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

AREAS OF LEARNING FOR CHILDREN IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

65. There have been a number of changes since the previous inspection to the provision for children in the Foundation Stage, in which some elements were deemed unsatisfactory, especially the curriculum. At the time of the previous inspection, children under five were grouped in the same class as Year 1 pupils. This is not now the case. Children in the Foundation Stage are taught in a separate classroom, as one group. This arrangement is appropriate and well established. The overall satisfactory teaching is having a positive effect on children's learning. Additionally, the planning for teaching of the required curriculum is good, and activities give the children many opportunities to work at their own levels through making their own choices, a factor notably missing at the time of the previous inspection.

66. Children start school at the beginning of the academic year in which they reach the age of five. Most have had some pre-school education, such as in the local village playgroup, with which the Reception Class teacher has good and useful contact. When children enter the school, the attainments of most in communication, language and literacy, mathematical and personal skills are broadly what might be expected of children of their age, although a small proportion has skills in language and literacy which are below, or considerably below, average. This is confirmed by the initial assessments of children in their first few weeks in the Reception Class. By the time they are ready to transfer to the Year 1 class, the majority of children attain the early learning goals in personal, social and emotional development, communication, language and literacy, mathematical, and physical development. They acquire good speaking and listening skills because the teaching is good in this area. The number of children in the class is small (11 at the time of the inspection), and the teacher takes full advantage of this factor when planning activities.

Personal, social and emotional development

67. Nearly all children enter the Reception Class with expected skills in personal and social development. They make satisfactory progress, and some children achieve well by the time they enter Year 1. Children are constantly encouraged to feel confident about what they can achieve, because the teacher gives them close individual attention when they are engaged in their work. Children play and work well together. They show consideration towards each other, and most are aware of the effects of their actions on others. The teacher regularly reminds them of how to relate to one another, with good results. At the end of mathematics activity, one boy said, 'I'll put those away.' A girl responded with, 'I'll help you.' Children are enthusiastic about their learning. For example, they described excitedly why parts of the school grounds are their favourite places, relating them to special games they play, or to similar facilities at home, such as a barn on their own farm.

68. The teacher provides a good role model, always calm and treating the children with respect. This leads to trusting relationships, and helps the children to understand each other's ideas and desires. For example, the children share a range of materials when making collages of flowers or houses, and discuss sensibly in simple terms each other's interpretations. The teacher promotes well the children's independent learning, through her high expectations of them to make sensible decisions and to carry out routine practices as a matter of course. Consequently, the children always put on aprons before using the water tray, and invariably clear away equipment before starting another activity.

Communication, language and literacy

69. Children enjoy listening to stories and sharing books. Their speaking skills develop well because the teacher patiently waits for them to answer her questions, and strongly encourages them to talk to her and to each other when they are engaged in quiet activities. At other times, such as in physical education activities, the teacher expects children to listen carefully to instructions and to carry them out, with some success.

70. By the time they enter Year 1, almost all children currently in the Reception Class are likely to achieve the early learning goals. They are particularly strong in talking, both to adults and to each other. For example, two children described their role-play characters in 'The Bear Hunt', one saying how he was lying in wait inside the bear's cave, the other how she was preparing the bear's food.

71. Children develop good reading skills. Because of good teaching, most recognise and sound out the letters of the alphabet. They like doing this, and some children spontaneously say letter sounds when they see them in unusual situations. For example, one boy spotted and sounded out the letter 'o' when he saw it in the shape of a wooden railway track that he had made.

72. The teacher uses elements of the Literacy Strategy well to promote children's understanding of phonics, using well-known stories to interest and inspire the children, such as 'Red Riding Hood'. Most children use their good phonic skills to sound out simple words, such as 'jam' and 'corn', showing that their ability to read is well under way. Children confidently have a go when writing. Displays of emergent writing from earlier in the year, on display in the classroom, show that children have made good progress in this respect. In one example, an average attaining child wrote 'I wlsh (wish) I was a hmn (human).'

73. Some higher attaining children copy neatly their teacher's writing. Most children can write their own names, although some are still confused about which way round to write some letters, such as 'j' and 's'. The teacher successfully encourages the children to think for themselves as readers and writers, and children respond well to this approach, for example when adding titles to their drawings and paintings. There are satisfactory facilities for children to engage in writing and reading activities; children freely use a permanent writing table to practise their skills, and the reading corner is used mostly by the higher attaining children.

Mathematical development

74. This area of learning is soundly taught, with the result that, by the end of the Foundation Stage, most children will have reached the early learning goals for mathematics. Nearly all children can count to 15, and many can count further. Some children have difficulty in matching objects to their counting, so the teacher provides appropriate activities to develop this skill. For example, they assemble strings of beads, and then check how many are on the string. About half of the children understand comparative terms such as 'more than' and 'smaller than', and can add one more to a given number. The same proportion recognises and name two-dimensional shapes, such as a square and a rectangle. Because they have rapidly developing literacy skills, some higher attaining children can use commercial workbooks to practise their number skills. Consequently, they understand the instructions given and insert numbers in simple diagrams, for example to represent positional understanding: 'on top', 'below' and 'beside'.

Knowledge and understanding of the world

75. Children build on their general knowledge to help them understand more about the place where they live and how things grow and develop. Many children come from farming backgrounds, and already have a broad knowledge of plants and animals. They delight in planting seeds, and watch broad bean plants grow over a period of time. They notice the countryside around the school, and knowledgeably talk about the purpose of certain buildings. For example, whilst walking around the school grounds, children said that barns are used for storing hay and straw for the farm animals, and a field is used for growing corn. One child knew that the corn is eventually used for making bread.

76. Children freely use a computer because the teacher ensures that it is always switched on and loaded with appropriate software, such as counting games that children control well with the mouse and the keyboard.

77. The teacher supports children well in investigating their surroundings and in talking about things they see. For example, through the good opportunities given to them, children choose their favourite places, and some, with the help of their teacher, use a digital camera to record what they see. The photographs are displayed in the classroom, and used as a focus for further discussion. Through the use of construction equipment, and other materials, children experiment with fastenings and fixings. They use a wooden track to assemble and alter the layout for a train way. Noticeably, only the boys take an interest in this activity.

Physical development

78. Children make good progress in developing their physical skills, and nearly all will meet the early learning goals by the time they leave the Reception Class. They have good opportunities to take part in outdoor play activities when they use a good range of tricycles and other wheeled toys, which they control well. The teacher has good oversight of the children as they play, but the area needs better planning to make it more interesting. In more formal physical activities in the school hall, children show developing ability to control small games equipment, such as beanbags and light balls, within designated areas. Most can throw and catch a ball, and control it with their feet. They enjoy working together as a whole class when they use a 'parachute', and follow their teacher's instructions. They show that they can use space creatively, and run, jump and hop with an increasing sense of balance.

79. The children's fine motor skills develop appropriately as they use pencils to practise their writing and crayons to draw pictures. They use scissors sensibly, for example when creating collages, and follow the teacher's instructions to handle them safely.

Creative development

80. There is good provision for children's creative development, another area where most reach the early learning goals. They create interesting collages, such as of daffodils, using a wide range of interesting resources. Some children are particularly thoughtful in their work. One girl noticed how layering coloured cellophane over yellow paper created an unusual and attractive effect. Children talk about their activities as they work and, for example, name the petals, stem and leaves of the flowers they create. Most children have a good eye for shape and detail. For example, one boy painted a well-proportioned tractor, and included such important detail as air intakes and a towing hook. However, the teacher gives the children ready-mixed paints to use, mainly the primary colours. The children now need to have

opportunities to mix paints themselves, so that they can experiment to produce a range of tones. Nevertheless, some children mix colours on the paper to make interesting effects, such as when they paint the 'Bear's' cave.

81. Some children are particularly able in role-play, largely due to the range of resources available to them. As part of the current topic, about the 'Bear Hunt', the teacher constructed with the children a cave and laid out suitable clothing, and the children used both to good effect. A recent topic about the Chinese New Year prompted some interesting creative activities, such as making a large lion head which the children used to perform a celebratory dance. Music making is an important part of the curriculum, and children experiment with a good range of instruments to perform in the class 'band'.

ENGLISH

82. Pupils enter the school with standards that are generally average. They make satisfactory progress in the infants, but by the age of 11 do not achieve as well as they could. To some extent this is because they got off to a slow start in the lower juniors and have had too much ground to make up. There are signs that new strategies to accelerate the pace of learning are taking effect but not enough progress has been made, particularly in writing, to affect standards significantly. In the national tests in 2001, standards were below average and they remain so this year at the age of 11. Standards at the age of seven are average and similar to those attained in the 2001 national tests in reading and writing. Most pupils of this age attain the expected standard but few attain above it. Standards are well below average for pupils at the ages of seven and eleven when compared with schools whose pupils come from similar backgrounds. Care needs to be taken, though, in making comparisons with other schools, because of the small number of pupils taking the tests each year. For example, in 2001, one pupil in Year 6 represented nine per cent of the total. Standards in both the infants and juniors are average in speaking and listening. Pupils with SEN make satisfactory progress overall because they are usually well supported by teachers and classroom assistants.

83. The atmosphere of class discussions is positive and encouraging, and many pupils learn to play a confident part in responding to teachers' questions. Higher attaining pupils often give extended answers to questions and show how carefully they have listened and thought about their responses. Teachers often ask challenging questions and give pupils a good length of time to think out their answers. Nevertheless, a few pupils rarely answer and teachers do not always direct questions to these pupils. When they do, and insist on pupils answering, as in a Year 5 lesson, pupils show they can respond well. When older pupils have the chance to take part in a debate they do so enthusiastically. Such opportunities help pupils develop their powers of persuasion and argument. Younger pupils in the infants are keen to talk and give their views in class discussions but become restless when questioning goes on for too long. They listen with interest to the story of 'The Little Yellow Chicken' and to tape stories they read independently.

84. Pupils in the infants are making steady progress in reading because their books are clearly graded for difficulty. They are taught how to use letter sounds to make sense of unfamiliar words, and some pupils can apply this skill to long and uncommon words. One boy, when reading aloud, used his knowledge of the letter blends 'ar' and 'ed', which he had learned in the previous lesson, to work out 'start' and 'dropped'. Many parents help to improve their children's reading confidence by hearing them read at home, and pupils generally like reading. The classrooms have useful displays of key words needed for improving spelling and reading. Pupils are taught how to gain meaning from text in their guided reading groups, where pupils at a similar level of attainment read the same book

together and, with the teacher's help, talk about it. These sessions are well taught and help pupils to acquire the necessary basic skills. Higher attaining pupils know how to look for information from books but there are few chances for pupils to develop these skills independently because the library is not well sited, nor are books attractively displayed. Those pupils who have SEN or who require additional help with reading are successfully helped to learn new strategies for finding out new words. The classroom assistant makes learning fun and pupils are helped to improve their understanding of non-fiction books and to read a wider vocabulary in their small group work.

85. Overall, by the age of 11, pupils have not made enough progress in their reading. Higher attaining pupils are good readers. They are reasonably fluent and expressive in their reading and have good ways of working out unknown words, such as 'inflexible' and 'inexplicable'. They have a good understanding of the books they read and show insight into the characters and plots. They enjoy reading and give succinct reasons for preferring particular authors. On the other hand, lower attaining pupils have limited strategies for tackling unfamiliar words and are hesitant in their reading. They tend to gloss over the words they don't know, especially when the text is challenging, which means they gain only a superficial understanding. In the literacy lessons, teachers choose texts that are demanding of pupils' reading ability and understanding. They usually ensure that pupils understand the passage and learn to read new vocabulary.

86. Standards in writing are improving in both the infants and juniors but there is considerable ground to make up, especially in the juniors, where standards are not high enough. Pupils in the infants write their own sentences, and some pupils write at an adequate length; but higher attaining pupils, who can write long stories, are not sufficiently encouraged to do so. Standards in spelling and handwriting are improving because pupils are given plenty of practice but they do not always transfer what they have learnt to their independent writing. This is also the case in the juniors, particularly the lower juniors, where the level of spelling and presentation is often poor. Recently, there has been a big improvement in handwriting in Year 5 due to the emphasis placed on it by the teacher. However, although strategies used in the literacy hour to help pupils improve their spelling are mainly effective, not enough emphasis is given to pupils identifying and correcting their spellings, a factor Her Majesty's Inspectors commented upon in their recent report.

87. Pupils are developing the coherence and structure of their writing because they are given guidance on how to do this. This element of writing is often the focus of teachers' marking, and pupils are keen to improve. In a session in Years 3 and 4, there was evidence of a good level of imagination and creativity when the whole class produced a poem with the teacher and subsequently wrote poems individually. However, there are not many examples of such work and not enough opportunities for pupils to write at length or to write in other subjects of the curriculum. Much more could be done to encourage pupils to redraft, for example using the computer, or to proof read their work. Pupils, particularly the higher attainers, could write at greater length, using a wider vocabulary and applying to what they write the skills of spelling, punctuation and grammar. Pupils use computers to word process their work, but using them for redrafting or writing at length in other subjects of the curriculum is not as well developed as it might be.

88. Teaching is satisfactory, and no unsatisfactory lessons were seen. Lesson planning is strongest in identifying the broad targets appropriate for all pupils, but it is sometimes less specific in setting out expectations for pupils at different stages of development. Teachers are skilled in reading texts dramatically, so capturing pupils' interest and demonstrating good speaking skills. The teacher of the infants makes good use of the big books, which she and the pupils read aloud together. Many of the spelling and reading resources for the infants are motivating, are tailor-made for the pupils and are of high quality. Group work is successful

when an adult leads the pupils, and they make effective progress at these times, with teachers and assistants teaching energetically in response to pupils' needs. However, some groups do not work well independently and are too dependent on the teacher, interrupting the group reading sessions. In the literacy lesson seen in the infants, the task for some of the higher attaining pupils was not challenging enough. Pupils quickly finished their work and subsequently wasted time. When the task is well matched to pupils' needs they do well, for example when pupils listened to a taped story and looked for words that rhyme. Teaching in the juniors builds on what pupils already know and is usually brisk in pace. Teachers monitor well what pupils are achieving, but occasionally the task set is not well matched to pupils' capabilities. Sometimes the big books used are too far away for pupils to see and the teacher does not always reinforce sufficiently the spellings pupils have learned.

89. Discussion with pupils is a strong feature of lessons. The pace is generally brisk, and questions are rigorous in requiring pupils to think, particularly in the juniors. What is to be learned is shared with pupils, and in most lessons the plenary session at the end is used well to check on what pupils have learned. Not only do these sessions ensure reinforcement of pupils' learning, but they also give them an insight into their own learning. At the end of a lesson in Year 5, when the work was too difficult for most, the teacher discussed the lesson with the pupils with considerable openness about what they had found difficult, what had been achieved and what the next step in learning should be. The plenary sessions have much improved since the recent visit from Her Majesty's Inspectors. However, the pattern of the final whole-class review has not been established to motivate groups to do their best written work.

90. The leadership and management of the subject are satisfactory. The co-ordinator is new but is well aware of what needs to be done. She has started to put into practice the good action plans. The structures in place to improve spelling and handwriting are beginning to show results, although not all teachers are encouraging pupils to transfer to their independent writing what they have learned. The school has rightly identified writing as a key target for development. Assessment procedures have been improved since the last report, and have the potential to track pupils' progress closely, so that the right kind of help can be given to them where necessary. Nevertheless, pupils are rarely exhorted to do their best work within a set time limit. Teachers work hard to make pupils think for themselves and give them good encouragement, but this does not have its full impact because pupils are not regularly required to do follow-up work to correct their weaknesses. Although work is attractively displayed, not enough attention is given to celebrating pupils' written work, a situation which is similar to that reported at the time of the last inspection.

MATHEMATICS

91. Pupils in Year 2 and Year 6 attain standards expected for their ages. These match the results of the 2001 statutory assessments for 11 year olds, but are above them in the case of seven year olds. The results also showed that pupils' attainment, when compared with similar schools nationally, was below average at age 11, and well below average at seven. There was a drop in average results from 2000 to 2001. Much of this was to do with the very small number of pupils (six) who took the test in 2000, where each pupil represented 17 per cent of the total. Additionally, records show that nearly all those who took the tests in 2001 had made little, if any, progress from Year 2 to Year 4. Nevertheless, 10 of the 12 pupils reached the expected Level 4 for pupils of their age, a proportion that compares favourably with national figures. Of these, too few reached the higher than expected Level 5.

92. There are no marked differences between the attainment of boys and girls, although here again the relatively small numbers of pupils at each age range makes these comparisons unreliable. Pupils with SEN make sound progress in line with their peers.

93. By the age of seven, most pupils have a sound knowledge of place value to 100, but few can solve problems to 1000. Average and higher attaining pupils competently double numbers such as 11 and 32, and they use decimal 'rods' and 'units' to add different numbers, showing that they understand the process. Lower attaining pupils have difficulty with this process. Most pupils can find the change for 50 pence when buying goods of small value, and use rulers to measure accurately lengths in centimetres. In Year 4, pupils understand inverse operations, for example $4 + 8 = 12$; $12 - 8 = 4$. Higher attainers convert fractions into equivalent fractions. By the age of 11, the more able pupils interpret money problems to find the cost of food items priced in euros, and use calculators or mental processes to convert their answers to pounds and pence. They construct straight-line graphs accurately, and find fractions and percentages of larger numbers, such as $\frac{6}{10}$ of 24, and 40 per cent of 500. They use effective strategies to work out more complicated problems, such as rounding up or down when calculating total weights of the kind $7.98 \text{ kg} + 9.21 \text{ kg}$.

94. The quality of teaching and learning is good overall, and one lesson observed was very good. Teachers use well the first part of their lessons to inspire the pupils mentally. The first part of the very good lesson, whilst being relatively easy for the higher attainers, successfully involved all pupils in quick-fire mental calculations. This gave them confidence to take part in the main part of the lesson, and added to the skills of the average and lower attainers. Analysis of pupils' work from across the school shows that, in the main, the work set is appropriate for those pupils of lower and average prior attainment, but that it has not been challenging enough until recently for the higher attainers, especially those in Years 2 to Years 4. However, more recent work shows that this weakness is receiving attention, and the lesson content for Years 5 and 6 caters well for pupils of all levels of attainment, including the higher attainers. For example, the planning for the very good lesson analysed carefully the work set for each of six groups of pupils defined by ability, with activities and resources ready and easily available for them to extend their knowledge should they finish their initial tasks. Thus, higher attainers conscientiously worked out complicated problems on paper, or used calculators, before researching the Internet to find out the day's exchange rate for the euro. Nevertheless, the teacher rightly discerned, in the final part of the lesson, that further work was required to confirm the ability of all pupils to interpret and tackle word problems.

95. The teachers are familiar with the National Numeracy Strategy, which they apply correctly to enhance pupils' learning. The three-part structure of lessons is secure, although the effectiveness of the last part of the lesson is dependent upon how much time is available. Sometimes the main part of lessons goes on for too long, at the expense of the opportunity for pupils to consolidate their learning in the last part. The mental sessions are usually lively, and most pupils eagerly answer the questions. Some teachers rightly ensure that all pupils try to answer at least one question in these sessions. Teachers manage their classes well in the main parts of lessons, when pupils practise their skills and often work collaboratively in pairs or independently. Pupils' behaviour at these times is not a problem because teachers have high expectations of them to concentrate on their work.

96. When teacher assistants are available, as in a Year 1 and 2 lesson, they are used well to support individuals or small groups. For example, in this lesson, as a result of good preparation by the teacher and her assistant, the class was divided into two groups defined by levels of attainment. The teaching assistant worked effectively with the lower attaining pupils, who all made good progress in subtraction skills because the assistant talked them through the process in small steps. She made certain that each pupil understood each step

before carrying on. At the end of the session, she revisited with the pupils what they had done, and was able to confirm their learning.

97. The school has purchased a range of computer software to support learning in mathematics. This is used appropriately in most lessons to extend pupils' calculation skills. However, in most cases, pupils tend to use the computers only when they have finished the primary work. Using computers for mathematics tends to be a reward for completion of written work, although there are plans to increase the quantity of available software. There is some use of mathematics in other subjects, but it is not firmly established. There is a shortage of some resources for learning, and this restricts the amount of work that pupils can undertake, for example collecting and collating original data.

98. Teachers assess pupils' progress regularly, and they are beginning to use the results to provide work that is matched to each pupil's capability. Work is marked, but teachers hardly ever use marking to set targets for pupils to improve their work. This was a source of some criticism made in the previous report. For example, many pupils do not use the squared paper in their workbooks to its best advantage, with the result that much work is poorly presented and often inaccurate. Nevertheless, overall the school has made satisfactory progress in mathematics since the last inspection, much of it in the recent past.

SCIENCE

99. Standards have dropped since the last inspection. In the 2001 tests for 11 year olds they were well below average and in the lowest five per cent of schools compared with pupils from similar backgrounds. However, statistically the numbers of pupils taking the test each year are small and one pupil can make a significant difference to the results. In the teacher assessments in the 2001 tests for seven year olds, pupils had below average standards.

100. Judgements from the inspection are that standards are below average for pupils at the age of 11 and average for seven year olds. Standards in investigative and experimental work are good in both the infants and juniors for the majority of pupils, and show a considerable improvement since the last inspection.

101. An analysis of work shows that most pupils have an inquisitive approach to science. They use information they have gained from first hand experience to compare and contrast, and to make predictions. In work on plants the teacher challenges the pupils in Year 3 and 4, encouraging them to think for themselves, to express their ideas, and to work out how they may carry out an investigation. For example, they think of how they can test why grass turns yellowy/green, and whether a plant loses its leaves when deprived of light. They consider how the test must be fair, which encourages them to become investigative 'scientists'. This leads them to sharpen the skills they learned as infants to observe, draw, hypothesise and draw conclusions.

102. There is now a strong emphasis throughout the school on investigation of scientific concepts through practical activities. Pupils particularly enjoy these activities because they take pride in using their previously acquired knowledge as a basis to pose and test their own theories. In the infants, pupils learn how friction affects the distance a toy vehicle can travel, and experiment to see what happens when force is exerted on a ball when placed in water. Higher attaining pupils already have a good knowledge of what is necessary to make a test fair. A particularly effective example of a scientific approach to testing was seen in a Years 5 and 6 lesson about irreversible reactions. Teachers discussed with pupils at the beginning of the lesson what they had previously done about reactions. Nearly all pupils could define accurately what is a reversible reaction, and correctly quoted melting and cooling chocolate,

and thawing ice, as examples. Subsequent experiments, in which pupils in small groups, led by the teacher or classroom assistant, burned in a sand tray a variety of materials, led them to discuss why the burnt match or plastic straw could not return to their original forms. Notably, some higher attaining pupils could explain that smoke given off in the reactions contained carbon dioxide, showing their knowledge of another aspect of science. Pupils and staff took all necessary precautions in these experiments and pupils were well aware of the need for safety.

103. By the time they are in Year 6, most pupils have a good understanding of fair testing and how tests need to be set up to make them fair. However, from a scrutiny of work and from discussions with them it is clear that they have little knowledge of other aspects of science, for example forces or how the body works. They have yet to learn about the solar system and have had little opportunity to revisit some of their work undertaken in the previous year. As a consequence, they are unable to remember much of their previous work, other than the knowledge they acquired when the 'science caravan' visited the school, when they were able to see models that lit up parts of the brain and other areas of the body.

104. Pupils have reasonable opportunities to record their work in a variety of ways, including graphs and in writing. Since the last inspection there have been improvements in the pupils' ability to decide how to represent the results of investigations, and not so much reliance on pupils using pre-prepared recording sheets. Sometimes the work shows that the lower attaining pupils have not always fully understood and have not been able to draw appropriate conclusions. Although there is a recent improvement in the presentation of work in the upper juniors, work is not as neatly presented in the other junior class. Information and communication technology is used in science, as are literacy and numeracy, but not as much as it could be.

105. The teaching of science is good. Teachers use their good knowledge of the subject to inspire pupils to think about science in real life situations. They use questioning well to draw out comments from pupils such as 'What else needs to be done?', when discussing the testing, and 'What is the difference between heating and burning?'. Teachers use simple resources well to support investigations and to promote pupils' interest. They inform pupils at the beginning of lessons about what they are going to learn, and the rate of learning in the juniors matches the teachers' expectations of pupils to work at a high level of concentration.

106. The management of the subject is satisfactory. The co-ordinator and headteacher together have worked successfully to produce a scheme of work that shows in some detail what pupils are to learn. However, this planning is not yet fully implemented and pupils in Year 6 are not well placed to undertake their national tests because they have not had the time to build on their understanding and knowledge. There has been a big improvement in letting pupils investigate and experiment for themselves, and to record their work in a variety of ways. Assessment procedures are in place, although it is not evident from some of these what pupils have learnt, because the procedures have not always been completed carefully. Work is marked, but does not always point out to pupils what they need to do to improve, or make reference to the quality of their written work. Information from assessments is generally used to plan future work for pupils. Monitoring of the subject has started, samples of work have been moderated, and teachers have worked alongside each other.

ART AND DESIGN and DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

107. Only one lesson was seen in each subject. Standards are broadly similar to those expected for pupils of 11, and for pupils aged seven in the case of art, but there are weaknesses in both subjects. In art, work in three dimensions is underdeveloped, and in design and technology the control element is weak. This is a similar picture to the one described at the time of the last inspection. In the present inspection there was not enough evidence to make a judgement about standards in design and technology for pupils at the age of seven. There are three main factors that are holding back pupils' progress in these subjects:

- The timetable is organised so that these subjects are alternated and taught for half a term or a term at a time;
- the school has not yet put in place a scheme of work which outlines precisely what is to be learned by each age group. This means that skills are not being built upon over time as systematically as they might, nor are certain elements being taught regularly enough;
- there is a lack of resources in both subjects, which means that in design and technology statutory requirements are not met.

108. The teacher in the infants provides an appropriate range of experiences, using two-dimensional media to develop pupil's knowledge and skills in art. Pupils use paint, pastel, charcoal and printing in their work but they rarely use modeling materials to work in three dimensions. By the time they are seven, pupils mix paints to create skin tones and hair colours, though even the higher attaining pupils are unsure of how to mix colours to get purple or brown. Pupils experiment with crayons to produce portraits, and make attractive collages to link with their work in science. Work from close observations of daffodils and a variety of historical artifacts shows that pupils are developing their drawing skills well. Information and communication technology is used satisfactorily in the infants for art but not used enough in the juniors or in design and technology.

109. In the juniors, pupils are encouraged to develop their skills in drawing and painting when using their sketchbooks, an improvement since the last inspection. They learn how to develop their printing techniques, building on the skills they have learnt in a series of lessons. Pupils take great pleasure in transferring the designs they have planned on paper to material to make a wall hanging. Pupils take great care in finishing and adding fine detail to their designs, and those with SEN are helped by the classroom assistant to produce work of which they are proud. Pupils have a satisfactory knowledge of the famous artists they study, and recall with relish facts about artists, such as Van Gogh and the fact that he cut off his ear. Work in three dimensions, however, is very limited.

110. In design and technology, infants enjoy making simple models that they can push or pull. They talk confidently about what they have made and explain what different parts do. When making a toy out of card they use split pins to make a part of it move, and cut carefully round the shapes they have drawn.

111. By the age of 11 pupils have a good understanding of how to plan a detailed specification, for example a bird shelter and designing slippers for the infants. They make prototypes and carefully consider the function and purpose of their designs and what materials they may need. Although there were few finished models to look at, conversations with pupils show they have a good understanding of the design process. Their written evaluations showed they had learnt what they needed to do to their models to improve them, and they particularly appreciate being able to choose what type of shelter to make and what materials to use.

112. Pupils have the chance to use tools and undertake some food technology, for example using different fillings when making sandwiches, but the opportunities and resources for such activities are limited.

113. The quality of the art lesson was satisfactory. It was good in the design and technology lesson. Teachers were well prepared and organised, and chose the materials well. Pupils were excited to translate their designs to material in the art lesson, and the teacher gave clear instructions and helped pupils to improve their work. However, the lesson was too long, and the colouring in of a pattern sheet whilst pupils were waiting for their prints to dry did not extend pupils' learning sufficiently. In the design and technology lesson the teacher used good questioning to focus pupils' attention on the important aspects of their designs, for example 'How are we going to make it stronger?' She had high expectations of pupils to plan their work, and monitored pupils' planning well to ensure they had considered all elements of their designs. She also had high expectations of the finished work and, because of this, pupils worked purposefully and with a high degree of concentration.

114. Although the school follows and adapts recent government guidelines for these subjects there is, as yet, no whole-school approach to setting out what skills are to be learned in each year group. The school is in the early stages of monitoring what pupils are taught and learn. Staff are beginning to assess what pupils have learnt in their lessons.

HISTORY AND GEOGRAPHY

115. Few lessons were seen in these subjects, but a range of evidence was taken into account when judgements were formed. By the time pupils are seven and eleven they reach the expected standards in history but in geography the standards are below what they should be at the age of 11. Standards in geography at the upper end of the juniors are also lower than they should be, and lower than at the time of the last inspection, because until very recently pupils have studied too little geography this year. Although the school works on a two-year rolling programme of work, and will cover the curriculum over time, there is no detailed planning that shows what precisely is to be learned for each year group. Work that was planned earlier in the year for the older pupils was not undertaken because of a lack of resources. This is unsatisfactory and limits the progress pupils can make. There was insufficient evidence to make a judgement about standards in geography in the infants.

116. Pupils in the infants develop a good sense of chronology when they talk about events in the past. They have good opportunities to learn from first hand experience when they visit a local museum and learn, for example, about how clothes were washed and ironed in Victorian times. They develop their knowledge of the Victorians in the classroom by means of role-play, dressing up and playing the part of Victorian school children. The teacher conducts a lesson in the style of the Victorian times and pupils learn what it is like to sit in rows and learn the same things together. They are excited by this and try very hard to work silently and produce their very best handwriting, although pupils with SEN found this difficult. In this way, learning has meaning for pupils and they remember facts well. Eleven year old pupils remember well their work about the Greeks. They are particularly proud of their writing about famous Greek philosophers, such as Plato and Socrates, which they researched using the Internet and then word-processed from the notes they had taken. Pupils in the lower juniors are enthusiastic in their learning about the Tudors, including Henry VIII. They realise how hard it might have been for the young King Edward, who came to the throne at the age of nine, to make decisions. They achieve this by considering what decisions they would make about controversial subjects, just as if they were in a position of power. For example, they discussed the advantages and disadvantages of the measles mumps and rubella (MMR)

vaccinations recently discussed in the media. Pupils know the term 'archaeologist' and have a fair idea of the different sources of evidence that can be used to find out the past. However, they have too few opportunities to look at facsimile documents to gain information, such as wills or inventories.

117. In geography, by the age of seven, pupils know their address and can pinpoint features on a large-scale map of the local area. They know that rivers are depicted in blue and know some of the symbols represented. They enjoy pointing out features on an aerial photograph and can point to where they live on the map. They are less secure in remembering what countries make up the British Isles. Teachers give pupils good opportunities to think like geographers and to discuss what they find. Junior pupils in Years 3 and 4 are keen to pinpoint differences between rural and city life, and can spot from pictures changes that have occurred over time. Higher attaining pupils can give good reasons for the changes but the teacher does not always encourage all pupils to think of reasons, which limits their learning. Older juniors learn about how land is used in Workington, a contrasting locality to their own to which they recently paid a visit. They think carefully about their answers to demanding questions, for example 'Why was the steelworks near the coast?' which elicits a variety of replies. Pupils are encouraged to use technical language and learn how to decide which shops and businesses come into a 'primary, secondary or tertiary' category. They remember well the facts they have learnt in the lesson. Pupils are familiar with maps and work out a variety of routes from Bowness to Workington. However, they are slow at finding places in atlases and have little idea about the scales of maps, and are unsure of how to use co-ordinates to work out locations. Pupils remember that they studied Kenya last year, but have difficulty in recalling even the basics of facts.

118. The quality of the teaching in the juniors was very good in one geography lesson and satisfactory in the other. The history lesson in the infants was good. Teachers are well prepared and organised, and give clear instructions. They usually ask challenging questions to make pupils think. In the very good geography lesson the teacher had high expectations of pupils in discussion and in their work. She set time targets for different tasks to be completed, which focused pupils' attention and provided work that was motivating and challenging for pupils of all abilities. A very good feature of the lesson was the plenary session, when pupils evaluated what they had discovered. This not only allowed the teacher to assess what pupils had learnt but also gave the pupils an insight into their own learning. Although this lesson was long its fast pace kept pupils interested. The satisfactory lesson was also long and, in the middle, pupils' interest flagged because the task was not sufficiently focused. The teacher provided an interesting book for pupils to look at but it was too small for pupils to see. Additionally, the teacher did not monitor enough the quality of written work.

119. The teacher did a good end-of-session review of what had been learned. The history lesson was good because the teacher had chosen the resources carefully and followed a Victorian lesson plan to give the pupils the experience of being a Victorian school child. The lesson was enjoyable and pupils gained an insight into children's lives from the past. Strategies for dealing with interruptions made by pupils with SEN are not as sharp as they might be.

120. The new co-ordinators are enthusiastic about the subjects but have had little time yet to make an impact on standards. The school has adopted the government's guidelines for the subject and has adapted them to suit its needs. The teaching of geography has improved. Teachers no longer rely on worksheets that offer little challenge to pupils, as was the case at the time of the previous inspection. Information and communication technology is not used sufficiently in these subjects, due in part to a lack of suitable software.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY (ICT)

121. Pupils are making better progress than they were at the time of the last inspection, but standards are still below what would normally be expected for pupils at the age of 11. Although the school has sufficient computers they are not used as much as they could be, and the result is that pupils are not achieving as well as they could. At the time of the last inspection computers were unused for much of the time. Standards are better in word processing and in using the Internet to search for information, because pupils have more regular access to these aspects of the subject. Some elements of the subject, such as modeling and the use of sensors, are not taught because the school does not have the necessary equipment. These aspects of ICT have not improved since the last inspection.

122. Standards in the infants are better than in the juniors, and pupils' attainment is as expected by the age of seven. This is because, overall, pupils have greater access to computers and appropriately matched work that covers all the elements of the curriculum. Year 2 pupils talk enthusiastically about their work when using a toy which they programme to move and to make right angle turns. By the time they are seven, they develop their keyboard skills satisfactorily. They enter text and organise their work using the space bar, backspace and return keys. They can explain how to retrieve their saved work and are keen to print out their work as soon as it is finished. Pupils use a graphics program to draw colourful pictures and patterns, and use simple mathematics programs to develop their understanding and accuracy with numbers.

123. Older juniors use the Internet to search for information, and take notes, for example about the Greeks, which they then word-process. They find pictures, which they include in their text, and use different fonts and colours to make their work look professional and to give interest. Pupils' skills in using a computer keyboard and a mouse are often good because many of them practise at home. They are keen to use the Internet and, in a numeracy lesson, found out the rate of exchange for the pound and the Euro to help them to solve problems. Information and communication technology is better used in numeracy than in other subjects of the curriculum, such as in history and music, and this is to some extent because of a lack of suitable software. Pupils are competent at using e-mails and have produced graphs and charts to represent data, though they lack confidence in interpreting such information. Although children in the Reception Class use the digital camera with adult help, the older pupils have not yet had such an opportunity.

124. The school employs a specialist who has considerable expertise in the subject, and who withdraws small groups of pupils. She liaises well with the teachers and introduced Year 6 pupils to a spreadsheet and Year 3 pupils to a database program. These lessons were effective in teaching pupils to input data, and gave them the technical skills necessary to use the programs successfully. However, the teachers did not introduce the topics beforehand or explain what spreadsheets or databases are, which was a missed opportunity for promoting pupils' understanding. Additionally, the list of plants Year 3 compiled was too long and had not been collected by them. This meant that the task had less relevance and interest for them. It also took too long and the effect was that they did not learn as much as they might about the functions of a database.

125. Information and communication technology is not planned to be taught in lessons, except when pupils work with the specialist assistant, and teachers do not include its use often enough in their lessons in other subjects. This means that the onus for teaching is unfairly put on the part-time specialist assistant. This is not a satisfactory situation because teachers cannot monitor what pupils are learning when they are withdrawn from the class. As a result, teachers do not make best use of opportunities for pupils to use computers, both in literacy work and in other subjects of the curriculum, such as geography and art. Nor do they often monitor what pupils are doing when using computers.

126. The headteacher is aware that standards are not as high as they need to be and has drawn up a good action plan and curriculum plans. The school has improved its resources. For example, it now has more computers and better software than at the time of the previous inspection, but there are still large gaps in provision. Staff are becoming more confident in the subject and are to receive further training in the near future. The monitoring of the subject is not yet established.

MUSIC AND PHYSICAL EDUCATION

127. Although music and physical education took place during the inspection week, it was not possible to observe any specific music lessons in the infants. Similarly, physical education lessons were seen only in dance, gymnastics and swimming in classes from across the school, so it is not possible to make judgements about pupils' achievements in all aspects of the physical education curriculum. Nevertheless, it is clear from teachers' planning that pupils have satisfactory opportunities over their time in the school to develop music and physical education skills. As at the time of the previous inspection, most pupils at age 11 achieve standards in music and physical education that are normally expected of pupils of this age.

128. Of particular note is the evident good standard of singing. Pupils of all ages sing together enthusiastically, as was evident in each of the assemblies, and in a hymn practice that included pupils from Year 1 to Year 6. For example, their singing of 'If you climb to the top of a mountain,' which most pupils know by heart, was lively, well pitched and dynamic. The use of body actions gave substance to the singing, promoted pupils' enjoyment, and successfully encouraged a good sense of rhythm. Pupils made good progress in their singing during this practice because the teacher gave them good guidance about how to achieve the right pitch. Asking the pupils to stand for the final rendition resulted in a polished performance.

129. Good teaching in a Year 1/2 dance lesson resulted in pupils achieving well, and producing expressive movements to interpret music and events from 'The Wizard of Oz'. The teacher used to good effect her own demonstrations, and those of some pupils, to improve the quality of movement. For example, she showed how the scarecrow hung on his support. This resulted in some interesting and expressive interpretations by the pupils, who showed enthusiasm for the work.

130. Physical education lessons always begin with a short warm-up session, which pupils enjoy, and teachers rightly point out the benefits of these. Teachers plan well for their lessons, and emphasise teaching points, for example the need to be aware of space and to use it well. Nevertheless, sometimes the teachers do not insist on all pupils listening to their

instructions before they move on to the next activity. This wastes time, and pupils do not make as much progress as they could. However, pupils in Years 3 and 4 take a more mature approach and, for instance, work quite well together in groups when they develop balance sequences independently.

131. Pupils in Years 5 and 6 make good progress in swimming, and by the time they leave the school most can swim the expected 25 metres. In the lesson seen, all pupils in both year groups, whether swimmers or not, had sufficient confidence to try to retrieve a brick from the pool floor. Most were successful. Higher attaining pupils displayed good style in their front and back crawls, and responded well to the teachers' guidance to improve their styles.

132. Pupils in Years 3 and 4 respond enthusiastically to opportunities to use instruments, but it is obvious that they have had too little access to them over the years. This is partly due to the fact that the school is short of good quality instruments. Nevertheless, in a very challenging lesson about the intricacies of rhythmic patterns, pupils working in groups managed to devise and perform their own pieces to a satisfactory level. These included at least an ostinato played on a percussion instrument, with contributions from other instruments. Nevertheless, whilst all pupils made sound progress, there was not enough time for them to practise and refine their work.

133. Pupils in Years 5 and 6 reach the expected level of expertise in understanding musical notation. The teacher explained clearly the objective of the lesson and what she wanted them to do. This factor, and her high expectations of the pupils to listen, resulted in pupils concentrating on the tasks and learning well in the lesson. Pupils responded well to the increasing degree of challenge. They co-operatively invented, and recorded in a simple way, their own rhythmic patterns, which they demonstrated to a satisfactory standard to the whole class. The final part of the lesson rightly focused on discussion about how the work could be improved, from which pupils looked forward with enthusiasm to the next lesson. The school makes good use of recorded music to inspire pupils' thinking. For example, assemblies draw on music from around the world, such as from India or South America, played on a range of instruments. Some older pupils confidently interpret the music in terms of how it makes them feel.

134. Partly as a result of the recent appointment of enthusiastic and competent teachers, the school is making good progress in providing pupils with further music and physical education opportunities outside class lessons. For example, many pupils have regular tuition from specialist teachers of trombone and flute. Already, after only a few months tuition, the trombone players give a good rendition of 'When the saints go marching in'. There is also a recorder group that meets weekly, and a choir is to start soon. Similarly, there are netball and football teams, although again, the netball team is a recent innovation. Activities such as these contribute well to pupils' personal development, and pupils talk enthusiastically about taking part.

135. The co-ordinator for music and physical education has been employed at the school for only a matter of a few weeks. She has quickly come to terms with how the subjects are taught in the school, and has drawn up initial action plans. These include revising how teachers' expertise is used in music to greater advantage, teacher training, the use of specialist coaches, for example in rugby, for boys and girls alike, and the purchase of more learning resources.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

136. The teaching of the religious education is better than at the time of the previous inspection, and pupils currently have the benefit of a more balanced and interesting religious education curriculum. The school has adopted the locally Agreed Syllabus as the basis for its curriculum core, as required by the findings of the last inspection, and teachers make good use of nationally produced guidelines. As a result of these developments, all pupils, including those with SEN, now make good progress. Additionally, each class has two lessons per week, specifically to signify to pupils the importance of the subject, and also to give them the opportunity to 'catch up' with their levels of knowledge and understanding.

137. Pupils respond well to their lessons because the teachers make these interesting and relevant to their stages of development. Two of the lessons seen in the inspection were satisfactory overall, and the other was good. Nevertheless, all lessons had significant good qualities.

138. Common to all lessons is the teachers' requirement for pupils to think carefully. Consequently, all teachers use questioning well to draw out pupils' existing knowledge, and to get them to contribute to whole class discussion and to share their opinions. For example, in a Years 3 and 4 lesson about the Easter story, when pupils were asked how they thought Peter felt after denying Jesus three times, one girl replied, 'He would be cross with himself because Jesus was his friend and he'd let him down.' Other answers similar in quality to this show that pupils do think carefully, and relate to real situations what they know about the stories they have heard. In another lesson, six and seven year olds recalled special incidents from the Bible, such as when Jesus turned water into wine, and cured people of illnesses. They felt that these were reasons why people came in droves to welcome Jesus, riding into Jerusalem on a donkey.

139. The teachers relate very well to their pupils and make them feel confident in their learning. For example, in the lesson about Jesus on a donkey, the teacher skillfully guided her pupils into a role-play exercise, without the pupils realising fully what was happening. The pupils 'became' the welcoming crowd, or the apostles, or Jesus Himself, with the result that this exercise brought home to them the reality of the event. Such qualities of teaching as this ensure that pupils fully understand religious events and celebrations.

140. Much of the subject's format consists of discussion and story telling. However, as pupils move up the school, they are required to write more in lessons. The quality of writing is variable and, at best, satisfactory. Too little results from individual thought, and teachers do not remind pupils enough of the need to apply the same rules of writing in this subject as they do when writing in English lessons.

141. Pupils study a range of world religions during their time at the school. These include Christianity, Buddhism, Judaism and Islam. Most pupils in Year 6 have a reasonable knowledge of each of these. They can name the major sacred books, and draw some comparisons between them. They understand that religions promote rules by which we should live, and relate them to real life situations. In a good lesson for pupils in Years 5 and 6, some pupils gave thoughtful answers to their teacher's question about why we have rules. One such was, '...so that we know the boundaries of our behaviour,' and another was, '...to help us live in one community.' The teacher in this interesting lesson successfully, after a quiet start, encouraged most pupils to take part in the discussion. This happened because, firstly, she had high expectations of pupils to listen, and would not accept any untoward behaviour. Secondly, she gave the pupils time to talk quietly in pairs to consider their

responses, for example about some of the precepts (rules) of Buddhism. The final part of the lesson showed that the pupils could apply the precepts to aspects of their own lives. In this way, and in the calibre of such lessons, the subject makes a strong contribution to pupils' moral, spiritual and cultural development.

142. All teachers are keen to teach the subject, and take every opportunity to make their teaching effective. Any weaknesses in teaching are to do with unsatisfactory use of time, control of a few disruptive pupils on occasions, or too low expectations of high quality written work. In contrast, the strengths of all lessons are to do with teachers' commitment to improving pupils' progress. This they achieve through the good use of resources, effective planning and challenging pupils to become independent thinkers who can contribute sensibly to whole class discussions. Consequently, the school is having greater success in the subject than it was. It has introduced such initiatives as a visit for older pupils to a nearby Buddhist temple, made good use of resources supplied by the Diocese, and featured two lessons per week for each class. Future plans for the subject appropriately include the purchase of more religious artifacts, and making better use of art, drama and pupils' literacy skills to enhance their learning.