

INSPECTION REPORT

BARROW PRIMARY SCHOOL

Barrow, Clitheroe

LEA area: Lancashire

Unique reference number: 119397

Headteacher: Mr C Wood

Acting Headteacher at the time of the inspection: Mrs C Marchi

Reporting inspector: Lynne Read
21199

Dates of inspection: 10 - 13 June 2002

Inspection number: 245270

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

| | |
|------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| Type of school: | Infant and junior |
| School category: | Voluntary controlled |
| Age range of pupils: | 4 to 11 years |
| Gender of pupils: | Mixed |
| School address: | Old Row Barrow Clitheroe |
| Postcode: | BB7 9AZ |
| Telephone number: | 01254 822338 |
| Fax number: | 01254 822408 |
| Appropriate authority: | The governing body |
| Name of chair of governors: | Mr Stephen Dilworth |
| Date of previous inspection: | 2 March 1998 |

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

| Team members | | | Subject responsibilities | Aspect responsibilities |
|--------------|----------------|----------------------|---|--|
| 21199 | Lynne Read | Registered inspector | Special educational needs Art Design and technology English Religious education | What sort of school is it? How high are standards? a) The school's results and achievements How well are pupils taught? How well is the school led and managed? What should the school do to improve further? |
| 9214 | Janet Garland | Lay inspector | | How high are standards? b) Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development How well does the school work in partnership with parents? |
| 12232 | Diane Atkinson | Team inspector | Foundation stage Information and communication technology Music Science | How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils? |
| 21910 | Gordon Longton | Team inspector | English as an additional language Equal opportunities Geography History Mathematics Physical education | How well does the school care for its pupils? |

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Barrow Primary school is situated in the village of the same name, close to Clitheroe in the Ribble Valley. There has been a substantial increase in the numbers on roll over the last four years. With 120 pupils currently attending, it is smaller than most primary schools. The school has a good reputation and many pupils travel some distance from surrounding areas to attend. On balance, social and economic circumstances are above average. Children entering the reception class have a range of learning experiences that are above average overall for their age group. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is below average, at just over eight per cent. Pupils are of British backgrounds and all speak English as their first language. Over 25 per cent of pupils are on the school's register of special educational needs, of which four have a formal statement. Both of these figures are above the national average. The substantive headteacher has been absent since the autumn term. The acting headteacher is seconded to the school on a short-term contract and there is a temporary deputy headteacher.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

Under the direction of the acting headteacher there have been very good improvements at the school, which currently provides a good standard of education for its pupils. Strengths include good achievements in English and mathematics, the very good quality of teaching and very good provision for pupils who have special educational needs. The school is dealing with major staffing and management issues at present that have proved costly. It currently provides satisfactory value for money.

What the school does well

- Pupils, throughout the school, achieve well in English, mathematics, art and design, design and technology, geography and history.
- The acting headteacher, ably assisted by the governors, provides very good leadership and a strong drive towards improvement.
- Teaching is mainly very good in the reception class and Years 3 to 6 and good in Years 1 and 2. Provision for the young children in the reception class is very good. They enjoy a stimulating learning environment and a wide range of opportunities to develop their academic, creative and personal skills.
- Pupils who have special educational needs are very well supported through focused targets for learning and by knowledgeable teaching assistants.
- Very good provision for pupils' spiritual, social and moral education leads to good standards of personal development. Pupils' attitudes to school are very good and they are well motivated in lessons. Relationships throughout school are very good.
- The curriculum in Years 1 to 6 provides a good emphasis on developing pupils' academic, practical and creative skills.

What could be improved

- Attainment in information and communication technology (ICT) and opportunities for pupils to use their skills when studying other subjects.
- The corporate management of the school, which lacks a second tier of management and does not yet ensure that subject managers observe and monitor lessons.
- The role of the governing body in actively monitoring and evaluating the success of the school development plan and in ensuring that the remaining targets are met on time.

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 1998 and has made good progress in addressing the five key issues identified, although two of them have been dealt with only since January 2002. Standards in English and mathematics have improved and, by the end of Year 2, are above average. The planning for children in the reception class covers all the areas of learning and provision here is a strength of the school. From

the beginning of this year, subject managers have re-written schemes of planning for all subjects, following national guidance and covering all the programmes of study in a balanced way. The acting headteacher and governors embarked on a thorough evaluation of the school's work and, together with staff, produced a comprehensive and detailed plan for improvement that covers three years. There is a new, annual improvement cycle in place.

STANDARDS

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

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

| Key | |
|--------------------|---|
| well above average | A |
| above average | B |
| average | C |
| below average | D |
| well below average | E |

Children in the reception class make very good progress in all areas of learning. Their achievements are above expectations by the time they enter Year 1 when many have already begun to work on the National Curriculum programmes of study. The good progress is a result of good teaching and provision. Results in the National Curriculum tests for seven and eleven year-olds vary from year to year. This is due firstly to the numbers of pupils with special educational needs in each year group that can be as high as 50 per cent. Secondly, many pupils enter the school part way through their education and not all have had the same good grounding in the basic skills as Barrow provides. Out of 14 pupils in Year 6, eight have arrived after the reception class. Thirdly, the cohort numbers are small and each pupil represents a high percentage of the marks. Trends over time need to be treated with caution because of these factors. For the eleven year-olds they show a pattern of improvement that is above the national trend in English and science. A dip in the mathematics attainment in 2001 means that improvement here is not as good as the national trend. In the 2001 National Curriculum tests and assessments in Year 2, attainment in reading, writing and science was above the national average and well above in mathematics. Inspection findings conclude that achievements for this year group are likely to be similar. In the Year 6 tests, attainment in 2001 was above the national and similar school average for English and science and average for mathematics. The current Year 6 group are attaining standards that are average overall in all three subjects and pupils achieve well. This year's targets for attainment are unlikely to be met because nearly 50 per cent of the group arrived after Year 2. The Year 5 group is likely to achieve above average standards by the time they are eleven. Looking at past results, there are some differences in the attainment of boys and girls: during lessons observed there was no difference in achievements. The vast imbalance of boys and girls in year groups influences statistics. Attainment in information and communication technology (ICT) by the end of Year 6 is below expectations. Pupils' achievements in art and design, design and technology, geography and history are above expectations throughout the school. For all other subjects, attainment matches expectations. For music no judgement was made.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

| Aspect | Comment |
|-------------------------|---|
| Attitudes to the school | Pupils are keen to succeed, maintain very good levels of concentration and work hard to complete their tasks. There is a strong sense of pride in the school. |

| | |
|--|---|
| Behaviour, in and out of classrooms | Behaviour throughout the school is good. The majority of pupils understand and follow the school rules and routines with very little prompting by adults. Those who have identified needs in this area receive very effective support through their individual learning plans and sensitive intervention from adults. |
| Personal development and relationships | Relationships are very good and make a significant contribution to pupils' progress and to the vibrant atmosphere in school. Pupils are confident and most show developing maturity as they take responsibility for their own conduct. |
| Attendance | Attendance rates have decreased and are now only average. This is due to the increasing frequency of parents taking pupils out of school for holidays in term time. Pupils are punctual and arrive eager to start their lessons. |

TEACHING AND LEARNING

| Teaching of pupils in: | Reception | Years 1 – 2 | Years 3 – 6 |
|------------------------|-----------|-------------|-------------|
| Quality of teaching | Very good | Good | Very good |

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

The quality of teaching is a strength of the school and underpins pupils' good achievements. The teachers' skills and dedication are largely responsible for ensuring that good standards of achievement and provision have been maintained during the recent period of instability. Teachers have high expectations and carefully focus on the targets for improvement, ensuring good rates of learning. An appropriate emphasis on literacy and numeracy starts early in the reception class and is effectively continued throughout school. This ensures that pupils acquire the basic skills well. Teachers' knowledge and understanding is good across the curriculum and staff who have expertise in specific subjects advise their colleagues effectively. Throughout the school, lessons have clear aims that the teachers share with the class. This sets a purpose for the work and presents pupils with goals to work towards. Teachers pay great attention to the needs of all groups within the class. Focused and sensitive support for pupils who have special educational needs ensures that they meet their individual targets. Teachers set extended activities for those capable of higher attainment, especially in English and mathematics. In the satisfactory lessons seen in the Years 1 and 2 phase, there were several strengths but weaknesses included less demand made of pupils. Sometimes, pupils spend too much time listening to the teacher rather than being actively involved in learning. Assessment and target setting is not established in Year 1 for this year and, consequently, without clear goals for attainment, the pace of teaching is sometimes less rigorous.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

| Aspect | Comment |
|---|---|
| The quality and range of the curriculum | The school provides a broad range of interesting learning opportunities across the curriculum. Links between subjects allow pupils to use their newly acquired skills in different contexts and to enhance their understanding. |
| Provision for pupils with special educational needs | There is very good provision for pupils on the school's register of special educational needs. They have individual education programmes and |

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|---|--|
| | targets that are agreed with parents and regularly reviewed. All pupils share in the varied opportunities offered by the school. |
| Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development | For spiritual, social and moral education, provision is very good. Pupils have a well-defined sense of right and wrong and of fair play. They are polite, friendly and helpful. All age groups take care with their work and are proud of their school. Cultural development is effectively promoted through assemblies and lessons. Pupils respect other people's beliefs, views and opinions. The school lives out its Christian aims very effectively and on a daily basis. |
| How well the school cares for its pupils | Established routines provide a good standard of care and safety for pupils. Successful systems for assessing progress and setting targets for learning for English and mathematics in Years 2 to 6 have been successfully introduced under the direction of the acting headteacher. They ensure that pupils are challenged and make good progress. Positive strategies to promote good habits of behaviour are very successful. |

Parents have a good opinion of the school and support their children effectively at home. They appreciate the school's emphasis on personal as well as academic development and praise the 'family atmosphere'. Some are concerned about the temporary nature of management at the school which is understandable. The governors are working to improve matters.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

| Aspect | Comment |
|--|---|
| Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff | The leadership provided by the acting headteacher and subject managers is very good. They have a clear vision for future developments. Management systems have been much improved since January this year and are good. Some work is delegated to key staff but there is no permanent second tier to support and deputise for the headteacher. Overall, therefore, management is satisfactory. |
| How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities | The leadership of the governors is very good. Since the autumn term, they have taken a much more active role in managing the school and now have a thorough overview of strengths and weaknesses. They took swift and appropriate action in securing an acting headteacher to ensure that pupils' education did not suffer in the absence of the substantive headteacher. Their management of the school has improved substantially and is now good but they still rely heavily on the acting headteacher to monitor the success of the school improvement plan and need to take a more active role, especially since her appointment is a temporary one. |
| The school's evaluation of its performance | A thorough evaluation of the school's performance was completed at the beginning of the year by the acting headteacher, subject managers and governors. Appropriate priorities were set to rectify the many issues identified. An annual cycle of evaluation is now established. The subject managers have a sound overview of learning and achievement in their subjects but their role has not, as yet, been sufficiently developed to include the monitoring of lessons and therefore they do not evaluate teaching. |
| The strategic use of resources | The governors and headteacher manage all funds carefully, linking expenditure to agreed priorities within the school improvement plan. The staffing issues over the year have taken up most of the school's financial |

| | |
|--|---|
| | reserves and governors have done well to maintain, and in some areas improve, the quality of pupils' education. |
|--|---|

A high quality of classroom support for pupils is provided by some accomplished and experienced teaching assistants. All adults who work in classes know the aims of each lesson and are fully briefed on their tasks. Accommodation is unsatisfactory because there is no hall or library and some classrooms are very small. Resources are generally satisfactory for teaching and learning but there are some shortages for science and ICT. Day-to-day administration is very efficient.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

| What pleases parents most | What parents would like to see improved |
|---|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Behaviour is good and the school helps their children to become mature and responsible. • The teaching is good. Their children are expected to work hard and they make good progress. • The school works closely with parents and they are welcomed at all times to discuss issues. • They are well informed about their children's progress. • Children like coming to school. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The range of activities outside of lessons. • Homework. • Leadership and management. • How the school works with parents. |

The team fully endorses parents' positive views of the school. The judgement of the inspection team is that the provision of academic, sporting and social opportunities outside lessons is good. The amount and nature of homework set is satisfactory. There have been very good improvements to leadership and management since January 2002. Important safety issues came to light and needed to be tackled immediately. Some parents felt that they were not kept well informed about the reasons for the essential changes that were made, although a letter was sent to all families. Governors are reviewing their methods of communication to ensure that all parents are kept up to date with future developments.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and pupils' achievements

1. In the National Curriculum tests for Year 2 in 2001, results were above the national average in reading and writing and well above in mathematics. The teacher assessments for science were also well above average, with all pupils achieving the expected level 2. When compared to similar schools, results were equally good. Trends over time show that attainment levels for reading, writing and mathematics at the school are improving at roughly the same rate as the national pattern. Inspection findings are that attainment at the end of Year 2 is above average in reading, writing, mathematics and for science. For this age group, there have been very good improvements in attainment for reading, writing and mathematics since the last inspection and achievements in science have been maintained. Pupils with special educational needs make very good progress because their programmes of learning are carefully targeted to overcome problems and ensure good levels of confidence.
2. Results of the tests in Year 6 in 2001 show above-average attainment in English and science and average in mathematics. When compared to similar schools attainment in English and science is equally good and for mathematics it is average. A good percentage of pupils achieved the expected level 4 in this subject but relatively fewer reached the higher level 5. Trends over time show that attainment in English is steadily rising. In mathematics it has dropped from a high in 2000 and trends overall are lower than the national pattern. New systems for target setting are leading to improvements. For science, attainment trends are slightly better than the average pattern and the improvements made in 1999 have been sustained. Progress, as measured from the end of Year 2 to Year 6 is well above average. Over 50 per cent of the current Year 6 group of pupils have entered the school part way through their education and over one half have special educational needs. Inspection finds their achievements in lessons to be average overall for English, mathematics and science. This represents some concerted efforts on the part of both pupils and teachers and some very good progress, especially for those with special educational needs. Year groups are small at the school and therefore numerical comparisons can be misleading since one pupil represents seven per cent of the total marks. Differences in the attainment of boys and girls should also be treated with caution since there are major imbalances between numbers of boys and girls in some year groups. On the basis of the figures alone, girls appear to be doing better at all subjects except mathematics by the end of Year 6. During lesson observations, the team found no differences in the progress of boys and girls in relation to their prior learning. There are more boys on the register of special educational needs and in two year groups, girls make up just 15 per cent of the total. The team could find no differences between the teaching of and provision for boys and girls; indeed teachers make a great effort to find books and topics that will be enjoyed by all. All pupils from ethnic and social groups make equally good progress.
3. Children enter the reception class with widely varying levels of prior experience and learning. Taking into account the skills identified on the baseline assessment when children enter school, attainment is above the expected level at the start of the reception year but some have particular needs and require a substantial amount of support. By the end of the year, children have made very good progress and almost every one has achieved the early learning goals in all areas. The majority are working in the early stages of the National Curriculum programmes of study. Skills in personal and social education are especially well developed and contribute to the enthusiastic response to teaching in future years. There have been very good improvements in learning for this age group since the last inspection and especially over this last year.
4. In Years 1 and 2, pupils make good progress overall. By the end of Year 2, pupils have a very useful range of reading strategies that they use effectively to help them tackle new books. Their comprehension is very good and the higher attaining pupils 'read between the lines' to find shades of meaning. Pupils' writing is well sequenced, and accurately punctuated in most cases. They

spell words by splitting them into sounds and know many irregularly spelt key words from memory. In mathematics, pupils compute accurately using pen and paper methods and mental strategies. They achieve good levels of knowledge and understanding in all areas of the science curriculum and use their investigative skills effectively. In information and communications technology, pupils develop the basic skills but do not have sufficient opportunities to use them when studying other subjects. By the time pupils reach the end of Year 2, attainment in art and design, design and technology, geography and history is above what is expected and they have made very good progress. In all other subjects, skills knowledge and understanding match national expectations. Pupils' skills of speaking and listening are especially well developed.

5. In Years 3 to 6, pupils continue to make good gains in their learning. Pupils' reading becomes fluent and expressive. They enjoy a very wide range of styles and have favourite authors. They investigate a range of story structures and are beginning to experiment with different techniques to improve writing. Pupils give their own views about books, justifying them with examples from the text. They examine non-fiction writing, analysing the structure and linguistic features effectively. Higher achieving pupils have a good grasp of punctuation and grammar and some have the confidence to experiment with extended sentences and the full range of punctuation to produce more sophisticated writing. In mathematics, pupils have a good understanding of number. Their skills of mental computation are good and they have a useful range of strategies to use when problem solving. In science, pupils' skills of scientific enquiry, investigation and fair testing are now well developed and applied across the programme of study for the subject. Their knowledge and understanding of living things, materials and physical processes are good. Pupils demonstrate developing skills in all areas of information and communications technology (ICT) but attainment is below expectations in Year 6. They use CD ROMs and the Internet for research, program a floor robot and successfully employ a graphics program to generate symmetrical patterns. Skills in this area are not as well developed as they could be because of computer operating faults that restrict the amount of 'hands-on' time that the pupils have. Skills in ICT are not consistently applied to support study in different subjects and therefore pupils do not consolidate what they have learned. By the end of Year 6, pupils' attainment in art and design, design and technology, geography and history is above expectations. There are also some strengths in aspects of physical education, such as swimming. In all other subjects of the curriculum, except music where there was insufficient evidence for any judgement, attainment meets national expectations and pupils have made at least satisfactory progress. Pupils identified as having special educational needs achieve the goals that their teachers set through focused, sensitive support. More emphasis is now given to challenging the higher attaining pupils and this is reflected in the better number of pupils achieving the higher standards in their lessons.
6. The school exceeded its statutory targets for attainment in English and mathematics in 2001. This year's targets are unlikely to be met. They were set before the acting headteacher took up her post and predictions were based on pupils' attainment at the end of Year 2. Since nearly one half of the class has joined the school after that time, the targets do not match the cohort. There is a much larger than average percentage of pupils with special educational needs in the group who progress very well but some may not reach the average levels, especially in writing.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

7. Pupils have very good attitudes to school, they arrive on time in the mornings and are enthusiastic about their work. Pupils listen carefully to their teachers and demonstrate good levels of concentration. They collaborate successfully, sharing materials and ideas freely. The good attitudes seen at the time of the last inspection have been improved further.
8. Behaviour is good, in class and also in the playground. Pupils of all ages mix together in this small school, playing skipping games and chasing around in a good-natured fashion in the restricted space. School and class rules are kept to a minimum and are understood by all. As a result, there is a calm, productive atmosphere with pupils moving around in a sensible manner. Parents are very happy about the standard of conduct in school. In the returned questionnaires, 96 per cent of parents agreed that behaviour is good. There have been no exclusions during the last two years.

9. Relationships are very good. Pupils show very good empathy with their classmates who have special educational needs and there is a strong, caring, supportive ethos that pervades all the school's work. This is encouraged from the earliest days in reception class and thoughtful behaviour is rewarded throughout the school. Each individual's views and opinions are respected and teachers make the most of pupils' talents. It is a fact that many pupils who have had difficulties in other schools flourish in this environment.
10. Personal development is good. As pupils progress through the school they have some opportunities to take positions of responsibility. Some boys volunteered to scrub the tables before a food technology lesson. They completed their task with great enthusiasm, being fully aware of the need to ensure good standards of hygiene. Pupils carry out their allocated responsibilities conscientiously and make a good contribution to the smooth running of the school. There are plans to make greater use of opportunities such as the School Council to develop pupils' views and increase understanding of the democratic process. The group has made a good beginning, with its Year 6 members discussing matters of interest to them and making their opinions known. They would benefit from more adult guidance to structure the process and organise their ideas more effectively.
11. Attendance is satisfactory. It has dropped of late, and examination of the registers shows that this is mainly due to parents taking their children out of school for holidays during term time. This sometimes happens twice a year and is having a negative effect on those pupils' learning.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS OR STUDENTS TAUGHT?

12. During the inspection, 47 lessons or parts of lessons were observed. No unsatisfactory lessons were seen and most of the teaching was very good and good with some excellent practice. In one fifth of lessons teaching was excellent, in one quarter it was very good; in just over one half it was good, and in the remaining small proportion it was satisfactory. This represents a good improvement since the last inspection, with a much higher percentage of very good and excellent practice. The quality of teaching is a strength of the school and is directly responsible for the good rate of learning and very good achievements of pupils with special educational needs. The teachers have been successful in maintaining standards and provision during the recent unsettled period and have shown a considerable commitment to the school.
13. The foundation stage caters for children up to the age of six and is more commonly referred to as the reception class. Overall, for this age group teaching is very good, with a significant proportion being of the highest standard. As a result, children achieve well. The vast majority of them have achieved their early learning goals and are working within the National Curriculum programmes of study in English and mathematics. A notable strength of teaching in this class is the range of interesting activities provided for pupils' development across all the recommended areas of learning. Lessons very cleverly consolidate and extend pupils' developing skills, knowledge and understanding, especially in language and literacy and mathematical work. During the week of the inspection the theme was 'bears' and activities included reading stories, improvisation in the 'bears' den', counting groups of toy bears and singing about the animals. In this way, new learning was practised and enhanced. The teacher and adults work effectively together, paying great attention to establishing routines and to developing confidence and independence in their pupils. This sets a very firm foundation for later learning. The teaching assistants and parents often work with a specific group, having a clearly defined brief. In this way, the teacher ensures that pupils in the below average group are fully involved in the lesson and are able to keep up with the fast pace of learning; and those who are fast learners have the challenge that they need.
14. The majority of teaching in Years 1 and 2 is good, with this standard seen in nearly 70 per cent of lessons. One in ten lessons was very good. Teachers choose interesting books to share with the pupils that motivate them to learn. Very good teaching of reading strategies uses games and practical sessions to extend pupils' skills in discriminating and blending sounds in the English language. In one lesson, Year 2 pupils collaborated in making different words containing the 'ar'

sound by changing the first and final letters. They thoroughly enjoyed the activity and worked very hard on skills that are essential for good reading and spelling. The teaching of mathematics is a strong feature, with group activities well designed to build on the mental mathematics starter session. To ensure that pupils remain challenged, teachers set work at different levels, especially in English and mathematics, in a way that builds carefully on their prior learning. In a very good mathematics lesson in Year 2 nearly one half of the class was working at the higher levels through extension activities that really stretched their learning. The day-to-day planning in Year 2 reflects the challenging targets for pupils' learning in English and mathematics. There were no specific goals set for the Year 1 pupils for this year. As a result, the tracking of progress does not clearly show who is achieving above or below their target and systems are not currently as rigorous as in other year groups. This has been recognised and appropriate action is being taken. Sometimes, in Years 1 and 2, the pace of lessons is not as fast as it could be, although it is never less than satisfactory. In one lesson, the pupils sat on the carpet for a long period and opportunities to include interactive sessions were missed. These could have provided the extra motivation that was needed. In general, however, the good balance of oral, practical and creative activities provides a rich level of experience and maintains pupils' interests effectively.

15. A good feature of teaching for pupils in Years 3 to 6 is the challenging pace of lessons. For this age group, over a third of the teaching seen was very good and one lesson in ten was excellent. Teachers' planning and a scrutiny of pupils' books show good emphasis on the extension and enhancement of reading, writing and mathematical skills in other subjects. For example, pupils recount experiments in science or events in history. They write plans and instructions in design and technology and use explanatory texts when writing about 'the water cycle'. Teachers often set open-ended tasks that allow pupils to ask their own questions, investigate and explore. In practical sessions there are good opportunities for pupils to try out their ideas, make mistakes and find ways to solve the problems encountered. For example, in one science lesson, pupils worked together to discover different types of circuit to make their light, bell and motor work. Sensitive support helps their skills of investigation. Teachers and teaching assistants encourage them to think the problem out. They pose some searching questions and skilfully channel their thoughts towards a solution. The quality of marking is very good. Teachers include helpful comments that show the pupils how they can improve. Encouraging feedback is often given orally during lessons so that pupils know how they are getting on. Teachers establish very good relationships with the pupils. Throughout the school there is an enthusiasm for learning.
16. Teachers have consistent approaches that support learning very well. They routinely tell pupils what they are going to learn, thereby providing a clear focus for the lesson. Sessions are usually concluded with a focused session to assess progress, tackle any misconceptions and congratulate individuals on their successes. This encourages pupils from the earliest stages to take responsibility for their own work and supports the development of confidence. It also provides very useful information for the teacher that enables good planning for the next lesson. Questioning techniques are very good and all pupils' replies are treated with sensitivity. This creates stimulating discussions and encourages all pupils to be involved. Teachers' planning is detailed and there is very good class management. Carefully chosen resources are organised and are readily available; pupils' books and other consumables are always to hand, and classroom routines are well established. This is especially important in the smaller classrooms where conditions are cramped. In preparing for a food technology lesson in Years 5 and 6, the teacher re-arranged the tables and had all the equipment and ingredients in the right place so that pupils could begin promptly.
17. Teachers throughout school have a good understanding of the most effective ways to teach literacy and numeracy and are successful in supporting pupils to develop skills in these areas. English and mathematics lessons are often delivered imaginatively and maintain high expectations of class, group and independent working. A useful day-to-day assessment process ensures that any gaps in learning are rectified and that pupils are on track to achieve what their teachers expect. This is especially important for the pupils who have joined the school part way through their education and have not had the same grounding in basic skills. Homework is used consistently to consolidate and practise learning in reading, spelling and mathematics but tasks tend to be routine and there are few extended research or study opportunities.

18. Most teachers have undergone training in the use of ICT in the classroom and are confident in their approach. A greater emphasis on applying these skills across the curriculum is now needed in Years 1 to 6. In the reception class, pupils are constantly encouraged to apply their skills in communication, language, literacy and mathematical understanding in all their work.
19. The teaching of pupils who have special educational needs is very good throughout the school and enables them to make very good gains in learning. The requirements of individual education plans are built into daily activities. Designated support staff provide targeted and unobtrusive support to meet individual and group needs. This ensures that all pupils are fully integrated into the life of the school community and that all develop good levels of self-confidence. Pupils who require additional help are identified as soon as possible in the reception class or when they begin at the school. The special educational needs co-ordinator, the class teacher and the teaching assistant, discuss and develop each pupil's individual education plan. Short-term targets are shared with parents and pupils and this system is very successful in helping them to realise their goals. Teaching and specialist support assistants know their pupils very well and this allows them to anticipate problems and to have solutions at their finger tips. Those pupils who are gifted or show a particular aptitude for a subject are well catered for through focused tasks and additional challenge. On occasions, in lessons seen, the teaching assistant was not fully engaged with the pupils all of the time and simply listened to the teacher during whole-class sessions or was carrying out routine jobs. As a result, there were wasted opportunities to support pupils, and inefficiencies in the use of adults' time.
20. Teachers make good use of the local environment and community links, especially in the teaching of science, design and technology, geography, history and physical education. Very productive links with the high school provide vital opportunities for pupils to develop their physical skills and they benefit from the excellent tuition of specialist teachers. Parents' returned questionnaires show that 92 per cent are of the opinion that 'teaching is good' and 96 per cent agreed that 'the school expects pupils to work hard'. The same opinions were repeated at the parents' meeting.

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

21. Overall, the quality of the curriculum is good. It meets the needs of all pupils and gives a high priority to the core subjects of English and mathematics. The attention to planning since January 2002 has created a framework that ensures a wide, rich and relevant curriculum although ICT is relatively weaker in the upper school. All statutory requirements are met. The school follows the locally agreed syllabus for religious education. The governors have decided that sex education should not be taught. The provision for personal, social and health education is good. The school rightly prides itself on the provision for special educational needs, which is very good. The implementation of the curriculum ensures equality of opportunity and inclusion very effectively. Since the last inspection the improvements made have been good, but most of the steps taken to achieve this are very recent developments. It is too early to judge the full impact that they will have on standards.
22. The new schemes of work thoughtfully modify the national guidelines so that they meet the particular needs of the school. They accommodate single year-group teaching in the reception class and Years 1 and 2 and a two-year cycle for the classes in Years 3 to 6. This is especially helpful for guiding teacher's planning in the mixed-age older class. Policies, all written since the spring, are good - individual and effective in identifying the aims, organisation and teaching approaches for each subject. The staff have produced a detailed plan of how all the subjects of the curriculum fit together into a well thought out teaching programme. They call this the 'curriculum map'. They have ensured that links between subjects are identified and for the most part these are explored in most interesting ways. The half-termly planning for each class develops the relevant sections of the curriculum map into a clear teaching programme, which

effectively identifies the skills and concepts to be taught. It ensures that all elements are addressed in sufficient depth, as well as clearly identifying the progressive steps that pupils will experience.

23. Provision for children's learning in the reception class is very good. All the shortcomings described in the previous report have been addressed. The provision follows national guidelines and provides a very good balance across the identified six areas of learning. It ensures children's progress towards the nationally recommended early learning goals, which lead naturally into the early stages of the National Curriculum. The principles of learning through first hand experience, investigation and play very successfully underpin the teaching and learning. The high quality planning includes lots of practical explorations, imaginative play and exciting games. Skills in one area of learning are deftly woven into activities and explorations in another, so children explore an idea in many different contexts. This adds great richness and relevance. All six areas of learning are thoroughly covered. There is clear guidance for all adults participating in activities, thus ensuring that the focus and learning intentions are similar and shared. Whatever a child's capabilities or specific educational need, all have equality of access and are challenged appropriately. As the school year progresses, children are introduced to the literacy and numeracy hours in a modified form. The reception class prepares children very well for the next stage of their education.
24. In Years 1 to 6, a good proportion of time is devoted to literacy and numeracy. The school makes effective use of the national guidelines for teaching these two subjects. The planning is detailed and builds well on prior learning. The links between subjects are harnessed effectively to provide opportunities for pupils to write for different purposes at length, read for information and to discuss their ideas, thus honing their speaking and listening skills. These factors underpin the effective learning in all subjects. Likewise, pupils' numeracy skills are applied and developed in other subjects, especially in science. However, this is not so in ICT and here, the standards achieved by the end of Year 6 are not satisfactory. The scheme and detailed guidance for developing the half-termly plans are very well structured and clearly identify links between subjects and ICT but these are not yet adequately implemented. Thus ICT is not yet a real tool for learning in other subjects.
25. There is a good allocation of time for good quality work in the other subjects. There is a particular richness in the art, design and technology aspects. The timetable ensures that the approach to each subject is not too piecemeal and provides blocks of lessons so that practical and extended projects can be completed successfully. However, the newness of the whole school planning means that in subjects where it is imperative to build systematically on acquiring and applying skills, such as in ICT and music, there is some deficit of understanding for the older pupils. This can not be overcome entirely over two terms.
26. The school's provision for extra-curricular activities is good for a school of this size. The activities are organised on a half-termly basis and the range varies with the seasons and the people available to run the clubs. Activities include art, homework, book and film clubs. The boys' and girls' football teams and a netball team participate in inter-school competitions. A local football training coach works with pupils from Years 4, 5 and 6. Pupils also have had the opportunity to follow a cycling proficiency course. Parents play a significant role in developing sport and music. There is a recorder club, run by a parent and a few pupils benefit from the county peripatetic music service. In Years 5 and 6 the pupils' curriculum is enriched by particular events such as a breadmaking experience, a 'chemistry at work' event run by a business partnership venture and a residential visit. School visits are used effectively to broaden and stimulate learning for all.
27. The school sets a high priority on ensuring equality of access. The planning and support for pupils with special educational needs is very good. Individual educational plans are well written and the dedication and effectiveness of the special support assistants ensure that these pupils make steady progress. They participate in all activities in class and the remainder of the pupils support and applaud their success with delight. Boys and girls work well together. They collaborate effectively across a range of different group activities. There is no evident difference in the contribution to class discussion or in the standards achieved. The school has worked hard at

ensuring that a task is appropriately matched to an individual's or group's needs. The new planning formats are instrumental in keeping this aspect to the fore for everyone's attention. High achieving pupils are challenged and have the opportunity to produce work of considerable length and depth.

28. There are very good links between Barrow School, partner institutions and the local community. The success of the physical education programme is dependent on the high quality teaching input from specialist staff. The reception class teacher visits the playgroup to ease children's transition into Barrow School. The Methodist minister offers his support for the school and is keen to re-establish links once the problems with the chapel building are solved. Parents are regular helpers in classrooms, playing a most valuable part as role models, hearing children read or imparting their own musical and sporting skills to pupils.
29. Provision for pupils' spiritual, moral and social development is very good and for cultural it is good. Spiritual development is encouraged by reflection and by looking beyond the immediate surface of things to make connections with music, art and religious education. Pupils study a range of different world religions and explore how belief influences people's everyday life. They find parallels in the common views towards the wonder of life and in basic human values such as consideration and kindness. In the reception class pupils asked spontaneously if they could say a prayer at the end of their lesson, and they all joined in naturally. In all classes, pupils make up prayers to show that they have understood the theme for worship, for example, one pupil gave thanks for water and another asked for help in making people happy. There is no hall and the chapel is out of use. Therefore, most collective worship sessions take place in the classrooms. While this restricts opportunities for the school community to meet as a whole, it does have some benefits. Pupils, in their small class groups, are able to discuss issues more fully than in a large gathering and this adds to their spiritual development. For example, they talk about Bible stories, parables and fables, reflecting on the messages and considering their relevance for everyday life. Older pupils consider more sophisticated issues such as symbolism and discrimination.
30. Moral development is very good and reflected in pupils' conduct. The school rules are clear and well understood by pupils and parents who endorse them fully. Staff instil in their pupils a strong sense of right and wrong and constantly encourage them to consider their actions on other people. Pupils take care of each other, of property and buildings, and show a great sense of pride in their school. Teachers and support assistants provide patience and good support in affecting the behaviour of pupils who have had problems in the past. They encourage reflection and discussion, providing practical solutions to help pupils cope with their feelings.
31. The provision for pupils' social development is very good. There is a very strong drive for inclusion throughout the school and pupils are encouraged to help others whenever they can. This is one reason for the school's high reputation. Many pupils travel a long distance to attend because their parents appreciate the quality and strength of the school's Christian ethos that is reflected in its work. The very good relationships in school ensure that teachers know their pupils very well, recognising their strengths and idiosyncrasies. Through collecting for charities, pupils appreciate the plight of those less fortunate. They recognise the value of the less tangible aspects of life. Pupils feel themselves part of the school community from the time they join and this gives an impetus to their social development and feeling of security.
32. Provision for cultural development is good. Pupils are taught to be proud of their local and national heritage, with visits to museums and places of cultural interest. They become aware of the divergence of different lifestyles around the world through studies in religious education, geography, art and music. Some interesting displays illustrate different aspects of culture and create a good profile for this important area of pupils' education. For example, some colourful Islamic patterns were on show in Year 3. Pupils in Year 4 had made bracelets for a Hindu festival, showing a good awareness of artistic influence. In worship time, pupils talk about current issues from around the world such as war or starvation. During the inspection they were discovering many facts about the different nations entered in the World Cup, which was an interesting extension of their learning.

33. There have been good improvements in spiritual, social and moral provision at the school since the last inspection and in the study of other religions and cultures. At the time, there were useful links with a school that provided pupils with the opportunity to meet friends from other cultures and faiths. Unfortunately, these valuable links have not been maintained.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

34. Assessment procedures and practices have improved well since the previous inspection and are now good. Most of the development has taken place since January 2002, especially in relation to assessment and the setting of attainment targets for pupils.
35. Children's prior learning is assessed shortly after they start school in the reception class. Progress is carefully checked so that the teacher develops a very good knowledge of individual children. She uses the information to plan lessons and move learning on at a fast pace.
36. There are new, very effective procedures for monitoring, tracking and recording pupils' attainment and progress in English and mathematics from Year 2 to 6. In addition to the compulsory National Curriculum tests at the ends of Year 2 and 6, pupils take optional tests in Years 3, 4 and 5 in English and mathematics. The results that pupils achieve are carefully analysed to assess progress and to plan future work. In Year 1 the target setting has not been as well developed, since no overall goals for learning were set this year. The acting headteacher is developing systems to rectify the situation for next year. Procedures for the assessment of progress in science are in the developmental stage. For other areas of the curriculum, an on-going assessment profile has been developed. Skills, knowledge and understanding are recorded at the end of each unit of work. The information is not always used to plan the next steps, especially in ICT. Thorough assessment and detailed record-keeping enable close monitoring of the progress of pupils with special educational needs. Parents are involved in the review process and in developing new targets for learning. Where appropriate, the pupils themselves contribute to the development of their targets and evaluate how well they are doing.
37. The school cares well for its pupils. Health and safety has been the subject of a major review since the acting headteacher took up her post, and the result is a careful set of procedures which cover areas of potential risk. Systems have been overhauled and risk factors minimised. There have been many improvements to practices which are making the school a much more secure place. Governors have been fully involved with this process.
38. Some parents have been less than enthusiastic about some of the measures introduced. For example, not all are happy with the procedures before school starts, the locking of the school doors and the 'handover' of pupils on the playground at the end of the day. All three measures are very sensibly founded on safety issues. Schools need to be secure places and there is a risk of overcrowding in the very tight corridors now that the school has expanded to its current size. Parents are welcomed into classrooms with their children to look at work or to talk to staff once the pupils have been picked up. The system was seen working very well during the inspection in terms of safety and communication.
39. The school provides good supervision of pupils at all times. The acting headteacher is on duty on the playground every morning before school to ensure that pupils are safe. Teaching assistants help with supervision at playtimes and lunchtimes, providing a good level of support and an extra pair of eyes. They position themselves well so that they have a good view of what is going on and intervene sensitively if they see a problem beginning to evolve. There is good first aid cover and boxes are well stocked and readily available.
40. The school has developed secure procedures for ensuring child protection. There is a named person who has received the appropriate training. The school has not yet devised a way of disseminating new training to the whole staff on a regular basis.
41. Personal support and guidance are very good because teachers and staff know their pupils very well and are able to track their development and give them individual advice. Teachers and

teaching assistants undergo relevant training in specialist techniques to meet the identified needs of pupils. Support for pupils with special educational needs is particularly good and all the resources of the school are brought into play to this end, including the involvement of pupils' classmates, and close liaison with families. There is good liaison with the many outside and specialist agencies, so that pupils, especially those with medical needs, have ready access to sources of help.

42. Pupils are supported well in their approaches to living in the school community. The opportunities for guidance in a wider context are not as well developed but are satisfactory. The governors have decided not to offer sex education. Drugs education is provided through occasional visits of an education bus provided by the local education authority. A review of the school's personal, social, health and citizenship education curriculum is scheduled, with the aim of improving provision.
43. The procedures for promoting good behaviour work well, resulting in a happy, secure atmosphere for pupils where they are sure of the parameters within which they operate. Most behaviour management is very positive in tone and pupils respond well. Bullying is rare and when unacceptable behaviour occurs, the school works closely with pupils and parents to correct it. In returned questionnaires, 96 per cent of parents agreed that the school is helping their children to become mature and responsible.
44. The school's systems for monitoring and promoting attendance are adequate but could be improved. Attendance has been dropping since the figures for the last full school year were reported and is just average. Many parents are taking their children out of school during term time. Some of the letters do not request leave in the appropriate way or give good reasons for the governors and acting headteacher to consider. In addition, there are cases where more than two weeks' leave has been granted or taken. Governors have a major responsibility in this area. The school needs to stress the importance of regular attendance and explain fully the effects that two weeks' absence can have on children's education.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

45. Parents' views of the school are generally positive. In the returned questionnaires 94 per cent of parents agreed that their children like school and 96 per cent agreed with the statement that 'the school expects children to work hard and achieve their best'. There are some areas where parents were more divided in their opinions. These include homework, extra-curricular activities, leadership and management and the way that the school works with parents.
46. The school has recently been through a period of instability owing to the absence of the head teacher and some anxiety was expressed about the amount of information that parents received regarding the situation. The inspection team found that the governors did what they could, within the parameters of confidentiality, and wrote to parents promptly once firm decisions had been made. A total of 15 per cent of respondents said on the questionnaire that they did not feel the school works closely with parents. Governors accept that communications could have been better during the uncertain times, although they did send out a letter to all families. They are fully aware of the need to keep parents informed of any developments to the situation and are readily available to discuss any issues. Twelve per cent of parents do not agree that there is an interesting range of activities outside of lessons. With sessions including academic, sporting and creative activities, together with residential opportunities, the team judge the range and frequency to be good. Homework is satisfactory in providing practice and consolidation of skills and learning. It is understandable that parents feel anxious about the temporary nature of management at the school and should be gratified to know that the governors are actively pursuing a solution.
47. Information for parents is good. Newsletters are sent out regularly and there is a parents' noticeboard in the entrance hall containing a range of up-to-date information. Parents are informed about the topics that their children will study each term so that they can help at home. The school works hard to ensure that parents are kept informed of national and local initiatives in education. A recent course entitled 'Keeping up with your Children', was well attended as are

annual workshops for parents of Year 1 and 2 pupils on literacy and numeracy. Firm plans are in place to run a 'Dads and Lads' course aimed at improving boys' achievements in literacy. Systems to introduce children into their reception class are very effective and include links with pre-school providers and home visits. Annual written reports provide a sound overview of pupils' achievements, although the acting headteacher recognises that there is room for improvement. At present, reports provide little information for parents about how they can help their children to improve. Historically, the school has held one meeting for parents each year. The acting headteacher and governors plan to extend this. Parents of children with special educational needs are very well informed and involved fully in the setting and review of learning targets. They have a good understanding of their children's progress and of the special provision that the school arranges.

48. The school has a home-school agreement that goes to every family. Unusually, some of these are not signed and returned although they follow a format similar to those in most schools. The acting headteacher and governors are anxious to ensure that all parents agree to this essential partnership. They are also looking at ways to better inform parents about the adverse effects of taking holidays in term time.
49. The chapel was recently declared unsafe, and, in the absence of a school hall, it has not been possible for parents to attend school assemblies. They express great regret and say how much they enjoyed the opportunity to share in worship and to feel part of the school community. The governors are exploring ways of providing a communal meeting place.
50. Friends of Barrow School are active in fundraising and also providing social events for pupils and their families. Their efforts are highly valued by the governors, acting headteacher and staff. Parents help regularly in class and provide a valued service. Some parents of children with special needs also come in to lend a hand in the classroom, forming an effective partnership. The school has the confidence of the different social communities it serves.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

51. The substantive headteacher has been absent from the school for most of this academic year. The governors took swift and sensible action in securing the services of an acting headteacher who is currently seconded to the school. There is an acting deputy headteacher who has been in this position for some time but was also absent for several weeks when the headteacher began his sick leave. In her short time at the school, the acting headteacher has made some essential changes and improvements. The school has a refreshed and positive feel.
52. The acting headteacher is providing very good leadership, striving for improvement and driving the school forward. Since January of this year, she has been instrumental in maintaining a supportive environment in which staff and pupils feel secure and valued. Management systems have been thoroughly reviewed and updated. There is very good teamwork among staff, who are very supportive of the developments recently put into place. Instead of working in isolated units, staff now pull together in a concerted and efficient way. Adults in school are very successful in promoting an environment where pupils work hard, enjoy very good relationships, and show respect for others. Teachers and governors are firmly committed to the school's aims, which include a strong emphasis on personal as well as academic development. All adults in the school work effectively to ensure that all pupils, especially those with special educational needs are fully included in all activities. The quality of leadership and management is currently better than at the last inspection.
53. The governors are very supportive of the school and have made very good improvements to their governance of the school since the autumn term. They have been fully involved, alongside the acting headteacher, in conducting a whole-school self evaluation. Many areas for improvement were identified and arranged according to priority into a comprehensive school development plan covering three years. The governors have embarked on training programmes and taken a much more active part in striving for improvement and in developing a corporate management approach.

It is to their credit that pupils' education was not adversely affected by the management and staffing problems at the start of the academic year. They have a thorough understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses. The quality of their leadership is presently very good and their management is good. Between them they have a valuable range of expertise and all are committed to ensuring the highest quality of education for all pupils. Governors know and understand their roles clearly and maintain a successful approach to meeting their statutory responsibilities. The proceedings of the governing body are efficiently conducted and committees are well organised. There is a very positive and productive relationship between the governing body, the acting headteacher and the staff. The governors are more effective than at the time of the last inspection.

54. The school development plan written this year is thorough and illustrates clear educational purpose. Funding is linked to priorities, with implementation strategies, timescales and criteria for success specified. Governors have been highly involved in the planning process and are kept informed of progress by the acting headteacher. They have no formal systems for monitoring the plan themselves or for evaluating the effectiveness of measures taken in terms of improved teaching and learning. They rely very much on the reports from the acting headteacher.

55. There is some delegation of responsibilities to the acting deputy headteacher but there is no specific support in major areas such as the curriculum or assessment. The acting headteacher carries most of the responsibility for the day-to-day running of the school, often supported by governors who visit or telephone regularly. The role of the subject managers has been developed since January of this year. They have a useful overview of the quality of learning and the standards attained. They are conscientious in their approach, regularly monitoring planning, talking to colleagues and scrutinising pupils' work. From a detailed analysis of assessment, carried out by the acting headteacher, the managers and teachers collaborate to set challenging targets for pupils' performance in English and mathematics. The managers for all subjects have received training to enhance their leadership and management roles. Under the direction of the acting headteacher, they have developed a corporate style of subject management. Since January they have conducted a full audit of resources, written schemes of work in line with national guidance and produced action plans for long-term development. They do not observe lessons and therefore do not have an overview of teaching in their subjects. The co-ordinator for special educational needs is knowledgeable and makes a very good contribution to the writing of individual education plans, in ensuring that all pupils are included in all areas of school life and in co-ordinating the work of specialist support staff.
56. The returns from the parents' questionnaires show that 10 per cent disagree that the school is well led and managed. There is some concern amongst parents about the temporary nature of senior management, which is understandable. The governors are working hard to secure a solution but there are some circumstances that are out of their control. They are, however, aiming to create a permanent second tier of management to support the acting headteacher. Some safety measures had to be taken shortly after the appointment of the acting headteacher in January this year following essential checks and risk assessments. These included the removal of a leisure facility and different arrangements at the start and end of the school day. Some parents felt that they were not well informed about the changes and this has caused some dissatisfaction among a small minority.
57. The school is staffed by an adequate number of suitably qualified and experienced teachers who are effectively deployed to meet the demands of the curriculum and to support pupils with special educational needs. All, including the supply teacher, have very high levels of professionalism, dedication and commitment. They plan all their work conscientiously, sharing their experience and expertise to pupils' advantage. Experienced teaching assistants provide very good support for pupils' learning. Between them, they have wide-ranging expertise that allows for effective group support in all classes from reception to Year 6 and for those pupils who have special educational needs. There are established arrangements for staff development, guided by the agreed priorities of the school. The newly qualified teacher feels that she has been well supported since January of this year and has had some further training and time to see colleagues teach. Barrow is well served by appropriately skilled non-teaching staff, all of whom are committed to its aims and policies. Staff provide a high standard of care at midday, both in the classrooms where pupils eat and on the playground. The caretaker ensures that the buildings, grounds and resources are very well maintained. She also ensures a very high standard of cleanliness and hygiene at all times. Administrative support is very effective and efficient, making very good use of ICT. The secretary makes a significant contribution to the smooth running of the school, discharging a wide and diverse range of responsibilities. She knows families very well and extends a warm welcome to all visitors.
58. New procedures for performance management have been successfully implemented. The headteacher and staff all have school and personal targets that are reviewed and assessed on a regular basis.
59. There is no hall at the school and accommodation is unsatisfactory. Until recently, the school used the adjoining chapel for collective worship and was able to invite parents. The chapel has now been declared unsafe, which means that daily worship has to be conducted mainly in classrooms. Just one joint assembly is arranged each week in the reception classroom, which is too small to include parents. There is a lack of facilities for physical education that are overcome by an arrangement with the local high school staff, who make their sports hall and specialist

teachers available. As a result, pupils' achievements are not affected. Staff make intelligent and efficient use of the limited amount of space. Building work has been completed in phases to accommodate the increasing numbers of pupils but problems with tight corridors, some very small classrooms, crowded cloakrooms and a lack of storage space have not been solved. The library is situated at one end of a larger classroom, but with some re-organisation of classes planned for next year will be moved to a resource area. At present, its use causes some disturbance to lessons in that room. The playground is small for the numbers of pupils. In good weather the field provides a good resource for games and additional play area. The reception classroom is spacious and well planned with access to the outside area for physical development and practical activities.

60. Resourcing for teaching and learning has been improved since January of this year under the direction of the acting headteacher. They are good for mathematics, geography, music, physical education and religious education but there are shortages for science. The range of hardware for ICT is satisfactory but not all computers are in constant use because of operating faults. Subject managers keep a watchful check on resources as new units of work are covered and request additions where needed. Resources are well organised, labelled and stored.
61. The school's finances are carefully monitored and controlled. Spending is closely linked to the stated priorities. There is a clear, delegated limit to spending and governors exercise their strategic overview of the school's financial planning effectively. Members of the finance committee monitor the budget closely. The relatively high carry forward from last year has been spent on resources and in securing teaching and management personnel during the extended sick leave. The school may well go into a deficit budget because of the additional expense this year. Best value principles are very well applied to all purchases and contracts. The school has systematic procedures in place for the ordering, receipt and payment of goods and services. Procedures for dealing with cash and private funds are safe and effective. Money provided for special needs pupils is very effectively used. Unfortunately, during the disruptions to routines in the autumn term, the timescale for spending funds specifically allocated to improving the railings and wall at the front of the school expired. The funding was subsequently lost. There are many sharp areas on the railings and one exit gate is not protected by a safety fence to prevent pupils from running onto the busy main road. This area needs urgent attention. The school provides a good quality of provision and pupils' achievements and progress that are often above expectations. Costs, at present, are high and there are uncertainties about the future management of the school. Taking all these factors into consideration, value for money is satisfactory.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

62. The school has made very good improvements in the last two terms. The quality of the school's recent self evaluation is reflected in the fact that most of the key issues below have already been identified as areas for development. These are marked with a star.

(1) In order to improve attainment in ICT across the school, the acting headteacher, governors and teachers should

*a) ensure that pupils have sufficient time on the computer to learn and practise their skills

*b) develop planning further to ensure that skills are used and applied to support learning other subjects and in the literacy and numeracy hours.

(Paragraphs 55,18,25,36,76,82,86)

(2) In order to improve further the management of the school, the acting headteacher and governors should

*a) establish an effective and permanent second tier of management to support the headteacher, especially in the monitoring and evaluation of the newly introduced curriculum and assessment systems

(Paragraph 55)

*b) develop the role of the subject managers to include classroom observations and the monitoring of teaching

(Paragraphs 55,77,82,88)

c) develop systems for the governors to monitor the effectiveness and success of the school improvement plan and to ensure that the remaining initiatives are completed to schedule, without relying on the acting headteacher's reports.

(Paragraph 54)

In addition, when drawing up their action plan, the governors should consider the following

- *Take steps, when appropriate, to ensure that the school has the future services of a permanent headteacher who is capable of sustaining and continuing the drive and programme for improvement that has successfully begun.

(Paragraphs 46, 51,52,56)

- Review systems for improving attendance and for informing parents of the correct procedures for requesting leave for their children during term time, ensuring that good reasons are given and the recommended maximum of two weeks is not exceeded.

(Paragraphs 11,44)

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

| | |
|--|----|
| Number of lessons observed | 47 |
| Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils | 40 |

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

| | Excellent | Very good | Good | Satisfactory | Unsatisfactory | Poor | Very Poor |
|------------|-----------|-----------|------|--------------|----------------|------|-----------|
| Number | 3 | 12 | 25 | 7 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Percentage | 6 | 25 | 54 | 15 | 0 | 0 | 0 |

The table gives the number and percentage of lessons observed in each of the seven categories used to make judgements about teaching. Care should be taken when interpreting these percentages as each lesson represents more than two percentage points.

Information about the school's pupils

| Pupils on the school's roll | YR– Y6 |
|---|--------|
| Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils) | 120 |
| Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals | 10 |

FTE means full-time equivalent.

| Special educational needs | YR– Y6 |
|---|--------|
| Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs | 4 |
| Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register | 34 |

| 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 | 11 |
| Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving | 3 |

Attendance

Authorised absence

| | % |
|-------------|-----|
| School data | 4.7 |

Unauthorised absence

| | % |
|-------------|---|
| School data | 0 |

| | |
|---------------------------|-----|
| National comparative data | 5.6 |
|---------------------------|-----|

| | |
|---------------------------|-----|
| 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 | 9 | 6 | 15 |

| National Curriculum Test/Task Results | | Reading | Writing | Mathematics |
|---|----------|---------|---------|-------------|
| Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above | Boys | | | |
| | Girls | | | |
| | Total | 13 | 14 | 15 |
| Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above | School | 87 (85) | 93 (92) | 100 (92) |
| | National | 84 (83) | 86 (84) | 91 (90) |

| Teachers' Assessments | | English | Mathematics | Science |
|---|----------|---------|-------------|----------|
| Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above | Boys | | | |
| | Girls | | | |
| | Total | 13 | 15 | 15 |
| Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above | School | 87 (85) | 100 (92) | 100 (92) |
| | 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 | 10 | 9 | 19 |

| National Curriculum Test/Task Results | | English | Mathematics | Science |
|---|----------|---------|-------------|-----------|
| Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above | Boys | | | |
| | Girls | | | |
| | Total | 16 | 16 | 19 |
| Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above | School | 84 (71) | 84 (100) | 100 (100) |
| | National | 75 (75) | 71 (72) | 87 (85) |

| Teachers' Assessments | | English | Mathematics | Science |
|---|----------|---------|-------------|-----------|
| Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above | Boys | | | |
| | Girls | | | |
| | Total | 16 | 16 | 19 |
| Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above | School | 84 (76) | 84 (100) | 100 (100) |
| | National | 72 (70) | 74 (72) | 82 (79) |

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

The numbers for boys and girls are omitted because there are 10 or less of each. This is to ensure that individual pupils cannot be identified

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 | 1 |
| White | 119 |
| Any other minority ethnic group | 0 |

This table refers to pupils of compulsory school age only.

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers and classes: YR – Y6

| | |
|--|----|
| Total number of qualified teachers (FTE) | 7 |
| Number of pupils per qualified teacher | 17 |
| Average class size | 20 |

Education support staff: YR– Y6

| | |
|---|-------|
| Total number of education support staff | 7 |
| Total aggregate hours worked per week | 133.5 |

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Recruitment of teachers

| | |
|--|---|
| Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years | 1 |
| Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years | 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 |
| Number of unfilled vacancies or vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of less than one term (FTE) | 1 |

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Exclusions in the last school year

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

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

Financial information

| | |
|--|---------|
| Financial year | 2000-01 |
| | |
| | £ |
| Total income | 245,074 |
| Total expenditure | 239,658 |
| Expenditure per pupil | 2,199 |
| Balance brought forward from previous year | 8,101 |
| Balance carried forward to next year | 13,517 |

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

| | |
|-----------------------------------|-----|
| Number of questionnaires sent out | 120 |
| Number of questionnaires returned | 52 |

Percentage of responses in each category

| | Strongly agree | Tend to agree | Tend to disagree | Strongly disagree | Don't know |
|--|----------------|---------------|------------------|-------------------|------------|
| My child likes school. | 67 | 27 | 4 | 0 | 2 |
| My child is making good progress in school. | 67 | 27 | 4 | 2 | 0 |
| Behaviour in the school is good. | 81 | 15 | 2 | 0 | 2 |
| My child gets the right amount of work to do at home. | 37 | 50 | 12 | 2 | 0 |
| The teaching is good. | 69 | 23 | 4 | 2 | 2 |
| I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on. | 35 | 54 | 2 | 10 | 0 |
| I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem. | 81 | 12 | 2 | 4 | 2 |
| The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best. | 71 | 25 | 2 | 2 | 0 |
| The school works closely with parents. | 35 | 50 | 10 | 4 | 2 |
| The school is well led and managed. | 48 | 38 | 2 | 8 | 4 |
| The school is helping my child become mature and responsible. | 71 | 25 | 2 | 2 | 0 |
| The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons. | 62 | 23 | 6 | 6 | 4 |

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

63. Children's attainment on entry to the reception class varies widely though it is generally above that expected for their age. Many start their school life demonstrating a confident command of spoken English and an interest in, and an awareness of, the world around them. However, there are a number who have very particular needs. Children make very good progress because of an extremely well thought out range of activities and consistently very good teaching. Those with special educational needs make best progress when there is sufficient adult support. Only the class teacher is in the class full-time. The changing team of adults work very well together and the relationships are very good. Parent helpers are made most welcome and their contribution valued highly. Thus the children are presented with good role models who help establish a warm, caring and stress-free environment in which the children themselves build strong and very positive relationships.
64. By the end of the reception year, almost every child has achieved the early learning goals in all areas of learning and is making very good progress with the early work of the National Curriculum. This represents very good improvements since the last inspection. The staff ratio in the mornings ensures support for those with particular needs and in the afternoon parental help further guarantees that all children are able to participate in the varied and exciting provision.

Personal, social and emotional development

65. Teaching is very good in this area. All the activities and the organisation of the classroom are planned to foster personal, social and emotional development. Children listen with great concentration to their teacher and friends. They are all eager to take part in discussions and willing to try out new experiences. They show great delight in their accomplishments. Children take turns to respond to challenges and spontaneously applaud the efforts of those whom they recognise as having particular difficulties. Classroom routines focus on developing responsibility and independence. Children take pride in fulfilling their various monitor roles, for example, when taking the register to the office. The teacher takes time to explain to the children the range of activities on offer during sessions. They think carefully about what to choose when they are not involved in an adult led activity. They demonstrate an ability to persevere, to collaborate and share resources, which they handle with care. The class understand the need for restricted numbers at the water activity and the 'bears' cave' and show patience when awaiting their turn. All the activities are designed to build on and consolidate the introductory learning sessions. The adults are successful in encouraging children to talk about what they plan to do, and in helping them evaluate why something happened or didn't happen. In this way the teacher is constantly checking the children's understanding and is able to build in suitable challenges or support where appropriate. Children are encouraged to consider others' needs and problems through stories. There is also time for quiet reflective prayer, which helps to develop children's spiritual awareness.

Communication, language and literacy

66. Children achieve the early learning goals in language, literacy and communication some time before the end of the reception year and continue to make very good progress along the National Curriculum programmes of study. Class routines such as sharing news ensure that there is a great deal of opportunity to reflect and talk. Most children use well-constructed sentences and a wide vocabulary. Discussing what was in a feely bag, one boy asked "Is it fragile?". These shared times are fun and provide a good learning context for those who are finding it more difficult to express themselves. Throughout the day children use spoken language effectively to collaborate, organise their ideas and create imaginary situations when, for example, when playing in the bears' cave. They are now well used to the 'literacy hour' format and relish the challenge that this provides. They are very knowledgeable about the structure of books. They recognise fiction and non-fiction texts and know the difference between them. Children explain the

significance of punctuation including full stops, exclamation and question marks. These are increasingly appearing in their independent writing. In a very skilful fashion, they have been introduced to sounds and letters and the way in which these combine to make words. This has resulted in great enthusiasm for recognising patterns within words to help them read and spell. The level of achievement that some of the children achieve is outstanding. Thus the quality of their reading, together with their enjoyment of books is well above what is common for their age. This interest is equally apparent in the children who do not have the same facility with spoken language. Most children are making very good progress with their independent writing that they use throughout the day in a wide range of contexts. The very skilful teaching encourages them to think who they are writing for and to rehearse how they will get their ideas down on paper. Handwriting skills are systematically developed with a good emphasis on shape and positioning.

Mathematical development

67. The teaching is very good, vibrant and fun. It is based on situations and activities that are purposeful for the children. Nearly every child has moved well beyond the early learning goals half a term before moving into Year 1. Every opportunity is seized for counting, sorting and using mathematical language; thus the children are now instinctively using mathematical concepts and language to discuss their view of the world around them. They love to count and the majority confidently chants numbers to 50 or 100. They recognise numerals and, as they demonstrated in a game with their white boards, they are able to write these correctly with well- formed numbers. They are absolutely secure about sequencing them. They delighted in suggesting strategies for counting and combining groups of five 'compare bears'. "I could just go up in fives", said one. At all times children are encouraged to talk about how they manipulate their numbers and delight in finding different ways to combine or 'take away'. This is an excellent foundation for later mathematical work. Once again the teacher's very skilful planning of activities ensures that children have continual opportunities to apply their mathematical understanding and that they are using it to solve everyday problems. The activities are open-ended so that children can investigate and extend their thinking further. The adult team is very skilful at moving children forward to a higher level of thinking or in structuring the steps to help a more diffident individual. The ongoing evaluation of children's progress is shared within the adult team and informs the next day's planning.

Knowledge and Understanding of the World

68. Teaching is very good. The thematic approach to the planning means that all the skills involved in the other areas of learning are developed through a topic. Currently the subject is bears; bears in stories and teddies but also different types of bears such as polar and grizzly bears. This is a fertile foundation for all activities. It enables children to reflect and use their everyday experiences as well as finding out new things and asking their own questions. Through a range of well-selected topics, subjects are explored in depth from many different perspectives and as a result children have already achieved the related early learning goals. The teacher is not afraid to use technical vocabulary; for example, she uses 'mammal' and 'muzzle' and explains their meaning. Wherever possible, the teacher and other adults draw on previous learning from the children, encouraging them to use whatever they already know. Thus in response to "What sort of animal is a bear?", one boy said, "Well it's not cold-blooded or scaly like an alligator." They investigate through books and pictures and demonstrate a good understanding of how to find out information from non-fiction texts. There is plenty of opportunity to use hands-on investigations. They have compared old and new toys, explored the environment around the school, investigated plants and played imaginatively in their class 'garden centre'. They follow up ideas discussed when designing and making, using construction materials, or by using simple graphics programmes on the computer to draw and colour their own ideas of a bear. One girl carefully selected medium and thin brushes to get the general shape and then add the muzzle, choosing and changing the colour as appropriate for a realistic portrayal.

Physical development

69. The teaching is very good and is sufficiently imaginative to overcome many of the difficulties resulting from the absence of an outside area and adequate push and pull, climbing and balancing equipment. As there is no school hall, the children go to the sports facility in Blackburn once a week. They have swimming lessons and visit the nearby park frequently. At other times, when weather permits, the children develop their co-ordination and throwing skills on the playground and fields. Photos show imaginative challenges, with children totally immersed in trying to achieve what has been asked of them. A few of the children would benefit from more opportunity to develop their skills in running, jumping and balancing in order to achieve the early learning goals. The range of activities provides a great number of opportunities for developing small motor skills and hand eye co-ordination. The teacher ensures that she explains, demonstrates and provides plenty of opportunities for children to handle tools and materials safely and effectively. They handle construction materials deftly, are confident with scissors and pencil control is good. These well-honed manipulative skills allow them to make the models that they plan or to obtain the intended effects on the computer.

Creative development

70. Teaching is good and the creative activities are drawn into the other areas of learning. Children are encouraged to explore and communicate their understanding in an imaginative way. Almost all have achieved the early learning goals. Currently, the study of bears provides a good vehicle for exploring texture. Children used finger painting to consolidate number formation and sequencing. The displays on the walls and collections of their efforts show that some are already extremely skilful in drawing from observation and have a well developed sense of colour and form. They are looking at well-known paintings and beginning to respond to them in a critical and appreciative way. The teacher is careful to teach skills, for example, how to manipulate clay and ways of joining it. She encourages children's own creative response whilst talking with them to extend their understanding of the possibilities. They enjoy music and learn the tunes and words of songs from tapes. They listen carefully, memorise the words quickly but most find it difficult to sing in tune. They respond well to singing softly or loudly following the instructions of individuals taking the role of the conductor. The role-play area is planned with flair and fits well with the prevailing theme, inviting pupils to enter the 'bears den'. The structure of the classroom with doors, cupboards and radiators is very restricting. As a result, the role-play area is small, thus limiting opportunities. However, there is the potential for two role-play areas to be established in the playground using the existing structures.

ENGLISH

71. The results of the 2001 National Curriculum tests for seven year olds show that attainment in reading and writing is above the national average and that for similar schools. For the eleven year olds, the percentage gaining the expected level 4 in English in 2001 is above the national average with one third achieving the higher level 5. Lesson observations during the inspection indicate good speaking and listening skills and above average reading standards in all year groups. The achievements in writing are mostly above average but there are two year groups that contain a very high percentage of pupils with special educational needs and where writing is below average. Since the last inspection, the school has made very good improvements to attainment in Years 1 and 2, especially in spelling and writing. For Years 3 to 6, improvements are good.
72. Standards in speaking and listening throughout the school are very high. Pupils express their ideas clearly and listen well to others. All readily engage in conversation about their work. In a Year 2 reading lesson, pupils talked about the humour in the story and helped 'Max the Hodgeheg' to 'unjumble' his words and sentences. In Years 3 to 6 pupils talk at length about a range of topics and respond sensitively to their classmates' ideas. They speak with clarity and assurance, listening carefully to other points of view and giving clear reasons for their opinions. In a Year 5 and 6 lesson, for example, pupils showed maturity as they worked in groups to evaluate the effectiveness of some commercially produced anti-smoking leaflets. They each took on a role such as scribe, clarifier or reporter and fulfilled their responsibilities very well. The presentations

made to the rest of the class at the end of the session were clear, thought-provoking and relevant. Nearly a half of pupils in this class have special educational needs. All were fully involved and well supported by sensitive grouping and useful interventions by the teaching assistant. Progress for all groups of pupils is very good, with the higher achievers able to clarify statements and to handle opposing views with courtesy.

73. Pupils' achievement in reading is often very good. Those who have special educational needs achieve standards that are appropriate in relation to prior learning and make equally good progress. Guided reading is used effectively and there is a good match of texts to pupils' prior attainment and developing expertise. Teachers keep a detailed record of pupils' developing skills and choose books that will move them on at a good pace. In Years 1 and 2 skills such as the recognition and articulation of letter sounds are well developed and help pupils to tackle unfamiliar words by 'sounding them out'. When reading, pupils use clues in the story and illustrations and their knowledge of grammar to predict and read new words. Most pupils recognise the features of both fiction and non-fiction books and know how to use the contents and index sections to find information. Without exception, pupils take reading books home regularly and are very well supported by parents. This makes a good contribution to learning. By the end of Year 2, pupils talk about the plot and characters in a story, often predicting what will happen next. Higher attaining pupils scan non-fiction texts to locate key information. Pupils read with good expression following the punctuation marks and features of the text, such as bold print or words written in capitals. In Years 3 to 6, pupils read fluently and show very good levels of comprehension. The majority of pupils recall in detail what they have read and skills of inference and deduction are very well developed by the end of Year 6. One group in Year 3 read about 'The Birthday Disaster', exploring the main character's motives and talking about what she might do next. Older pupils state their preferences for favourite books and authors, justifying their views. They extend their reading experiences by borrowing from the school library and bringing books from home. Pupils are very discriminate when choosing books to read. They have favourite authors and usually check the book description and part of the text to see if it appeals. They locate information efficiently, using subheadings, diagrams and captions effectively. Pupils of all abilities make good progress, owing to the very good quality of teaching and the positive attitudes fostered by the school. One pupil commented on her love of books by saying that reading is 'like being in a bubble; a world of my own'.
74. In Years 1 and 2, pupils practise writing in logically sequenced sentences. They apply their knowledge of letter sounds effectively when spelling simple words and know many more difficult words by sight. By the end of Year 2 writing is well structured. Capital letters and full stops are used to demarcate sentences. Many pupils are also using speech, question and exclamation marks correctly. One Year 2 pupil wrote, "Who are y y y you?" she stammered' to gain the effect of suspense in her story. Writing shows a good range of fiction and non-fiction work. Good examples of writing from the higher achieving pupils in Year 2 included some interesting connecting words and longer sentences containing detail. Handwriting is becoming well formed and legible. In Years 3 to 6 pupils write imaginatively in different styles, including poetry. Most pupils have a secure grasp of punctuation and grammar. More able writers show good awareness of the reader and choose words carefully for greater effect. They use sophisticated techniques to hold the reader's attention such as using ellipsis or adding a short, two-word sentence to create impact in a suspense story. Some lively and thoughtful writing was seen in Year 3 where pupils have made a good selection of their own class books. Exciting titles such as 'Vicious Vikings' invite others to read their reports about weapons and longships. Their 'creation myths' show a good imagination and secure understanding of the genre. One pupil wrote about the beginning of the world as 'a magic egg cracked-in front was a green and blue world'. Pupils use simile and metaphor to create effect, and often model their writing on the work of significant writers. Many older pupils spell accurately, using a range of appropriate strategies. Higher attaining pupils make good use of complex sentences to add interest and imagery. However, the writing skills of some pupils in Year 6 are below average. Over one half of them have joined the school part way through their education and have not had the benefit of the school's good provision for the full seven years, especially in relation to spelling and grammar. They are not as confident in writing in a wide range of styles and for different purposes but they are making good progress. Pupils with special educational needs often do less well in writing than reading. Some have specific problems with the order of letters and words but they make good progress in achieving their targets for learning.

75. Provision for pupils with special educational needs is very good. Individual programmes of learning are used to plan work and pupils have additional support to help them meet their targets. Their rate of progress is at least equal to that of their peers and many show levels of competence expected for their ages.
76. The literacy hour has been very successfully implemented in the school. Teaching is mainly very good and has a direct impact on pupils' learning, resulting in the good standards of attainment for most age groups. Teachers demonstrate good subject knowledge and use it very effectively to plan and prepare lessons. Expectations are generally high. Consequently, pupils are challenged by the pace of learning and the work prepared for them. Careful planning ensures that tasks are matched to pupils' prior learning and are set at appropriately differentiated levels. Very good relationships are established. As a result pupils are attentive, understand what they have to do and work hard. Resources are used very effectively to support pupils' learning and time is never wasted. During guided reading sessions teachers and teaching assistants extend pupils' skills by questioning them about the plot and possible outcomes. There is a strong emphasis on developing skills of inference and deduction from an early age, which enhances comprehension. Teachers constantly seek out opportunities to extend pupils' vocabulary and to develop non-fiction reading and writing skills in subjects such as history and geography. Pupils sometimes use ICT to present their work but little use is made of computers in drafting and editing writing. Homework is very well used to practise and consolidate reading and spelling skills. There are few extended writing assignments for the older pupils. Marking is excellent in this subject. Detailed comments point the way forward for pupils and congratulatory remarks specifically show what was good and why. The information gathered from regular assessments is used to track each individual's progress and to ensure that all are achieving what their teachers expect. Prompt action is taken where necessary. The system has not been developed in Year 1 but will be in place for next year.
77. The drive towards higher attainment in English is managed well by the subject manager and the acting headteacher. Detailed, accurate analysis of pupils' test results shows what pupils know what they need to learn next. This enables the focused setting of work that ensures good rates of progress. Systems in Year 1 have not been as well developed this year but the acting headteacher is introducing more rigour into assessment for this age group for the coming year and to inform the setting of challenging targets. There is no time allocated for the subject manager to observe lessons and monitor teaching. This restricts her ability to identify issues that arise and to intervene quickly.
78. Resources for English are adequate overall but there are variations. There is a good selection of big books and guided reading sets that teachers use within the literacy hour. All are very carefully stored and easily accessed. Because some classrooms are very small, it is not possible to have a reading area but teachers do all they can by providing boxes and displays of good quality books. The school library is housed at one end of a larger classroom and is used regularly by pupils. However, this does cause some disturbance to lessons and the acting headteacher is keen to relocate the facility in order to allow for better research and study facilities. The selection and quality of dictionaries and thesauruses for the older pupils are good but those for Years 1 and 2 are not sufficient at present. The school makes very good use of the local authority's lending system to enhance the stock of books. The advisory services offered are also well used to enhance teachers' and assistants' training and ensure that all staff are kept up to date with national initiatives.

MATHEMATICS

79. In the National Curriculum tests in mathematics at the end of Year 2 in 2001, the school's pupils attained results which were well above the national average and that for similar schools. At the end of Year 6 the school's results were in line with the national average and that for similar schools. These pupils did not have the benefit of target setting procedures to move their learning on at a fast pace. Current inspection findings, based on a scrutiny of pupils' work, lesson observations and discussions with the subject leader and pupils, are that the pupils'

achievements are above average in Year 2 and satisfactory in Year 6. Results vary from year to year owing to several factors. For example, in Year 6 this year, there is a higher than usual number of pupils with special educational needs and a considerable number of older pupils have joined the school part way through their primary education and have not had the same solid grounding in mathematical concepts. Although they make good progress according to their prior knowledge, they are less secure in the test situation. Overall, the progress currently made by pupils throughout the school is good and there is no underachievement. Pupils with special educational needs attain their targets in their individual plans. Additional emphasis is now being given to the identification and support of higher attaining pupils so that they also make the progress that they should. There has been very good progress since the last inspection in Years 1 and 2 and good progress in Years 3 to 6.

80. Year 1 pupils count forwards in 2's confidently but are not as confident counting backwards. They follow up mental activities with group work which gives all pupils opportunities to consolidate their knowledge. They recognise two- and three-dimensional shapes and are becoming confident in estimating weight. The teacher in Year 2 discussed the lesson's objective before beginning work on a game which helped pupils to identify two digit numbers in multiples of 2, 5 and 10. Pupils in Years 3 to 6 continue to make good progress in their learning and apply their understanding to solve a wide range of increasingly demanding problems. For example, in a very good Year 3 lesson pupils worked with numbers to solve problems in magic number squares and triangles. The work was very well matched to the pupils' prior knowledge and provided opportunities for useful investigation. The lively way in which the teacher introduced the subject inspired all to work hard and produce good results. Those in the Year 4 class attempted to solve problems using a combination of signs and numbers, embarking upon early algebraic work. The large number of pupils in the Years 5 and 6 class have a well-established pattern of working. They apply themselves enthusiastically to their tasks and work conscientiously. In one lesson, pupils used small white boards to show instant answers to mental agility questions. This gave all pupils an equal opportunity to take an active part in the lesson and allowed the teacher to assess how well they were learning. In another lesson observed pupils visualised three-dimensional shapes from two-dimensional plans. The class teacher used the overhead projector well to illustrate lines of symmetry. Pupils then worked on a practical task in groups, checking their answers by using small mirrors. A representative from each group reported clearly to the whole class on their findings, providing valuable opportunities for speaking and listening. An analysis of pupils' work in Years 5 and 6 shows that pupils cover all areas including handling data, measures and shape. Very good attention is given to the application of computational skills throughout the school. For example the older pupils work with very large numbers in calculating the mileage of cars, heights of mountains ranges and the length of famous rivers throughout the world. Good attention is also given to problem solving with money, including changing currency.
81. Throughout the school, the quality of teaching is never less than satisfactory. In almost half the lessons observed it was very good, with three lessons judged to be good. Teachers plan carefully for pupils of all abilities. Teaching assistants are knowledgeable and provide good support for pupils with special educational needs. This was particularly noticeable in the Years 5 and 6 class where the support for a pupil with special educational needs was excellent, enabling her to participate fully in the lesson. Teachers are enthusiastic, have high expectations of behaviour and use their very good subject knowledge and questioning skills to assess pupils' understanding. For example, the Year 4 teacher realised that a few pupils had not grasped the learning fully so revisited the concept in the next lesson. In a Year 3 lesson, the teacher's enthusiasm for the subject was so great that it fired her pupils with enthusiasm for the task. The classroom was a hive of activity, with good habits of work clearly established and developed. Teachers and classroom assistants make good use of resources, for example using overhead projectors and a variety of games to add interest. Teachers bring pupils together at the end of a task for a worthwhile review of what has been achieved. They use this opportunity well to praise and encourage pupils and this improves their confidence and self esteem. The marking of pupils' work is good and includes supportive comments to help pupils to improve. The use of ICT in mathematics is not developed satisfactorily. There is little use of the computer in collecting, organising and sorting data although it is sometimes used in presenting information, for example, in the form of pictograms.

82. Teachers are fully conversant with the numeracy strategy, which they apply very effectively. The new subject leader, who took responsibility in January 2002, has a very clear overview of the pupils' attainment and progress throughout the school. She is enthusiastic and knowledgeable. The policy has been rewritten and all resources reorganised and, where necessary, replaced or improved. There are no opportunities for the manager to observe lessons and therefore she does not have an overview of teaching in mathematics. This also restricts the direct support that she can give to teachers and the sharing of her considerable expertise. Assessment procedures are now good in mathematics. Results of all tests are carefully analysed and challenging targets are set for learning. Numeracy is used most effectively to support study in other subjects such as science, history, geography and physical education. For example, in a physical education lesson, Year 2 pupils enjoyed counting their rounders score in twos and threes.

SCIENCE

83. By the time pupils reach the end of Year 2, standards of attainment in science are above average. Pupils in the current Year 6 are likely to attain standards that are in line with those achieved nationally. In last year's teacher assessments at the end of Year 2, all pupils reached the expected standard but the percentage achieving the higher level was only average. This year the pattern will be quite similar but with more reaching the higher level. The results of National Curriculum tests in 2001 for pupils at the end of Year 6 were above average when compared with schools nationally and those with a similar intake. This year the cohort is atypical: it has had changes of teachers, is very small and has a large number of pupils with special educational needs or who have come as late entrants to the school. Progress since the last inspection shows consistently steady improvement in Years 2 to 6.
84. These improvements stem from teachers' greater familiarity with the science curriculum and more attention to the investigatory nature of science. There are very noticeable improvements in the planning and teaching of science since January 2002. The new, joint managers have written a fresh and valuable policy statement. They have devised a new scheme of work that thoughtfully modifies the national guidelines in order to meet the needs of the school with both single year and mixed age-group classes. It identifies far more precisely the depth to which topics should be taught. This rationalises what had been a rather ad hoc system for selecting science topics in the past.
85. In Years 1 and 2, pupils cover an appropriate range of topics and participate in discussions, undertake some tightly guided investigations and fill in a lot of worksheets. Increasingly the Year 2 pupils are encouraged to write their own ideas about what they are doing. They demonstrate a considerable knowledge and understanding about electricity and its role in everyday life, offering good examples and justifying ideas with clear explanations. The teacher's discussions with individual children are particularly effective in checking what they understand. They have made increasingly good progress as the year has progressed. In a Year 1 lesson pupils examined seeds, used magnifying glasses efficiently and were encouraged to draw what they saw. However, their drawings were too small to show the detail they identified.
86. Pupils continue to make satisfactory progress through Years 3 to 6, although teachers' expectations and the quality of work are uneven from class to class. Year 3 pupils considered the role of food in sustaining growth. They used numerical skills effectively to tally and record data. They wrote independently, recording their experiment and making judgements about the absorption qualities of different types of paper. Not all the pupils can draw conclusions from their observations but the quality of the marking is helping them to make progress in this important area. Their exercise books show the importance placed on prediction and checking by testing. As they considered whether plants needed leaves to grow well, the teacher ensured the use of correct technical vocabulary and a proper consideration of ways to eliminate variables during a test. She provided different degrees of support for their independent writing, including a framework to follow. Year 4, a very small class almost entirely boys, approached their work on circuits with enthusiasm. They know how to make a circuit and used this knowledge to try and rectify

problems arising from broken wires and some inadequate equipment. They are better at oral rather than written explanations. Early in the year some of the work was sketchy, with a lot of 'filling in the word' exercises of a routine nature. They found it difficult to explain their predictions or comment on results but the marking is increasingly supportive in developing their recording skills. Years 5 and 6 are taught together. There is little evidence of work undertaken in the autumn term and no difference between what was expected of the higher and lower achievers at that time. After January 2002 the quality of learning improves significantly. Work, such as that on circuits, is much more challenging. Studies of 'the body' and 'light' show a systematic approach, increasingly focusing on prediction and testing. Marking asks questions of individual pupils, which helps consolidate understanding and reminds them, for example, to check their predictions on soundproofing by developing a fair test. Overall, opportunities to develop independent writing in science remain limited. The gaps in knowledge and understanding of investigations are evident on occasions. In pupils' investigations on air, they demonstrated just how far they had come since January but the work also highlighted the very variable range of prior knowledge that exists within the group.

87. Teaching is good, overall. Staff can count on pupils' enthusiasm for the subject. In the good lessons the planning is detailed: identifying key vocabulary, previous knowledge to be reviewed and the sequence of the elements of the lesson. This helps to ensure a good pace, with pauses to review progress so far or refocus on the next sequence of tasks. Most teachers use questions effectively and draw ideas from the children, using the information that some offer. The better lessons provide opportunities for pupils to investigate, but there is still a tendency to over direct exactly how they will set up a fair test. This means that the higher achievers in particular are not always fully stretched. There is far more evidence in the last few months of modifying tasks to meet the different needs within a class and to cater well for those pupils who have special educational needs. Teachers make ongoing evaluations of what pupils understand and build the results into their later planning.
88. The subject managers have made good improvements since their appointment in January 2002. They audited resources and identified a severe lack of necessary equipment. Much has been ordered, some has arrived and more orders are planned. Their scrutiny of work highlighted inconsistencies between planning approaches and the depth and breadth with which science was addressed in different classes. The new scheme and planning formats addressed this issue. The subject managers have not had an opportunity to observe and evaluate the staff teaching science. They check the half-termly planning but the variations in science teaching show up largely in the weekly lesson plans. Because they do not have time allocated for lesson observations, this problem has not been identified or tackled. Staff have not had any professional development for science. Assessment of skills and understanding, in order to identify individual strengths and weaknesses, is in the developmental stage. There is almost no use of ICT within the science programme. Co-ordinators recognise these areas for development. If all these changes are systematically implemented then the standards in science are likely to improve considerably.

ART AND DESIGN

89. Inspection evidence shows that attainment is above that expected nationally at the ends of Year 2 and Year 6 and pupils achieve well in the subject. Standards have improved since the last inspection. Pupils have a wide range of opportunities to explore different media, extend their talents and to be creative.
90. By the end of Year 2, pupils have a good knowledge of line, colour and pattern making and they use it to good effect in their work. In Year 1 pupils produce self portraits that show a developing understanding of shape and proportion. They explore texture and pattern through a study of buildings. Pupils make rubbings of different materials and identify shapes in a variety of structures. They use all their research to decorate their model houses to a good standard. In one good lesson, pupils looked at three-dimensional structures to explore the meaning of 'sculpture'. They experimented with types of art pencils to gain different effects in drawing and shading before 'capturing' the sculpture on paper. Pupils use a variety of materials to produce collage, showing great attention to detail and effect. In one display they had selected a variety of materials and

textures to produce a shiny effect. The Year 2 butterfly display shows carefully chosen colour and tone. Pupils in this class had produced very detailed observational drawings of fruit sections in pencil and pastel. They then extended their skills by making and painting clay tablets that they named 'fruit sensations'. Pupils study famous artists and their 'Lowry' pictures replicate many of the specific techniques that they have identified.

91. Pupils in Year 3 have a good understanding of proportion that is demonstrated in their pencil sketches. They study famous sculptors and engage in some detailed research. In one lesson, they worked on matchstick 'Angels of the North'. The developing models were of very good quality and showed a good eye for detail and a willingness to persevere in delicate and intricate work. Year 4 pupils have worked on lines and patterns in the style of Paul Klee to produce bright, colourful compositions. In Years 5 and 6 pupils make a palette of yellow, orange and white colours before trying out the techniques used by Van Gogh. Some pointilliste pictures were of an especially good standard that might be expected of pupils much older. Throughout school, pupils use their sketch-books to record their ideas and to draft a first attempt. They then consider the visual and tactile elements before beginning composition. This makes a good contribution to the quality of their work.
92. Skills in design are particularly well developed and there are very good links between work in art and in design and technology. Pupils have a keen eye for detail and constantly appraise their work to ensure that they are achieving the required effects. They link history into their art work as they sketch portraits of Henry the Eighth or make Viking rune necklaces. Art work effectively supports cultural education. Pupils learn about artists from around the world and explore traditional pattern making. Year 3 pupils work on complex Islamic patterns and all age groups study styles and crafts from various cultures and periods in history.
93. Teachers demonstrate good subject knowledge and an informed choice of resources. Taking into account planning, completed work and the lessons observed, teaching is very good. Good intervention in learning helps pupils to improve. Constant encouragement engenders a willingness in pupils to change and modify their work, so that by the end of the task, they enjoy a sense of achievement. Teachers make the work interesting. As a result, pupils enjoy art lessons and work hard to improve their artistic skills. Teachers encourage collaboration on tasks and pupils offer constructive suggestions to each other. In one lesson, those who were waiting for the glue to dry on their models spontaneously offered to help those who were working more slowly. Older pupils help younger ones with new skills such as knitting or weaving. Pupils who have special educational needs often do well in art due to the sensitive teaching and those with artistic talent are recognised and challenged. The school held a dedicated art day recently when a specialist team of teachers helped pupils of all ages to paint their portraits on tiles. The finished work was then mounted into a large frame that is proudly displayed in the entrance hall. Visitors often comment on the quality and detail of the work.
94. The subject manager leads the subject well. Classes are now developing portfolios of work to record pupils' achievements. When complete, they will provide a reference point to help with assessment, and a resource bank of ideas for teachers. Computers are used to some extent, for example in the study of famous artists or to make patterns. There is room to employ graphics programs more extensively to enhance skills and studies further. An art club is included in the cycle of extra-curricular activities and runs for one term during the year. This provides opportunities for pupils to pursue their interests and enhance their learning. Parent helpers offer their expertise and this provides a valuable additional source of support for the subject. Art work enhances the learning environment of the school and provides some eye-catching displays to inspire pupils.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

95. From the evidence gathered through lessons seen, by looking at finished products and talking to pupils and teachers, it is clear that attainment is above that expected at the ends of Years 2 and 6. There are particular strengths in designing and in the quality of finish. Good links with the art

and design curriculum provide good consolidation of skills, knowledge and understanding. Pupils, from an early age, plan their work, consider materials and adapt their ideas to overcome problems. Standards have improved since the last inspection.

96. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 use different fastenings, tools and materials when working on their projects. Year 1 pupils think carefully about structures in their work on homes, beginning by researching the buildings in the village of Barrow. On their walk around, they look at windows, doors and roofs investigating shape, design and materials. Back at school, pupils use computer programs to find more information about types of houses. All the findings are used in the design process and pupils produce annotated plans to help them make their models. The completed models show good skills in making with a variety of fixings used for doors and windows and a high standard of finish. In Year 2 pupils work on the logos for the side of their lorries, using ideas from the commercial vehicles they have studied. As they work on their designs, pupils constantly evaluate their success and identify where there are problems, changing their original intentions where needed. They use a computer program to help with their designs of 'Joseph's Coat' and try out different ideas before choosing their favourite.
97. In Years 3 to 6 pupils broaden and extend their knowledge, skills and understanding. Those who have special educational needs make good progress and often attain good standards in the practical work. They use pneumatics to make their clowns work and investigate an interesting collection of moving parts used in books and greetings cards before making their own. Good links with art helped pupils to make some attractive picture frames, specifically designed for the user. In Year 4 pupils have designed and made a selection of chairs for different purposes, often showing imagination and originality. During the inspection, this year group were involved in examining torches to see how they had been designed and made. The work provided good consolidation of their learning in science about electrical circuits. There was some divergent thinking as pupils then designed a light for a specific purpose, including headlights for a toy car. Skills in food technology are good. In one excellent lesson, pupils designed and made party buns using an interesting selection of edible decorating materials. They paid very good attention to health and hygiene, scrubbing the tables beforehand and wearing appropriate clothing. They evaluated as they went along, changing design or materials where needed. Older juniors investigated types of bread from different cultures. In an extensive survey, they recorded country of origin, appearance, texture, flavour and preferred way of eating. This type of extended research is a common feature in the subject and provides pupils with good ideas and inspiration.
98. Pupils collaborate very well on their tasks, readily sharing ideas, equipment and resources. They critically evaluate their own and other people's work, suggesting ways to improve. They have a good knowledge of their own learning and show perseverance in completing their assignments.
99. The quality of teaching is good overall, with some excellent practice seen. Teachers plan a wide range of interesting tasks, carefully mapped out over several weeks to give pupils plenty of opportunity to evaluate and improve their work. Recording is kept to a simple format for pupils who have special educational needs so that they can be fully involved in the lesson. Teaching assistants provide sensitive support and encourage pupils to find their own solutions to problems by prompting their thinking. Teachers pay good attention to the development of essential skills in the subject and are constantly mindful of safety issues. They often group pupils with their friends for lessons, enabling good interchange of ideas and sharing of expertise. ICT is used appropriately, especially through using computers for research and by taking photographs to help in the making and evaluation processes. Teachers link aspects of design and technology work with topics in other subjects, especially science and art, and there is very good use of mathematical skills in the designing and making processes.
100. The manager for design and technology offers good support to staff in providing ideas and inspiration. Resources are adequate and readily available but cramped classrooms can cause difficulties in this practical subject. The scheme of planning provides good progression in learning throughout the school, a wide breadth of study and some rich experiences. Topics are imaginatively planned to ensure that pupils of different ages and prior learning are fully challenged and interested.

GEOGRAPHY

101. Pupils by the end of Years 2 and 6 attain standards that are above those expected. Those with special educational needs make good progress in lessons. They have good guidance and help from support assistants and well-chosen resources. Judgements were made on the evidence of two geography lessons, discussions with pupils and teachers, a scrutiny of teachers' plans and observation of pupils' work on display throughout the school and in the pupils' books and folders. There have been good improvements in the attainment at the end of Year 6 compared to that reported at the time of the last inspection.
102. Pupils achieve well throughout the school, owing to their very good attitudes to learning and the good standard of teaching. In Years 1 and 2 pupils compare and contrast life on an island to that in Barrow. They compare houses and opportunities for work in the two communities and begin to understand differences in lifestyles. They complete maps of the British Isles and know the names of several main towns and cities as well as the direction of the four points of the compass. Pupils know their own address and where they live in relation to the school. They study where people go on holiday and find out why certain places, such as Blackpool, are popular. Year 2 pupils were observed studying the difference between physical and human features. They contrasted the localities of Barrow with Blackpool using an excellent variety of resources provided by their teacher. Pupils identified which features were common to both places and which were not. They made careful observations and recorded their findings neatly. As an extension to the activity they produced a poster showing attractions they would expect to find at a seaside resort. Every pupil had the opportunity to explain to the whole class why they thought their poster would attract visitors to their chosen resort. This was a valuable link to literacy, helping pupils to develop their speaking and listening skills. Year 3 made excellent use of the school's grounds for their lesson on land use. Before moving out to gain first hand knowledge of the area, pupils discussed exactly what they were looking for, making sensible notes to remind them of their lesson objectives. Pupils made records of their findings and observations in several ways. They used ordinary and digital cameras, made rough notes and collected a variety of interesting things including bird's feathers, animal bones, and sheep's wool. Pupils were well aware of all safety issues and the teacher was careful to make sure all pupils washed their hands on their return to the classroom. Pupils in Years 5 and 6 carried out a traffic survey which provided evidence for a debate about traffic problems. Again this made a useful link with literacy and helps pupils to become more aware of the dangers on the roads. Pupils make a very detailed study of water and the water cycle. Much of the work involved independent research and writing. Pupils also increase their knowledge of mapping by a study of the world's mountain ranges and major rivers. Groups of pupils choose a river such as the Thames or the Amazon for an in depth study and present their finished work to the whole class.
103. The attitudes and behaviour of pupils are good both inside and outside the classroom. They show a keen interest in the subject, often producing work at home. They demonstrate a mature attitude, discussing the tasks they have been set in a constructive manner and helping each other willingly.
104. Teaching was good in both lessons seen. Teachers share lesson objectives with pupils so that they know what they are to learn. They use questioning profitably to remind pupils of prior learning. There is very good class management that results in a productive atmosphere. In both lessons teachers' planning was very good, allowing pupils to learn effectively and to make good progress over an extended period of time. The lessons finished with a discussion in which there was good consolidation of learning.
105. The leadership and management of the subject are good. The subject leader took charge of geography only recently. She has written a policy and organised a complete scheme of work based on the latest curriculum guidelines. Teachers are now finding this very useful and the subject is becoming more structured. There is some use of ICT for research and in using digital cameras to collect evidence but links between the subjects are not routinely highlighted on the

planning sheets. Resources have been improved and reorganised since January 2002. Assessment of pupils' work and the progress of all pupils at the end of each study are in place and are now being used effectively by teachers across the school.

HISTORY

106. The observation of lessons, an analysis of pupils' work over the year, displays in classrooms and discussions with pupils and teachers indicate that the standards of attainment are above those expected of pupils at the end of Years 2 and 6. This is an improvement since the previous inspection.
107. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 make good progress in their learning. They are introduced to the subject through stories, which help them to develop concepts of time and place. Year 1 pupils had walked round Barrow looking at houses of different types and ages. They enjoyed discussing the different features of buildings and attempted to identify which were old or more modern. To record their work, they made detailed, labelled drawings. Year 2 produced a very interesting display on The Great Fire of London. They discussed how it started and why it spread so quickly, commenting on the poor quality of the fire fighting equipment when compared to modern appliances. Linking their historical studies with the work done in English, pupils wrote a diary of 'what they saw' during the Great Fire for the London Evening News. Pupils learn about the life of Florence Nightingale. They identify changes she made in helping soldiers in the war and discuss the lasting contributions she made. Pupils use a good vocabulary for talking about the past. They confidently use words such as "old", "new", "past", and "present". They ask and answer relevant questions. In Years 3 to 6 pupils devise questions and then find the information that they need from different sources. They make good use of the library and the Internet, which is often used at home. When presenting their findings to the class they demonstrate that they are able to select and organise information well. For example, Year 4 pupils enjoyed a lively introduction to their lesson on settlers and invaders of Britain as they investigated the Romans and Celts. They answered questions about how people lived in those times by examining a selection of drawings. In Years 5 and 6, pupils compared the lives of rich and poor children in Victorian times. In discussion pupils illustrated a good understanding of social conditions. In their studies about Britain since the 1930's pupils had chosen one topic, such as entertainment or technology, to find out about the past and see how life has changed. In a lesson for older pupils observed during the inspection pupils began a new topic based on life in Tudor Times. In an interesting introduction to the work, pupils used a time line to discover just when the Tudor era began. They scanned a selection of maps of the world to understand the work of the great discoverers of the period. This work made an important link with the pupils' geographical studies.
108. Pupils throughout school make good progress in history. Teachers take great care to ensure that work is appropriately matched to pupils' learning needs. Consequently, pupils, including those with special educational needs, are supported or challenged appropriately.
109. In the lessons observed the teaching was good. An analysis of teachers' planning showed that it is detailed and thorough, demonstrating that teachers have good knowledge of the subject. Clear lesson objectives are shared with pupils so that they understand the purpose of the lesson. There are high expectations of behaviour and this enables pupils to concentrate on their work. Lessons move with good pace which keeps pupils motivated. In all lessons the very good relationships between teachers and pupils make the learning enjoyable. Discussion at the beginning and end of lessons is used effectively to assess what pupils have learned. Work in pupils' books and folders is marked effectively and includes helpful comments. Opportunities for the use of ICT are not detailed consistently on the planning sheets and facilities are underused in the teaching and learning of this subject.
110. Since January 2002 the subject manager has rewritten the policy and produced a scheme of work based on the latest national guidelines. Resources have been bought and reorganised and are now good. At present, the subject leader does not monitor work within classes and therefore does not have an overview of teaching. However, she conscientiously monitors teachers' planning,

checks assessments that take place at the end of each unit of study, and scrutinises pupils' work. She therefore has a good knowledge of the progress pupils make as they move through the school.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

111. By the end of Year 2, pupils reach standards in ICT that are similar to those expected nationally. By the end of Year 6 standards are not satisfactory. The achievement noted in the previous inspection has not been maintained but the school itself has changed radically. The school population has gone from 90 to 120. What was then considered as adequate hardware is now insufficient for pupils' needs. Additional computers and printers have just been received but the installation of all elements is not yet complete. Throughout school, there are a number of children who are very confident with computers and many have regular access to them at home. However, there are many who are not confident in the range of skills required by the National Curriculum and certainly not at a level where they use ICT to enhance learning in other subjects.
112. Many changes have taken place since January 2002. The new co-ordinator has written a new, well-focused policy. She has used the national guidelines to write a scheme of work that will meet the needs of the school. She has linked this scheme with the topics in every subject on a yearly basis and identified the appropriate software. None of this existed before. The timetable allocates a short period weekly for the teaching of specific skills and functions but allows only 15 minutes' hands-on time per week for pupils to use computers. This is insufficient for pupils to acquire the rather more complex skills or to allow for practice and consolidation of new learning. Except in the reception class, computers are underused for much of the day.
113. Pupils are enthusiastic about their computer sessions and teaching is usually good when introducing a new aspect. Explanations are clear and progress is good at this initial stage. However, the standards are only secure if pupils can return and use these programs in other contexts, with some independence. There is considerable inconsistency in the effectiveness with which teachers follow up and consolidate these new skills. Too often the planning suggests that they are 'one off' experiences. In a number of cases, the weekly plans show that there are extremely limited opportunities identified during other subject lessons and in the literacy and numeracy hours to consolidate ICT skills and use it as a tool for learning. There was no evidence, for example, of pupils using the computer facilities to redraft their writing.
114. The pupils in the Year 1 class were introduced to the idea that data collected can be presented as a pictogram. This built on work they had done on a traffic survey. At one point during the year they had used the Write Away program to create a list of names and to generate a design for 'our town'. Those in Year 2 were also handling data. The teacher showed them how to interrogate the pictogram with a series of increasingly difficult questions. Over the week each pupil had this experience. Planning shows an effective sequence of work using a graphics program linked to the study of famous artists. A range of examples illustrates pupils' satisfactory progress in this area.
115. Year 3 pupils used a music program to consolidate their learning. It provided them with the chance to apply their knowledge of beat and to compose using tuned and untuned instruments. Pupils were able to investigate the effect of combining a range of unusual sounds and to improve on their first efforts. Year 4 pupils were exploring how to write a very simple program to move the floor or screen turtle through a planned route. They had very little previous knowledge and experience to draw on. Displays show that pupils have created symmetrical patterns using the 'reflection' tool on a graphics program. During the inspection, there was a keen interest in accessing the Internet to find the latest scores in the World Cup. No 'hands-on' ICT work was observed in Years 5 and 6 but pupils' work files contain limited examples of using Encarta to support their studies in geography and history. Photographs provide evidence of working with Lego Dacta in design and technology lessons. However, there is no evidence in their other work of the use of ICT to enhance learning. Pupils who have special educational needs have equal access to the computers and progress as well as their peers.

116. The new manager is knowledgeable and has already provided useful training for individuals. She has set effective systems in place, which if properly implemented, will quickly have a positive impact on standards and computer use. Staff are at different stages of the nationally funded training. Resources have been improved to include new machines, a portable interactive white board and a digital camera. Together with the computer-linked microscope and headphones for quiet use of tape recorders, the school now has all the required software and Internet connections to teach all aspects of the National Curriculum for ICT. However, operating faults are too common and restrict the use of the equipment. Therefore, resources are unsatisfactory. The school recognises that the deficit in skills for the older pupils will take some time to address. There is an assessment schedule to match the year's programme outline but this has not been implemented yet. Half-termly plans are monitored but not the weekly lesson plans, and the co-ordinator does not yet have the opportunity to monitor the quality of teaching or the regularity with which ICT is used.

MUSIC

117. By the end of Year 2, pupils reach standards in music that that are similar to those expected nationally. No music lessons were observed at the top end of the school and thus there is insufficient evidence on which to make a judgement. The school has made a number of improvements since the last inspection but these date from spring this year, and have not yet had time to bed down and influence standards as pupils progress through the school.
118. The school now has a good policy and scheme of work, based on the national guidelines. It is carefully worked out to ensure that the re-occurring elements such as pulse and tempo, pitch and volume are addressed at progressively more sophisticated levels. The co-ordinator has monitored music teaching in each class. There are no opportunities for the children to sing together as a school since there is no hall and the chapel has become unsafe. Pupils in Year 3 were seen using computer facilities to compose music but, overall, ICT not used effectively to enhance or practise skills in the subject.
119. The quality of the music teaching relates closely to the musical knowledge, interest and confidence of individual teachers. Pupils sustain concentration when appreciating music and explain their likes and dislikes. They create simple compositions that come together in the form of a class performance. This approach was used effectively by both Year 2 and Year 3, with a better developed understanding of rhythm in the older class. In both instances they used a range of musical instruments to increase the texture of the taped music. Pupils often found it hard, particularly the keyboard element in Year 3, but watched and listened carefully to their teachers' direction and systematic help. In both classes they felt a sense of achievement at the end of the lesson. Year 1 managed the simple rhythms easily but did not know how to respond to the musical extracts used and lost concentration. Year 4 pupils have enjoyed their work on African music and Years 5 and 6 have been exploring Holst's 'Planets Suite'. The quality of singing is not good. Progress is made more difficult because class teachers have no resources to establish a starting note. After a few lines they get closer together but overall found it difficult to achieve a tuneful performance. Pupils who have special educational needs enjoy this creative subject and often do well.
120. The co-ordinator has moved the teaching of music forward but there is still much to do and staff would benefit from some professional development. The school is well resourced with instruments. A parent runs a recorder club and children have the opportunity to learn an instrument through the county peripatetic music service but few take this up.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

121. During the inspection the pupils were observed in games and swimming. Extra-curricular activities had not restarted after the half-term break and several lessons were planned for Friday, after the

inspection finished. Together with an analysis of teachers' planning and discussions with pupils and teachers, inspection findings indicate that overall, standards of attainment are as expected nationally by the time pupils leave the school. There are examples of individuals whose attainment is well above average in specific areas, for example in swimming. All pupils, including those with special educational needs, make good progress. Standards have been maintained since the time of the last inspection.

122. The school compensates for the lack of a hall by using local facilities. There are very effective links with the local secondary school staff, who transport the pupils to the swimming pool at a local college. The physical education specialist teachers provide excellent instruction for the Barrow pupils. During the lesson seen, they made very good progress in improving their swimming stroke as well as learning to dive. All pupils, including the reception children, have weekly swimming lessons in the summer term and use other local facilities for gymnastics and games in the autumn and spring terms. The small hard surface play area is well used when weather permits. For example Year 1 and 2 pupils were observed in small games activities during the inspection. The school's playing field provides a good facility in dry weather, offering sufficient space for games such as football or for athletics. Older pupils have the opportunity to attend a residential course where they experience a variety of outdoor pursuits. Parents and governors help with training in football, netball and cricket and the school takes part in local football and netball competitions.
123. All pupils change quickly and quietly without fuss for their physical education lessons. Teachers have the appropriate kit and set a very good example. Pupils carry out appropriate warm-up exercises and know the reason why it is essential to do so. They enjoy this practical activity and those with special educational needs often achieve success.
124. Year 1 pupils use a good variety of small apparatus to improve their catching and throwing skills. They enjoyed a challenge to improve their performance and tried hard to catch the quoit ten times without dropping it. Many pupils were successful with a few reaching much higher scores. Year 2 build on skills gained in the first half of the summer term and take part in a game of rounders. All pupils were aware of how the games should be played. Many showed considerable skill in hitting the ball and made good progress during the lesson as the teacher patiently explained the rules, which, at first several pupils found quite complicated. In both classes pupils handled equipment with care, were well aware of all safety rules and joined in the activities with enthusiasm. In the rounders match Year 2 pupils showed very good team spirit, applauding their friends excitedly if they succeeded in scoring well. The teachers gave generous but well deserved praise for the high quality performances.
125. Pupils clearly enjoy the opportunity to engage in physical activity and behave very well. They cooperate sensibly in pairs and small groups and use their initiative and imagination. For example, pupils in Year 1 found many different ways to throw and catch quoits and balls.
126. The good quality of teaching leads to good progress. Teachers have appropriately high expectations of pupils' behaviour and performance. In the lessons seen, teachers demanded constant effort from all pupils in order to extend their movements beyond the satisfactory level. This was particularly noticeable in the Years 5 and 6 swimming lesson where the teaching was excellent. Teachers build in assessment procedures alongside the planning process and use them well at the end of each unit of work to check pupils' progress. No use was seen of digital or video cameras to help pupils improve their performance or to record achievements.
127. Although the school has tried hard to compensate for the lack of a school hall, pupils would benefit from the opportunity to take part in all areas of the physical education curriculum on a regular basis without having to be transported considerable distances to use other facilities or rely on the weather.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

128. Attainment in religious education, for pupils at the ends of Years 2 and 6 meets all the expectations of the locally agreed syllabus. Standards have been maintained since the last inspection and the breadth of study has improved considerably, providing pupils with a good insight into the different faiths that are represented in modern society.
129. By the end of Year 2, pupils have a good knowledge of Bible stories and of their significance to everyday life. For example, they link the parable of 'the loving father' with the principle of forgiveness. They write their own prayers, showing a good awareness of the less tangible aspects of life. One pupil wrote 'thankyou for the plants and flowers that make the world look so nice'. Pupils have a developing awareness of the differences between religious beliefs and practices. They compare and contrast different customs, places of worship, symbols and significant artefacts between the Christian, Hindu, Muslim, Sikh and Buddhist faiths. They learn about the home shrines of Hindu families and talk knowledgeably about the significance of each object included. They write about the Buddhist religion, exploring how a believer's actions will be influenced by their faith. Pupils recognise the special people in their lives and discuss how celebrations are important for marking significant events in our lives, such as birthdays. Through their work in raising funds for charity, pupils come to appreciate the plight of those less fortunate than themselves and show a keen desire to help.
130. During Years 3 to 6 pupils gain a deeper knowledge and understanding of different beliefs, extending their studies to include the Jewish faith. They explore the use of symbols in religion. Pupils in Year 3 study the significance of the cross for Christians and engaged in some interesting work where they explored the symbolism in the story of Noah's Ark. They drew the olive branch representing life and a dove as a symbol of peace. As they drew their own symbols, they clearly showed a good understanding of a difficult concept for this age group. Pupils learn more Bible stories and begin to explore their significance in our modern world and for everyday life. Those in Year 4 write about dilemmas in life, exploring issues such as bullying, or 'being the new boy'. They show good empathy with people in difficult situations and a great respect for opinions and beliefs that are different from their own. In a very good lesson in Year 3 pupils considered what makes a good friend and created an advertisement, detailing the personal qualities they feel are important. The good range of artefacts that have recently been purchased are well used to enhance learning. In one topic about 'special objects' pupils discovered the significance of the menorah and torah scrolls for Jewish people. They took great care in making and decorating their own mezuzah, showing that they understood the importance of the object. In a study of the Hindu Raksha Bandhan festival, some pupils designed and made rakhi bracelets and then considered which special person would receive them. Pupils have a good knowledge of religious leaders; for example, they study the life and work of Jesus, Mohammed and Guru Nanak.
131. The daily acts of worship supplement learning and provide some opportunities for reflection. Pupils confidently offer their own prayers that are thoughtful and reverent. Because these sessions are held in small groups in the classrooms, there is plenty of opportunity for discussion and active involvement. In one class, all the pupils participated in a drama improvisation as the teacher read out the story. There was much enjoyment and very good learning. One pupil showed very good understanding by offering a prayer for 'more courage to ask for help'.
132. Pupils' attitudes in lessons and assemblies are very good. They take part eagerly and listen well, showing a very good respect for beliefs, opinions and traditions that are different from their own. Most offer views and opinions confidently and their responses to questions are thoughtful. The subject makes a valuable contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral and social development. Those who have special educational needs enjoy the fruitful discussions and have clear views that they express well. Lessons often cover elements of citizenship and equip pupils for life in a multi-cultural society.
133. On the basis of the lessons seen and the scrutiny of pupils' work, the quality of teaching is very good. Teachers follow the very good scheme of planning that has been developed this year by the subject manager to cover all aspects of religious education as detailed in the locally agreed syllabus. The range of topics studied is interesting and teachers bring the subject to life by

planning different activities, including meaningful discussions, debates and practical opportunities to explore and investigate. Some good use is made of ICT as pupils use the Internet to research about festivals but this is not seen consistently in all classes. The subject manager is very knowledgeable and provides informed support and inspiration for colleagues. She has recently chosen and purchased an exciting range of resources and artefacts to enrich study and these are very well used. She has a sound overview of learning in the subject by looking at teachers planning, pupils' work and the assessment records. At present, she has no opportunity to observe lessons at first hand but does regularly consult with colleagues to check the effectiveness of the planning scheme. Her enthusiasm and very good leadership are reflected in a high profile for the subject and some very good displays around school. The Christian ethos and the aims of the school are strongly represented in this subject.