

INSPECTION REPORT

NETHERTON INFANT SCHOOL

Maryport

LEA area: Cumbria

Unique reference number: 112137

Headteacher: Mrs C I Taylor

Reporting inspector: Mrs J E Platt
11565

Dates of inspection: 24 – 26 June 2003

Inspection number: 247186

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Infant
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	3 to 7
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Rydal Avenue Maryport
Postcode:	CA15 7LT
Telephone number:	01900 812709
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Appropriate authority:	The governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr C P Rayson
Date of previous inspection:	4 November 1997

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members			Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
11565	Mrs J E Platt	Registered inspector	English Art and design Music Physical education Educational inclusion Special educational needs	What sort of school is it? The school's results and pupils' achievements How well are pupils taught? How well is the school led and managed? What should the school do to improve further?
9798	Mrs V Ashworth	Lay inspector		Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development How well does the school care for its pupils? How well does the school work in partnership with parents?
12232	Mrs D Atkinson	Team inspector	Areas of learning for children in the Foundation Stage Mathematics Information and communication technology Religious education	How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils?
18344	Mr D Earley	Team inspector	Science Design and technology Geography History	

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Netherton Infant School is smaller than most schools having 71 boys and girls on roll plus 24 attending part time in the Nursery. It provides education for children in Maryport. The area served by the school is economically disadvantaged. A high number of pupils (27 per cent) are eligible for free school meals. No pupils come from ethnic minorities. Twenty-one per cent of pupils are on the school's register of special educational needs which is broadly average. Most concerns are moderate learning difficulties and speech problems. Three pupils have formal Statements of Special Educational Need. When they first come to the Nursery, children's attainment varies from year to year but is generally in line with expectations for this age.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

This is an effective school with several very good features. The school is very much a community and pupils feel happy and secure. Teaching is good and leads to effective learning. As a result, pupils' achievement is good. Standards in English and science are above average and in mathematics are in line with the level expected nationally for this age range. Management of the school is purposeful and has successfully overcome the threat of closure. This is greatly appreciated by parents. The school gives good value for money.

What the school does well

- Standards in English, science, geography, history and physical education are above average. Children get off to a flying start in the Nursery and the Reception class and exceed the level expected for their age.
- The headteacher is an outstanding and inspirational leader who sets a very clear direction for the school.
- Teaching is good and has a positive effect on pupils' eagerness to learn.
- Pupils are very well cared for in a supportive community and enjoy coming to school.
- Personal development is very good and pupils establish very good relationships and grow in maturity.
- The partnership with parents is very good and parents have very high opinions of the school.

What could be improved

- The consistency with which the school challenges more able pupils to make better progress especially in mathematics.
- The marking of pupils' work and the use of targets so that pupils have a clearer understanding of how to improve.
- The overall management of subjects, other than English and science.

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

The school has made good progress since it was last inspected in November 1997. High standards in science and English have been sustained. Although standards in mathematics are satisfactory they are not as high as those identified in the last inspection. A significant improvement is in accommodation. Under the leadership of the new headteacher many changes have taken place. Most notable is the building of the school hall that has allowed the school to start a Nursery. This has led to a much richer range of experiences for the younger children. Consequently, they now make good progress in all areas of learning. Other concerns raised in the previous inspection have all received attention. Governors play a full part in the management of the school and spending is checked to see that it has a positive impact on standards in the school. They play an active role in school, including monitoring teaching. Teaching is better and more very good and excellent teaching was observed. The school has clear plans for the future recorded meticulously in the school's improvement plan.

STANDARDS

The table shows the standards achieved by pupils at the end of Year 2 based on average point scores in National Curriculum tests.

Performance in:	compared with			
	all schools			similar schools
	2000	2001	2002	2002
Reading	E	A	B	A
Writing	C	A	A	A*
Mathematics	D	B	D	B

Key	
in the top five per cent in the country	A*
well above average	A
above average	B
average	C
below average	D
well below average	E

These results show that the school is doing very well compared with similar schools and results were all above or well above average. In fact in writing results were in the top five per cent in the country. Compared with all schools the results were also high in reading and writing. In mathematics, results were below the national average because few pupils exceeded the level expected for their age and this held down the school's overall performance. Teacher assessments in science judged standards to be well above average because every pupil reached the level expected for their age. Test results fluctuate because of the low number of pupils involved and should be treated with caution as they do not always provide a reliable picture of standards. Nevertheless, the results show a clear trend of improvement in recent years and in 2002 the school received a nationally recognised Achievement Award. The school is well placed to sustain these high standards.

Current standards in Year 2 are above average in reading, writing and science and average in mathematics. Overall achievement is good with the great majority of pupils reaching the level expected for their age. However, higher attaining pupils are not always sufficiently challenged and do not make as much progress as they could.

Children in the Nursery and Reception class get off to a flying start and make good progress. In response to the warm and friendly atmosphere they make very good progress in their personal and social skills and establish friendships and are very happy in school.

Pupils with special educational needs are given extra help and make good progress.

Attainment in physical education, history and geography is above average and in all other subjects is wholly satisfactory.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Very good. Pupils are very enthusiastic about their school. As pupils arrive there is an air of excitement and they are eager to settle to work.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Very good. Behaviour is very good. Respect for each other and for adults is a strong feature that prevails throughout the day.
Personal development and relationships	Very good. Pupils look forward to break and lunchtimes because relationships are very good and they play happily together. They have a growing understanding of responsibility and carry out small duties diligently.

Attendance	Below average. Attendance has fallen because those with special needs are not always able to attend school.
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TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils in:	Nursery and Reception	Years 1 – 2
Quality of teaching	Very good	Good

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

The overall quality of teaching and learning is good. Examples of good teaching were seen in all classes and in two lessons seen the teaching was excellent. These were in physical education where the teacher's enthusiasm for the subject inspired pupils and much new learning took place.

The teaching of English is good. Early literacy skills are taught imaginatively through practical activities. As a result, pupils learn these skills quickly and they get off to a good start in reading and writing. This active approach is missing in the teaching of mathematics, which although satisfactory overall is not as exciting as it should be and pupils could learn at a faster rate.

Teaching in the Nursery and Reception class is very good because the teachers provide stimulating lessons and use a variety of exciting resources. Staff know that children learn best through practical activities and so every session is an enjoyable learning experience.

Teaching fully meets the needs of pupils with special educational needs, who play a full part in lessons because teachers check they have enough support to complete their work. Classroom assistants play a valuable role helping these pupils to focus on the task in hand. The needs of more able pupils are not always met because teachers do not plan in enough detail for these pupils or challenge them enough in lessons.

Positive features in many lessons are the warm relationships and the value staff place on pupils' contributions. As a result, pupils are confident about trying out new ideas. Teachers plan carefully and in the best lessons use a variety of activities to maintain pupils' interest. Pupils' work is marked regularly but teachers do not always make the mistakes they have made clear to pupils or explain how they can make their work better.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Good. Planning is good and ensures all statutory requirements are met. Visits and visitors are used very effectively to stimulate pupils' interest and provide a real life context for learning. Extra-curricular activities are very good.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Good. Pupils are identified quickly and support given to help them keep up with the other pupils. All staff are sensitive to their needs and ensure these pupils are included in all aspects of the curriculum.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Very good. Provision for spiritual development is very good. Classrooms and outdoors abound with examples of activities that create a real curiosity about the natural world. Social and moral development is very good. Pupils are taught the importance of accepting responsibility for their own actions. They are polite and friendly to visitors and each other. A good range of opportunities celebrates both the local culture and customs in a multicultural society.

How well the school cares for its pupils	Very good. The school provides a very secure, caring environment. Teachers know their pupils very well, and good assessment procedures help teachers to check on pupils' progress. Pupils do not have individual targets and so are not clear about the next steps in their learning.
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The school works very well with parents and the school is held in high esteem by the community.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Good. The leadership and management from the headteacher are excellent. She has very high expectations of all aspects of the school's life. The roles of other key staff are not as well developed and not all subject leaders have enough opportunity to find out about what is happening in the subjects they lead.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Good. Governors are good friends to the school and are involved in all aspects of its work. They play an important role in deciding the school's priorities and in evaluating progress towards achieving them.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Good. Detailed analysis of assessment information is carried out so that the school has a clear picture of the next steps in its development. Teaching is regularly monitored and support offered when a need arises.
The strategic use of resources	Good. The school makes efficient use of its resources including grants and other funds. Good attention is given to the principles of best value and governors check that spending has a positive effect on standards.

The number of teachers and support staff is satisfactory, as are the quality and quantity of learning resources. The accommodation is satisfactory but is still cramped and the school hopes to improve this in the near future.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Children are expected to work hard. • Teaching is good and children make good progress. • The school is well led and managed. • Parents are welcomed and they feel comfortable discussing any concerns. • Their children are happy in school. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Parents expressed no concerns.

The inspection team fully agrees with parents' very positive views of the school.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and pupils' achievements

Standards and achievement in the Foundation Stage¹

1. Children start school with a wide range of attainment and as is to be expected with a small school this varies considerably from year to year. However, overall it is in line with the level expected for this age. Children make good progress in both the Nursery and the Reception class and exceed the early learning goals² in all of the areas of learning. Very good progress is made in their personal and social skills and many establish firm friendships and show the ability to work independently. They get off to a flying start in numeracy and literacy because these skills are taught very effectively through imaginative games and practical activities. Standards are higher than those identified in the previous inspection because of the rigorous attention given to enriching the curriculum and improving the accommodation. This has enabled the school to have a Nursery class and this is extremely beneficial in preparing the children for full time education. The new hall and improved outdoor areas have enabled the staff to provide imaginative activities. Visitors to the school will quickly spot the improvement in the curriculum because the environment is exciting and children are all busily engaged in purposeful activities. The focus on learning through first hand experiences is especially effective in increasing the children's knowledge about the world.

Standards and achievement in Years 1 and 2

2. Standards in Year 2 are above average in reading, writing and science and average in mathematics. Overall achievement is good although higher attaining pupils are not always sufficiently challenged and are underachieving. Pupils with special educational needs receive effective support and make good progress.
3. These standards vary slightly from the results of the most recent results of national tests. This variation is to be expected in a small school and test results do not always give a reliable picture of standards especially when compared with similar schools. Nevertheless, there is a very clear picture of rising standards over the last three years and last year the school received an Achievement Award for improvement in test results. In reading, test results were above the national average and well above the average for similar schools. Results were even higher in writing being well above the national average and in fact were in the top five per cent in the country when compared with similar schools. Results were not as good in mathematics and were below the national average because few pupils exceeded the national average. However, compared with similar school results were above average showing most pupils did better than expected. Teachers' assessment in science last year judged standards to be well above the national average because every pupil reached the level expected for their age.

¹ Foundation Stage- this begins when children reach the age of three and finishes at the end of the Reception year. It is a distinct stage in preparing children for later schooling and is based on six areas of learning. These refer to communication, language and literacy; mathematical development; personal, social and emotional development; knowledge and understanding of the world and creative and physical development.

² Early learning goals are the expectations for most children to reach by the end of the Reception class.

4. The improvement in recent years has been brought about by:
 - improved assessment procedures so that the school has a clearer picture of attainment and can adjust the curriculum when a weakness is spotted;
 - very detailed self-evaluation in literacy and numeracy so the school has a clear plan of action with a determination to raise standards;
 - changes in the approaches to reading and the teaching of letters and sounds;
 - the improved curriculum in the Foundation Stage so that pupils are starting in Year 1 at a higher level;
 - more training in the teaching of numeracy and literacy.
5. Standards in speaking and listening are satisfactory. Many are confident sharing their ideas although some find it difficult to explain their methods and investigations in science and mathematics. Listening skills are often good and pupils listen attentively to teachers and each other. Reading has improved and the focus on reading a variety of books means many are discerning readers and gain pleasure from books. Writing is above average because the focus on writing stories means that many are confident using imaginative vocabulary. They are less confident writing for different purposes and higher attaining pupils are not always set tasks that enable them to achieve as well as they can.
6. Standards and achievement in mathematics are satisfactory but are not as high as in literacy because teachers are less confident teaching the subject. Although many pupils are confident in ordering and continuing sequences of numbers up to 100 they are less sure about applying their skills. They find it difficult to decide on different ways to solve problems or to explain their methods. This is linked to an overuse of worksheets which do not enable pupils to set out their own work. This particularly restricts the progress of the higher attaining pupils.
7. Many pupils reach the level expected for their age in science and overall standards are above average. Many have a good understanding of how plants grow and what is needed for a healthy lifestyle. The improved focus on investigation has improved pupils' scientific skills although pupils are not always being fully challenged to set up their own investigations and to express their own ideas.
8. The school is fully aware of the needs of the pupils with special educational needs and they are supported effectively in most lessons. They make good progress to reach the targets in their individual education plans. In reading, the extra sessions for those identified as falling behind the expected standards are very effective. They are well organised, based on practical activities and lead to pupils quickly catching up with the others in their class.
9. Standards in information and communication and technology are satisfactory. Most pupils have a secure foundation in basic computer skills and are confident using computers to support their learning. In physical education standards are higher than usually seen for this age range because of the teachers' enthusiasm and very high expectations. Visits and visitors bring geography and history alive to the pupils and achievement is good and standards are above average. In all other subjects standards are wholly satisfactory.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

10. Pupils have very good attitudes towards their school and their work. Their personal development is very good and their behaviour and relationships with each other and members of staff are also very good. These make a great contribution to the harmonious and friendly atmosphere within the school. There is an overall improvement in attitudes since the last inspection. Attendance has fallen below the national average because pupils with special needs are not always able to attend school.
11. The pupils show great enthusiasm both in lessons and other activities. They are eager to be part of the school's extra-curricular activities and many pupils belong to the clubs. There is a very positive attitude to learning, which is encouraged from the moment they enter the Nursery. This can be seen in the excellent attitudes in physical education and in the Foundation Stage and pupils work at levels higher than usually seen for their age. The pupils enjoy the sense of belonging and would not wish to be at any other school. They show interest in their work and are happy to share and co-operate with others. Most pupils exhibit very good levels of effort and concentration in lessons and are very keen to join in activities. Most try hard with their work. However, some examples of work are not presented as neatly as they could be. This is often linked to pupils' eagerness to get down all of their ideas.
12. Behaviour throughout the school and in lessons is very good. The pupils are particularly well behaved in the playground without losing their enthusiasm for play. There are no exclusions. The school's emphasis on forming relationships and social development generally has a very positive impact on behaviour.
13. The headteacher and staff consider it a very high priority to develop positive relationships. The school recognises the need to form friendships and for pupils to be secure and happy in their learning environment. Staff provide very good role models and the caring attitude is evident throughout the school community. Pupils are very polite to adults who come into the school and are willing to enter into conversation and share their snacks when given the opportunity. Many relate to adults very well and are very pleasant. There is no evidence of bullying in the school. Any incidents which do occur are dealt with quickly and effectively. Pupils are taught to think about what they do and to respect each other's feelings. This was observed in the act of daily worship in the Reception class, when children discussed happy and sad feelings with great understanding and showed excellent attitudes towards their teacher and each other. Pupils also demonstrate a very caring attitude towards animals and plants. They think carefully and in Year 1 follow the code of conduct in their mini-beast area. They understand that when the butterflies emerge from their chrysalis they will have to release them.
14. The pupils are willing to take responsibility when this is offered. There are opportunities to be special helpers in class and also to enjoy other responsibilities, such as returning the registers to the office. Teachers make effective use of *thinking partners* which entails the more able sharing their ideas with others so they all learn from each other. The pupils are quick and very willing to tidy up both in the classroom and in the playground. They choose their reading books with care and are able to select a number to take home. However, there is scope for providing more opportunities for pupils to exercise greater responsibility in class and around the school. Also in some lessons teachers give too much direction which restricts pupils, especially the more able, from trying out their own ideas.

15. Attendance at the school is below average. This is lower than usually seen in the school and is related to the special needs of some pupils which lead to more absences than are usual in the school. There is however no unauthorised absence.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS OR STUDENTS TAUGHT?

16. The overall quality of teaching is good and leads to effective learning. In the 24 lessons seen teaching was excellent in two, very good in five, good in 11 and satisfactory in the rest. The excellent teaching was in physical education in Year 1 and 2 and was in lessons taught by the headteacher. In these lessons the teachers' enthusiasm for the subject and desire to share this with the pupils was very evident and pupils show a real aptitude for the subject. Teaching has improved since the last inspection with more very good and better teaching being seen especially in the Foundation Stage.

Teaching and learning in the Foundation Stage

17. Teaching and learning are very good in the Foundation Stage. This is an improvement since the last inspection. A more stimulating range of experiences and better resources and accommodation has brought this about. Learning is assured because of the focus on learning through fun and practical activities. The afternoon spent trying to wash clothes with a tub and scrubbing board and toasting bread on a toasting fork provide a snapshot of the stimulating experiences planned for these children. All staff are very clear about the needs of these young children. A few activities are planned with close adult support whereas others allow free choice. As a result, children grow in confidence to make decisions and to work independently. Literacy and numeracy skills are taught well through rhymes and practical activities. Children look forward to these sessions and so these essential skills are thoroughly learnt. Children thrive in the caring atmosphere which is firmly based on warm relationships and appreciation of the efforts of the children. This is very helpful for the children with special educational needs. Staff are very aware of their needs and check to see they are fully involved in all activities. Teachers have very high expectations in all areas of learning and this considerably boosts the children's learning.

Teaching and learning in Years 1 and 2

18. Teaching and learning in Years 1 and 2 are good. Teachers have a good knowledge of the subjects they teach. In science they offer clear explanations and effectively transfer their knowledge to the pupils. The teaching of reading is good because teachers have a good understanding of the skills pupils require. Teachers focus on these skills in guided reading sessions and many pupils are fluent readers. Although the teaching of mathematics is satisfactory overall teachers lack the confidence to stretch pupils' skills and understanding. Practical mathematical resources are not used enough to make learning interesting and also to consolidate pupils' learning. Teachers do not draw from pupils the methods used in their calculations and so pupils are not learning how to solve problems in a variety of ways. Science teaching is good because teachers focus more on investigation which is improving pupils' learning. Most teachers have taken on board the advice given in their information and communication technology training and are supporting pupils confidently as they work on the computers.
19. Planning is good. Teachers make good use of the detailed guidelines to ensure all of the requirements of the National Curriculum are covered. Lessons are well planned and carefully organised. The joint planning between Years 1 and 2 ensures the pupils

in the mixed age classes have access to a curriculum that matches their age and ability. This was seen in Year 2 when the teacher carefully matched spellings to the differing abilities. This was done effectively so that all learned from the activity. Staff plan well for the use of support staff who play an important part in most lessons. They help pupils using the computer and teachers include the use of information and communication technology in most lessons.

20. Teachers' expectations are not high enough. Tasks are not always closely matched to pupils' ability because teachers do not always record the learning that takes place in lessons carefully enough. Teachers are more aware of the needs of the pupils with special educational needs because they are guided by their individual education plans and this helps them to plan tasks that match their needs. However, the needs of the higher attaining pupils are not fully met. This is best illustrated in mathematics and literacy when too many worksheets are used which are not always matched to the different abilities. Consequently, higher attaining pupils complete them quickly and then colour in the pictures which fails to extend their learning.
21. In the best lessons teachers include a variety of methods and a brisk pace makes lessons interesting and maintain pupils' interest. This is very evident in physical education when the variety of tasks and the quick move from working on the floor to the apparatus led to an excellent lesson. In history and geography, the focus on learning through visits and looking at artefacts makes learning interesting and boosts achievement. However, some lessons lack variety of tasks and this leads to the pace of lessons being too slow. For example, in a music lesson in Year 2 the pupils repeated the same action too many times and lost enthusiasm for the tasks.
22. A positive feature in all lessons is the very effective management of pupils. Lessons are carried out in a friendly and yet hard working atmosphere. There is high emphasis on valuing every individual pupil and lots of encouragement is used to build up the pupils' self-esteem.
23. Marking of pupils' work is better in science than in other subjects. In science teachers take time to comment on how well pupils have done and what they need to do to improve. This is not the case in other subjects, however, and pupils lack understanding about the quality of their work. In some examples comments are too positive which misleads pupils so that they think they are doing better than they are. Teachers do not make the most effective use of assessment information to set pupils' individual targets to enable them to appreciate the next steps in their learning.
24. Parents are happy with the amount of work their pupils have to do at home. Inspectors find the uses of homework to be good and activities are linked to current topics. For example, in literacy pupils learn about non-fiction books and have the task to research information at home. The amount of reading done at home has a significant impact on the standards in reading and the fact pupils now enjoy a wide range of authors.

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

25. The curriculum is good, overall. The attractive outdoor accommodation that meets visitors as they arrive at the school alerts them to the stimulating learning opportunities in the Nursery and Reception class. These are firmly based on national guidelines and provide an exciting and well-structured programme, which emphasise

learning through play and first hand experiences. The curriculum in Years 1 and 2 is good but some of the breadth has been lost in the emphasis on English, mathematics and science. All the statutory requirements are met.

26. The improvements since the last inspection are good because:

- the Foundation Stage is now very well developed;
- there is good support for pupils with special educational needs;
- planning guidelines are good and national guidelines are modified to meet the needs of the school;
- extra-curricular activities are better.

Main strengths include:

- a two-year planning cycle, which ensures adequate coverage of the curriculum in mixed age and single aged classes;
- the emphasis on literacy, numeracy and science;
- effective planning to ensure all pupils have full access to the curriculum;
- very effective use of the outside area to enhance learning, especially of numeracy and literacy and knowledge and understanding of the world in the Foundation Stage;
- very good provision for personal, social and health education;
- good relationships with local primary and secondary schools;
- effective use of visits to provide first hand experience related to pupils' studies;
- the effective contribution of the community to pupils' learning.

Areas for development include:

- further refinement of the numeracy strategy;
- an increase in challenge for high attainers, particularly through the use of their own ideas in investigations in mathematics and science;
- a more flexible use of time in the daily organisation to enable more focus on subjects, such as art and design;
- an increase in the links between subjects, with a greater use of literacy, numeracy and information and communication and technology in all, as a tool for learning.

27. Although the numeracy strategy is in place, it is not as well developed or effective in driving up standards as the literacy strategy. For example, limited opportunities for pupils to explore their own ideas when tackling investigations or solving problems restrict learning opportunities. In science too, pupils are not sufficiently encouraged to use their own initiative. A curriculum organisation built around unusually long literacy periods does not encourage links between subjects, or the use of information and communication technology, mathematical or literacy skills to their full extent in other subjects. Thus, for example, the potential for developing a range of writing styles for different purposes and audiences are missed. All these factors play a part in a reduced challenge for more able pupils.

28. In contrast, those pupils who need additional support and who are on the special educational needs register are well integrated into all lessons. The curriculum for these pupils is good. Their individual educational plans and the review of progress is good so activities are set that take account of their changing needs. Support staff provide good support and in several subjects, the emphasis on verbal explanations, ensures that they participate fully in all activities.

29. The school has made a great effort to enrich the curriculum further by providing a very good range of clubs and a choir, unusual for an infant school. Parents are very pleased with these opportunities. Observations of these activities show pupils benefit from expert tuition and these sessions are not only good fun but also considerably extend skills. Pupils benefit from an increasing range of well thought out visits that bring their work in history, geography and science alive.
30. Spiritual, moral, social and cultural provision is very good and has improved on the good standards noted at the last inspection.
31. Spiritual provision is very good, stemming from well-thought-out whole-school and class assemblies, which ensure a quiet and reflective atmosphere. Topics are thoughtfully selected and relevant to young pupils. They look forward to the stories told them by the local vicar and have enjoyed their visits to church where they explored the clothes she wore for services. They are helped to develop a reverence for living things. When Year 1 discovered that one of their chrysalises had hatched into a beautiful butterfly, they were almost breathless with delight, watching spellbound as it gradually fluttered its wings. In the garden, pupils are amazed as the blossom on the tree turns into tiny fruit. All staff are aware of the need to raise pupils' self-esteem and value their efforts and all lessons include lots of praise and encouragement.
32. Moral and social provision is also very good. The behaviour policy is consistently implemented and the pupils are encouraged to take an active part in managing their own behaviour. They draw up their own rules and discuss and reflect on how their behaviour impacts on others. These rules vary between classes and include phrases such as, *I've got an idea, tell me about it, you can go first*. This means they are clearly understood and followed by all. Staff are very successful in helping pupils understand how to step back from an argument or unwelcome behaviour. They not only apologise but are encouraged to take this further and say that *it will not happen again*. Circle Time³ in the Foundation Stage and religious education in Years 1 and 2 focus on personal and social development. Consequently, pupils understand how their actions can affect others. Relationships are very good, reflecting the very good role-models that the adults provide. This respect for one another is developed from the moment they start in the Nursery and is linked closely with encouragement to take pleasure in and accept responsibility for their environment. They designed their playground and planted the flower boxes and flowerbeds. Key features of the curriculum for the youngest children are the fostering of independence and the encouragement of initiative. Their developing social responsibility as they move through the school is especially demonstrated in their successful efforts to collect money for local and national charities.
33. Cultural provision is good. The visits to the local museums and exploration of artefacts in history help them begin to understand something of their own culture. They listen carefully to music in class and in assembly and confidently identified Elgar as the composer of the music, played in assembly. There are opportunities to think about and appreciate great artists' work. The youngest children's paintings

³ Circle Time sessions provide pupils an opportunity to discuss a wide range of personal and general issues. All pupils agree that no interruptions should occur and only one person at a time will speak. Respect for other pupils' views will occur and therefore pupils feel confident that they can talk with ease and free from any form of interruption from other pupils.

show they have learnt about the work of Van Gogh. Well chosen storybooks, an occasional visitor and an exploration of religious celebrations in other faiths are used sensibly to widen pupils' awareness of similarities and differences in the way others live.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

34. The school takes very good care of its pupils and has established a very warm friendly atmosphere which offers pupils every opportunity to do their best. There are very effective measures in place to ensure that pupils receive support and guidance. This is an improvement since the last inspection.
35. Procedures for child protection are very well established and effective. The headteacher is the designated person responsible for child protection and receives regular updated training. All the staff and the governor responsible have been trained and local authority procedures are followed. The school is particularly vigilant for any concerns and has developed good relationships with outside agencies. The school considers that the health and safety of the pupils is very important. There are very effective procedures in place to check on the health and well being of all those in school which are well monitored by the headteacher and the member of the governing body with this special responsibility.
36. The procedures for monitoring and supporting pupils' personal development are very good. Tracking of pupils' development starts when they enter school and assessments are recorded. As the pupils move up the school their personal development is rigorously monitored. The teachers know the pupils well and understand when and where support and guidance are required. Throughout the school day, achievement is recognised through praise and encouragement and rewarded at celebration assemblies.
37. There are very effective procedures in place to promote good attendance. Parents understand the importance of informing school early on the first day of any unexpected absence. Pupils are punctual and registers are completed quickly and efficiently and returned to the office twice a day. Not many families take holidays during term time but some local industry does not give any choice in the timing of holidays. The main cause of the statistical lowering in the attendance rate has been that some pupils with special needs are not always able to attend school. Attendance and punctuality contribute greatly to the attainment and progress of the pupils.
38. There are very good procedures which support and promote high standards of behaviour. The behaviour policy works very well because it is applied consistently throughout the school. Pupils are aware of the sanctions if behaviour is not good. Behaviour is monitored at all times and incidents are recorded when necessary. The school is very successful in eliminating oppressive behaviour. The accepted practice is one of prevention through positive means such as giving regular praise for good behaviour. Pupils are taught to understand the value of good behaviour in sustaining an orderly community.
39. Procedures for assessing pupils' attainment and progress and using the information are good. When children first begin in the Nursery, adults unobtrusively observe and record what these youngest children can do. They make effective use of this information to plan careful, well thought-out tasks and activities. The activities systematically help children to learn to manage their personal and social needs,

extend their language understanding and facilitate an exploration of number and shape. This is continued through the Reception class. As a result, by the end of the Foundation Stage, the school has a clear picture of what children can do. This provides teachers in the infants with clear levels on which to plan their curriculum.

40. Good use is made of assessment information to adjust the curriculum when a weakness is identified. At the end of the infants, a detailed analysis of national tests further informs the school about the standards reached by each individual child. The school checks on pupils who have not made as much progress as they expected. This information is used to identify barriers to pupils' learning. The school is quick to act to overcome these difficulties. For example, in reading a more active approach to teaching letters and their sounds and a focus on reading a variety of books has greatly increased reading standards.
41. More use could be made of assessment information to tell pupils how to improve their work. At the moment teachers do not set individual targets which would indicate the next step to be addressed in mathematics, reading, writing and science. As a result, pupils and parents do not have the precise information that they need to be actively involved in moving learning, forward. Teachers' marking, though regularly undertaken, is not as evaluative as it might be. It does not identify elements that are really good or those that need further attention and thus does not play a significant part in improving standards.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

42. The school has developed very strong links with parents as was found at the last inspection. The survey of parents' views before this inspection, the letters received and the pre-inspection meeting, all indicate that parents are extremely satisfied with the school's provision. The parents show a very high regard for the school's work throughout and are very happy to have their children there. This became particularly evident when the school was under threat of closure and this support has remained. Parents now have excellent views of the school and raised no concerns. They are very proud of their school.
43. The school's links with parents start early with a very good introduction to the Nursery. A useful booklet and visits make sure parents and children find the starting of school a pleasant experience. There is an open door policy which means that parents are welcome at the beginning and the end of the day to speak to staff if necessary. The headteacher is also there to meet and greet parents. Children are met with comments like, *a nice smile today*, and parents are reassured that the staff have a genuine concern for their children. The school administrator is friendly and greets everyone with a welcoming smile so parents feel comfortable contacting the school throughout the day. Parents respond well to the invitations to attend assemblies, special performances and fund raising events. Parents are encouraged to communicate and feel happy in the school surroundings.
44. Parents receive good quality information on the work of the school. The prospectus gives details of the vision, aims and mission of the school and is clear in its detail. Information tells parents how to help their children at home. Details of the curriculum are issued each term and parents are clear about what their children are doing in school. There are regular newsletters and home school agreements are completed to show a firm commitment to the school. The two parents' evenings are very well attended. Annual reports to parents detailing their children's progress are full in detail about work done although not always clear on what should be done to improve.

45. Very good opportunities are available for parents to be involved with the work of the school. Some work very effectively in the classroom with a variety of tasks and help on school outings and with school plays. Parents share their experiences. For example, the parent who drives an ambulance brought it to school and showed how patients are cared for if the need arises. Some parents are also valuable members of the governing body. The school greatly appreciates the contribution made by parents and the impact they make on the work of the school.
46. Parents support their children's learning very well in reading, project work, supporting homework and recording work done at home. Although there is no formal parent teacher association the school, parents and children work hard to raise money for the school, and deserving causes such as, the local cottage hospital and national charities. The parents are very happy that their children should be taught to support and think of others and are anxious to enhance the quality of their children's lives in this way.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

47. The overall quality of leadership and management is good. Since the last inspection a new headteacher has taken over the leadership of the school. At the time of her appointment the school was facing possible closure and morale was low as parents were moving their children to other schools. Standards had fallen and the school was facing many challenges. The headteacher faced these with great strength of character and determination to put the school back on an even keel and return it to the heart of the community. It is evidence of her excellent leadership that the school is now thriving and fully supported by parents. Much has been achieved and she has earned the respect of all involved with the school. She leads by example being an excellent teacher for the children in the Reception class and also sharing her enthusiasm for physical education in the very popular gymnastics club.
48. To overcome the difficulties a detailed audit was carried out and a long-term plan put in place to tackle weaknesses. This effectively resolved a weakness in the last inspection and also raised morale. All staff were involved in this planning and so feel valued and are supportive of change. The speed in which the accommodation has been extended and the Nursery set up is impressive. The school is a much pleasanter place to work and this has effectively raised morale.
49. The low number of staff means that most staff have management responsibility for more than one subject or aspect of the school. The management of English and physical education are very good because the headteacher carries out these roles and has an informed view of what is happening in school. A very detailed self-evaluation of English has been carried out and the resulting action plan implemented changes which have raised standards. This is best illustrated by the move to reading and sharing many books. Pupils now not only read correctly but more importantly have an enthusiasm for books. Management of science is good and the recent focus on investigation has led to improvements in pupils' scientific skills. Management of mathematics is satisfactory but insufficient attention has been given to checking that the practical approaches recommended in the National Numeracy Strategy are being effectively carried out in lessons. All other subjects are soundly led. Staff have put in place new planning guidelines but have limited opportunity to check how these are being implemented in lessons. As a result, they do not have a fully informed view of the areas most needing attention.

50. Management of the needs of pupils with special educational needs is good. The requirements of the Code of Practice⁴ are fully met. The needs of these pupils are spotted promptly and individual education plans written to tackle their needs. These are variable in quality and some targets are not sufficiently broken down into sufficiently small achievable steps to guide teachers in their planning. This makes it difficult for teachers and support staff to check when a target has been achieved. The individual plans for pupils with formal Statements of Special Need are more helpful and these pupils benefit from well informed support. Their needs are fully met and the school is very keen to include pupils with very special needs in all aspects of school life. Progress is closely monitored and advice sought to check the pupils are getting the best possible help.
51. The support given by the governing body is good. Governors are well organised and carry out their duties in a highly organised manner. Governors have a clear overview of what is happening in school because they play a full and active role in school life. Many help in lessons on a regular basis so they gain an informal view of what is happening on a day-to-day basis. This is supported by formal observations of teaching which are based on an agreed focus. Staff appreciate the views of other people and value the feedback governors provide. The governors check that all statutory duties are met. A strength in the role of the governing body is their commitment to improvement. They are prepared to go that extra step to provide the best for the pupils. This can best be illustrated by their determination that the new buildings would be up to the required standard.
52. A positive feature of management is the effective evaluation of the school's performance. This has been very instrumental in the school's improvement. Detailed analysis of test results are carried out and prompt action taken to remedy weaknesses. Governors play a full part in this and are not slow to question decisions if they feel they may not be the best course of action. The headteacher has put in procedures to track pupils' progress from when they start school. Results of national tests are compared with early predictions. This enables the school to check that pupils are making as much progress as possible. Teaching is monitored and has been especially effective in raising teaching in the Foundation Stage and in English.
53. Development planning is a strength of the school and involves the whole staff and governing body in the setting of relevant priorities and targets. The format of the school's improvement plan shows good practice. It successfully identifies key areas for development is carefully costed and has criteria to judge success. In response to a concern in the last inspection it now plans over four years and so appears to have a long list of priorities. However, progress on areas of development is evaluated and adjustments made to the plan. It is to the school's credit that many of the original goals have been successfully accomplished.
54. Performance management is firmly established and staff development is linked to both personal and school needs. All staff are included in training events and this has enhanced the team approach to implement changes. The school is well on the way to receiving an Investors in People Award. The school offers placements to nursery nurses and students from the local secondary school. This is managed well so that all benefit from the experience.

⁴ The Code of Practice gives practical advice to schools and local authorities about their responsibilities and tasks to ensure that pupils who have special educational needs receive the most appropriate help to further their learning and personal development. This is a statutory duty under the 1993 Education Act.

55. Financial management is good. The school makes good use of the surplus funds which governors had held in reserve in case more money was needed for the recent improvements in the accommodation. The administrative staff is very efficient and keeps a close check on financial records but the local authority has not yet put in place systems to use information and communication technology to simplify financial administration. Specific grants are spent correctly, This can be seen in the use of additional funding from the small schools' initiative which has helped raise achievement in writing and the Foundation Stage. Good attention is given to the principles of best value. Governors check that spending has an impact on standards. This is very obvious in the links between the establishment of the Nursery and the effect this has had not only on improving progress in the Foundation Stage but also in increasing the number of pupils on roll and hence securing financial stability. Parents are regularly consulted and the commitment they made to the school at the time of the threatened closure has been maintained. The school was audited in 1999 and recommended changes were put in place.
56. Accommodation has significantly improved. The outdoor environment is now stimulating and very well used. It makes a clear statement about the school's philosophy to provide exciting first hand experiences for the pupils. Although the indoor accommodation has improved and the hall is a valuable asset the school still has weaknesses to overcome. Classes can only be obtained by walking through other classes. Pupils are very aware to do this quietly and so disturbance is kept to the minimum. The hall is used for the Nursery and this means staff have to put out and tidy away the equipment every day. There is no staff room or medical room. The headteacher has to share an office with the administrative staff making it difficult to have confidential meetings with parents. Effective planning means these weaknesses are overcome. Staff are imaginative with display and this creates a stimulating environment for learning.
57. Learning resources are adequate. The school has increased the number and variety of reading books to support their philosophy on reading for pleasure. Resources in the Foundation Stage are good although the Nursery is somewhat limited by the storage of equipment. Each class has access to a computer but some of these are needing updating and it is difficult to teach information and communication as a whole class. Practical resources to make numeracy lessons more stimulating are not available. Artefacts, especially relating to other faiths, are limited in religious education.
58. Staffing is satisfactory although the headteacher still has a considerable teaching load. The deployment of staff is effective in keeping class sizes to a manageable size. The employment of additional support for reading is proving beneficial in raising standards in reading.
59. Effective management means the school's aims, which include, *to enable each child to realise success and to create a positive and friendly atmosphere in which learning takes place without fear of failure* are clearly reflected in the daily life of the school. Parents are unanimous in their belief the school is well led and managed and inspection evidence support this judgement.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

60. In order to further raise standards and improve the quality of education the governors, headteacher and staff should:

- (1) improve the progress made by the higher attaining pupils especially in mathematics by:
 - providing more challenging tasks and opportunities to plan and carry out their own investigations;
 - avoiding the use of worksheets in mathematics which prevent pupils setting out their own work and moving onto harder work;
 - providing a wider range of writing experiences and having higher expectations of the presentation of work.
See paragraph numbers 2, 5, 6, 7, 11, 14, 18, 20, 26, 27, 49, 72, 76, 77, 78, 80, 81, 82, 83, 85, 87, 94, 111, 121, 122.

- (2) make it clearer to pupils how they can improve their work by:
 - marking pupils' work more thoroughly and making it clear when work is not as good as it could be;
 - setting individual targets so that pupils are clear about the next steps in their learning.
See paragraph numbers 23, 41, 72, 78, 82, 83, 100, 103.

- (3) allow subject co-ordinators the time and opportunity to check teaching and learning in order to gain a more informed picture of the standards in the subjects they lead (this is done well in English, science and physical education)
See paragraph numbers 49, 83, 95, 99, 104, 108, 112, 116, 124.

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	24
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	26

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Number	2	5	11	6	0	0	0
Percentage	8	21	46	25	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 four percentage points.

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll

	Nursery	YR – Y2
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	12	59
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	N/a	19

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs

	Nursery	YR – Y2
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	1	1
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	6	9

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	1
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	1

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	5.2
National comparative data	5.4

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.0
National comparative data	0.5

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

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

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2002	13	16	29

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	13	13	12
	Girls	16	16	16
	Total	29	29	28
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	100 (92)	100 (92)	97 (100)
	National	84 (84)	86 (86)	90 (91)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	13	12	13
	Girls	16	16	16
	Total	29	28	29
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	100 (92)	97 (100)	100 (88)
	National	85 (85)	89 (89)	89 (89)

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

Recruitment of teachers

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	0.5
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	1
Total number of vacant teaching posts (FTE)	0
Number of vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of a term or more (FTE)	0
Number of unfilled vacancies or vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of less than one term (FTE)	0

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	71
Number of questionnaires returned	33

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	85	15	0	0	0
My child is making good progress in school.	91	9	0	0	0
Behaviour in the school is good.	70	30	0	0	0
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	76	18	3	0	3
The teaching is good.	91	9	0	0	0
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	76	24	0	0	0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	88	12	0	0	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	97	3	0	0	0
The school works closely with parents.	82	18	0	0	0
The school is well led and managed.	91	9	0	0	0
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	88	9	0	0	3
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	82	9	0	0	9

Percentages are rounded to the nearest integer and may not total 100.

Other issues raised by parents

Parents hold the school in high esteem and have excellent views about the education their children receive.

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

61. Children enter the Nursery on a part-time basis for a year. They transfer to full time education in the Reception class at the beginning of the year in which they turn five. The school has made great improvements in the Foundation Stage since the last inspection and the improvements include:
- a Nursery has been established in the new hall;
 - the curriculum was a concern at the time of the last inspection and it is now very good. Experiences are thoughtfully, and imaginatively planned in great detail, meeting all the recommendations of the national guidelines;
 - the outdoor area has been very significantly improved and is now an excellent resource for learning through play;
 - assessment follows the new national recommendations on assessing children as they start school and the recording of progress is systematically implemented.
62. With a small intake, attainment on entry varies from year to year and includes a wide range of attainment but overall attainment is similar to what is expected for their age. Of the children entering the Nursery this year, a significant number have speech problems, and as an unusually high percentage do not turn four until the end of the summer term, they lack social and physical maturity. All of the children make good progress. By the end of the Reception year most have achieved the early learning goals in all of the six areas of learning, and are working comfortably at National Curriculum levels. Progress in personal, social and emotional development is very good.

Teaching and learning are very good.

Strengths include:

- staff across the two classes work very well together;
- relationships with the children are very good;
- the use of assessment leads to good planning that matches the needs of all;
- the use of all resources including support staff;
- expectations are very high: the range of methods and approaches to learning are exciting and very stimulating.

Personal, social and emotional development

63. Teaching is very good. Relationships between children are based on trust and work so well because the whole ethos of the Foundation Stage is one of *working together and for each other*. For an hour a day, the Nursery and Reception children are mixed. Both ages benefit from a wider learning environment, which provides them with greater chance to initiate their own learning, and collaborate with a wider range of children. They mix well. Behaviour is very good. Routines that underpin the whole day are quickly established and understood. The organisation and range of activities provided enable the adults to teach the children to share, collaborate and take turns. Adults observe and make assessments of selected activities. They join the children in their play if the quality of learning needs redirecting or extending further. This is

subtly and effectively done and does not take away initiative from the child. Both age groups listen intently and thoughtfully to the adult or each other, confidently offering ideas. Children select an activity after careful thought and sustain their exploration or imaginative play, well. For example, two boys chose to explore counting games. Initially they worked alone on opposite ends of a carpeted area. Then one, watching what the other was doing, made a suggestion. From that point on they collaborated. The quality of their learning increased as they began to discuss 'number choices' and told each other why this or that would not work. Staff expect children to respect their environment and take care of their resources. When talking to visitors they demonstrate their pride in their area. Tidy-up time is greeted with a buzz of anticipation. They enjoy the responsibility of clearing up and putting away, which they do extremely sensibly. Although the building does not facilitate their own management of personal hygiene, they manage this well, and are confident about asking staff for the required help.

Communication, language and literacy

64. Teaching is very good and leads to very effective learning. Excellent use is made of all adults, including parent helpers. All know the underlying intent of the activity, the vocabulary to explore and how to join in and extend children's language. Groups are kept small so that the enjoyable practical activities are genuinely shared by all. The relatively small number in each group ensures that children do not have to wait too long for a turn or become distracted. The visual and practical nature of the activities focuses their attention and learning is very good. This is especially helpful for the children with special educational needs who join in happily and are also quickly picking up this essential knowledge. Nursery children already demonstrate a very commendable knowledge of letter sound, names and how to form these.
65. As speech is often assessed as being indistinct or underdeveloped the emphasis on *doing and talking* is particularly important. The shared focus of the water tray is dramatically set up as an underwater scene with beautiful shells, sand and convincing seaweed. It allowed the adult and children to talk with a shared purpose. Children used language to label, describe, ask questions and create small imaginative scenarios. The adult helped children clarify their speech, both in organising ideas as well as refining pronunciation.
66. Children love stories and books. They have a good knowledge about the organisation of a book. For example, one Reception child was insistent that he read the blurb on the back of the book before launching into the story. The older children understand the importance of speech bubbles, emboldened text and exclamation marks as well as the demarcation of sentences. They use this knowledge well in their own independent, expressive reading. The understanding is further evidenced in their confidence in writing. The higher attainers produce well formed and presented sentences. Others, not so confident, manage well with a little reassurance from and discussion with an adult. The most striking factor about children's progress in this area of learning is their solid understanding and use of all this new knowledge in their free play, as well as in their explorations.

Mathematical development

67. Teaching is very good and results in very good learning for all from their quite different starting points. In both year groups, the focus is on practical investigation and manipulation of number, shape and simple measurement. Adults plan very carefully. The language of mathematics, relating to size, position and complex

concepts such as *more than*, *less than*, which most young children confuse, are carefully developed. A lot of the ordering of numbers is done through active games using the imaginative number lines in the outside areas. Adults have very good subject knowledge both of mathematics itself and how children acquire a good understanding of this. Next year the new Reception children will start the year with a very good grounding of mathematical awareness because of the quality of experience and good teaching in the current Nursery class.

68. Reception children relished counting to 100, but it was not just mindless chanting but brief, well focused, challenges. They counted on from 53 to 86, with the adult indicating when to stop. What children can manage when joining in with their classmates does not always match what they can do as individuals. The adults are very careful to evaluate the real extent of understanding. For example, most children were comfortable with identifying missing numbers between 10 and 20 on the washing line and carry out simple calculations. They are always encouraged to explain the strategy they used to find the answer. The teacher explored their understanding further, using white boards to check that they could write these numbers correctly. They did so. Then she introduced a new idea of *estimate*. They were challenged to guess the number of beads between 10 and 20 strung on laces. The teaching was very good. It drew children's attention to ways of thinking about the question, how to observe carefully and think about what they already knew. *If one lace had 15 beads was the next longer, did this mean more beads, so how many?* This really extended the learning of the high attainers. Interestingly then when they wrote their estimate on the white boards the ordering of the numbers went adrift for some as 19 was written as 91. This was carefully noted, and discussed by the adults. Further exploration of a similar outcome occurred when higher attaining children used the big number square outside. Whilst they managed perfectly to move to one more or one less number, as soon as a further element such as prediction was added, children found it difficult to hold one idea and operate with a second. The teaching is so good because the adults note children's responses quickly and find many practical and exciting ways for children to readdress the problem until their knowledge and understanding are secure. Tasks are matched to the individual child's level, allowing both consolidation and then introducing the next bit of challenge.

Knowledge and understanding of the world

69. Teaching is very good and results in a wide experience base for all children. The starting point is always individual children's prior knowledge. The different skills associated with the wide range of elements are systematically developed. The two year planning cycle ensures that children explore science topics, their family history, the local environment, construction and design, the computer and understanding about other religions and cultures as part of their religious education. Adults encourage children to develop their curiosity, ask increasingly searching questions, take time to observe carefully and talk about what they see, increasingly suggesting reasons. The indoor and outdoor provision is managed so that children can initiate their own observations and investigations as well as taking part in well-directed, adult activities. These activities are organised so that as one or two children join the adult, the expectation and questions or new skills can be matched to individual children's needs. Detailed evaluative notes and recording ensure that the system always functions efficiently. Over the year children have explored ice balloons, linking the idea of ice, to icebergs and polar bears. They completed electric circuits as they checked bulbs for Santa's grotto. They have planted seeds and flowers in the raised beds. They have handled a classmate's rabbit, and learnt how to look after pets. The staff ensures that the experiences filter out into the wider world. Besides exploring

their own environment, they have been pond dipping and explored autumn leaves in the park. Adults begin to introduce them to other cultures through exploration of things such as Mendhi patterns drawn on the hands and feet of Indian and Pakistani women for special celebrations. They participate in a *sense of stillness* during the act of worship.

Physical development

70. Teaching is very good, built upon very good teacher knowledge. Children are taught to become aware of their bodies and learn effectively how to stretch their limbs and muscles. The youngest children in the class were not able to push themselves to the full extent, unlike the older ones, who, when stretching their thigh muscles could feel them harden. All are challenged to think carefully about the shapes that they can make with their bodies, such as a wide shape, and then a low or a high wide shape. Great care is taken to build systematically on prior learning, which is continually extended. The children understand, respond and use the correct technical language in their comments on other's efforts. They have a lot of opportunity to investigate climbing and balancing apparatus, as well as crawling through tunnels or use bikes in the outside areas. As a result, they use space well, showing an awareness of other children's needs. They demonstrate fertile imaginations in the way that they link equipment together or find different ways to travel over and dismount from the equipment. Great care is taken to ensure that children know they must tuck their heads in properly before doing a forward roll. An adult is always there to check and help correct the movement. Throughout the day the many practical activities and investigations reinforce and demand good hand eye co-ordination. They manage everyday tools well.

Creative development

71. Teaching is very good, reflecting the thorough knowledge that adults have of the need to introduce and teach skills systematically. In both art and music by the end of the Reception, children have a range of skills that they can select and use freely in their own compositions. For example, chalk observational drawings of snowdrops on black paper illustrate an appreciation of spatial arrangements, size and shape. They are most striking and of very high quality. They have looked at Van Gogh's painting and talked about the thick paint and swirly strokes. This has had a favourable effect on their own paintings. Likewise in music children explore the sounds of different musical instruments, learn to handle them well, so that they are able *to play as an orchestra*, with different groups playing their agreed sound when particular words occurred in a story. Again a very mature performance which they taped and listened to with delight. Across all experiences offered, the wide range of techniques and skills are well taught and the opportunity for children to use these in their own imaginative way is equally well catered for. Their imaginative play in the role-play areas demonstrates a similar ability to sustain and extend ideas through collaborative play. The café is much in use.

ENGLISH

72. Standards in Year 2 are above average in reading and writing and average in speaking and listening. Considering the attainment of these pupils as they started in Year 1 their overall achievement is good.

Strengths in the subject include:

- standards in Year 2 are above average in reading and writing;
- teaching and learning are good;
- assessment procedures are good;
- additional reading sessions for those needing a boost to their learning are effective;
- management of the subject is very good.

Areas for development include:

- providing more opportunities to write for different purposes;
- reducing the number of worksheets which are not extending the learning of the higher attaining pupils;
- more use of assessment information to set pupils' individual targets;
- marking of pupils' work with particular attention to improving the presentation of work.

73. Standards are similar to those identified in the previous inspection. However, the improvement in the results of national test since that time identifies the school has made good progress in the intervening years. Standards are similar to the results of the most recent national tests in reading and not quite as high in writing. Last year's results were well above average when compared to similar schools. In fact in writing, were in the top five percent in the country. The variation between years is linked to the small size of year groups. The current Year 2 is a small group with more pupils identified as having special educational needs. These pupils make good progress because their needs are assessed promptly and additional support in lessons helps them to learn at the same rate as other pupils. When pupils are identified as falling behind in reading they are given intensive one to one help. These sessions are carefully planned, well structured, active and so very effective.
74. Standards in speaking and listening are satisfactory in Year 2. Many pupils are happy to talk about their work and activities. They confidently ask questions to clarify their understanding and seek help when needed. They have a clear understanding of the need to take turns and contribute well in question and answer sessions as well as to general discussions. Pupils find it more difficult to explain their investigations in other subjects and their calculations in mathematics. Listening is often good and in assemblies is very good. Pupils gave great attention to the story told to them by the local vicar and their responses showed good understanding.
75. Standards in reading have risen considerably since 2000 when they were well below average. This has been brought about by a more active approach to teaching letters and sounds in the Foundation Stage. As a result, pupils are getting off to a good start to their early reading. The school also adjusted their approach to teaching reading. Pupils are allowed to choose books that are carefully grouped to match their ability and interest. The focus is on reading and enjoying more books. As a result, pupils learn not only how to read, but to become discerning readers. Pupils discuss their reading eagerly and have favourite authors and stories. They re-tell what they have read in their own words and the higher attaining pupils refer to characters and events in their books when they discuss reading preferences. Most have a good understanding of the difference between fiction and non-fiction books. They know how to use the contents and index of a book to find information because this skill has been taught effectively.

76. Standards in writing are above average. However, there are aspects of writing which can be improved. The focus is very much on writing stories and many enjoy this and are reaching high standards. Stories include a simple plot and some imaginative vocabulary. The higher attaining pupils opens with *Floss was an extremely nice border collie* and includes description including *his voice was like thunder*. Prayers written include carefully chosen words which show a sensitivity in their work. Writing shows increasingly accurate spelling and most pupils use capital letters and full stops accurately. Pupils do not have enough opportunities to write for a variety of purposes. Pupils have written instructions to make a gingerbread man but this did not include lists or the use of bullet points. No examples of poetry were in pupils' books or on display during the inspection. In the lesson seen in Year 2 pupils recognised that non-fiction writing was different to writing and story and understood the purpose of a sub-heading. Handwriting is not as neat as it could be. Most have a legible print but it is not always neat. Occasionally pupils attempt to join up their writing resulting in a peculiar style because this is not taught by the school so pupils invent their own. There are some differences between teachers about the teaching of joined-up writing and expectations are unclear.
77. Pupils' literacy skills enhance pupils' learning in other subjects. For example, in science pupils label their mini-beasts and represent the growth of a plant in a cycle of picture and labels. Teachers do not plan to promote writing in a range of styles in other subjects. Reading skills are used well for research especially using the Internet to research famous people.
78. Teaching and learning are good. Teachers are always encouraging and so pupils have positive attitudes to learning and try their best. When pupils are successful their success is celebrated by all and greatly enhances pupils' confidence. This is especially helpful for pupils with special educational needs. In the Year 2 lesson, spellings were carefully matched to the differing ages and abilities in the class which enabled all to be successful and to learn from each other. Pupils are taught effectively how to learn their new words. They look closely at them before covering the words and writing them correctly from memory. The teaching of reading is good. When pupils read with their teacher in small groups, records are kept which help the teacher to keep track of the progress pupils make. Lessons open with an activity to practise sounds and letters. For example, in Year 1 lessons the pupils thoroughly enjoyed the lotto matching activity. This made learning enjoyable and they quickly spot words with the given blend of sounds and enjoy reading out the winning words. Planning is good and follows the guidance in the National Literacy Strategy. Lessons have a clear learning outcome and teachers explain the focus of the lessons to pupils. Information and communication technology is used to support learning and pupils show confidence writing simple sentences and know how to delete their errors and print their work. Less effective aspects of teaching are the overuse of worksheets with no clear purpose. Examples show that all abilities complete the same sheet and examples from the higher attaining pupils include too much colouring in of pictures which fail to extend their learning. Marking of work is completed regularly but is not used to inform pupils how to improve. Some comments are too positive and so pupils are led to believe their work is better than it is. The school is not maximising the use of the assessment information now available to set pupils individual targets. Consequently, pupils are not clear about what the next steps in their learning are.
79. Leadership is very good. The headteacher is managing the subject and has the benefit of having seen all teachers teach. This information is used well to improve

teaching and also to adjust the curriculum. When taking up appointment the headteacher quickly identified the need to raise standards in English. The very detailed self-evaluation document records the school's interventions which are reaping benefits in the current improved standards.

MATHEMATICS

80. Standards in mathematics are in line with those expected nationally at seven. Achievement is satisfactory. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress because they benefit from extra support. Standards in the most recent national tests were below the national average, but above the average of similar schools. Overall performance was held down by the lack of pupils exceeding the national average. However, it is unwise to draw comparisons because this year there are very few pupils, which makes it difficult both to make accurate comparisons with other schools and to identify trends over several years. Standards are not as high as those reported at the last inspection although test results have shown improvement over the last two years.

Strengths in the subject include:

- teachers' very good relationships with pupils provide a secure basis on which to develop mathematical learning;
- the results of national tests are carefully analysed and used to track progress in the subject;
- pupils with special educational needs benefit from additional adult support in class and make good progress.

Areas for development include:

- the progress of the more able pupils;
- more practical investigation, and a greater range of teaching methods;
- ongoing assessment, including marking and the setting of individual targets, so that pupils are more aware of how to improve their work;
- the management role of the subject co-ordinator.

81. Year 2 pupils are enthusiastic about their numeracy lessons and are confident with the numbers expected for pupils of their age. Most count to 100 confidently and recognise odd and even numbers and accurately double numbers. They know their 2,5 and 10 times multiplication tables. They enjoy chanting these tables although those who find mathematics more challenging, are not so secure in their understanding when working alone. Other pupils are more confident using their numeracy skills when solving simple money problems. They add up several items and calculate change from 50 pence. Most understand how to divide shapes into halves and quarters. Pupils collect information about their toys and accurately represent this on a graph. They can identify on the graph which was their favourite toy. A group explained how they had successfully produced their graph with the help of the computer. However, they could not explain to someone else how to set about the task. In lessons there is a tendency for the most able to rush at their worksheets. They attempted to remember what the teacher had told them rather than thinking carefully. As one boy said to the group working on simple sharing, "*If you just keep putting one in each box until you get to there you don't have to think*". Unfortunately, whilst the answer was correct, the working out, which they did not usually show, was totally incorrect. He found it very difficult to think his way through the task

systematically, in order to correct his working. Too often the work sheets require mechanical application rather than thought. This restricts the progress of higher attaining pupils because they do not have opportunities to set out their own calculations or to think for themselves how they might solve a problem. The supporting adult, spotting an error, helps pupils to put the correct answer on the sheet. As a result, it is difficult for the teacher to accurately judge the pupils' real level of understanding because errors are not evident in their work.

82. Teaching and learning are satisfactory. In the best lessons teachers include clear learning outcomes which they share with pupils so that they understand the focus of their tasks. These are revisited at the end of lessons and learning is effectively consolidated. Teachers manage pupils' behaviour effectively, which enables all pupils to concentrate. A new approach, the use of *thinking partners* is encouraging pupils to learn from each other as they share their ideas. Information and communication technology is being used to support learning and add interest to lessons. Teaching is less effective when teachers use unchallenging worksheets which fail to extend learning. This restricts pupils learning how to set out their own work neatly. There is a tendency for teachers to tell rather than set up situations where pupils can investigate and use their initiative, exploring and deciding upon their own strategies. Teachers do not always make lessons sufficiently interesting by using practical resources to make learning more exciting. The marking of work does not make it clear to pupils how they can improve their work methods.
83. Leadership and management are satisfactory. The National Numeracy Strategy has been put in place and is offering more structure to teachers' planning. However, the school has not fully embraced the recommended approaches and from the co-ordinator's monitoring of teaching it has been recognised that the teaching is not as exciting as it could be. Systems to assess progress are good and the school is making effective use of this to adjust the curriculum when a weakness is spotted. For example, to improve the progress of the higher attaining pupils the school has a mathematics challenge club although it is too early to see the effect this is having on standards. Assessment information is not used to set pupils' individual targets so that they are clearer about the next steps in their learning. The school recognises that the software they have for extending mathematical understanding, needs further development.

SCIENCE

84. **Strengths in the subject include:**

- standards are above average;
- assessment is used well to guide planning;
- leadership of the subject;
- resources are used well to support learning;
- the quality of teaching and learning is good.

Areas for development include:

- extending the investigative skills of more able children;
- planning tasks which are suited to the different abilities of children.

85. By the end of Year 2 standards are above average. This is in line with the results of the National Curriculum teacher assessments in 2002 and with the findings of the previous inspection. The school has made good use of its assessments in order to

identify and improve work in scientific investigation and this has helped to raise standards in this area. Overall achievement is good. Higher attaining pupils are not always being enabled to work at a higher level of the curriculum or to set up their own investigations and are underachieving. Pupils with special educational needs benefit from the focus on practical activities and make good progress and often reach the level expected for their age.

86. Year 2 pupils produce clearly labelled circuit diagrams and understand and construct circuits with switches. They have a good understanding of the life cycle of plants. This is because teachers carefully share their good subject knowledge by using clear diagrams and making good use of collections of seeds and plants in the classroom. Teachers organise pupils and materials efficiently. This enabled pupils in Year 2 to have a good understanding of forces, resistance and fair testing when they were helped to conduct an investigation using model cars and ramps. Teachers present work which relates to the pupils' everyday experiences and so they have a good knowledge about healthy and unhealthy foods and about healthy life styles. In a similar way, pupils in Year 2 have good skills in sorting materials and recognising that common objects are made from different materials. In order to make work interesting teachers make good use of nature trails, pond dipping activities and the school grounds and local area. This helped pupils in Year 1 to increase their knowledge of mini-beasts and habitats. This was further enhanced when an officer from the RSPCA talked to them. They extended their social skills and their understanding of environmental issues when they devised their own rules for taking care of their collection of creatures in the attractive *mini-beast corner*. Teachers take advantage of opportunities to develop pupils' appreciation of the natural world. For example, children were excited to observe the shoots emerging from seeds they had planted. They were absolutely amazed at the butterfly that had emerged overnight from its chrysalis. One pupil could not contain his excitement and had to share it with his mother, *come and look mum it's a painted lady*, he squealed.
87. Teaching is good and leads to effective learning. Teachers use clear explanations and ensure that tasks build on work that has gone before. This makes learning easier because pupils have a good starting base for new topics. Teachers manage pupils effectively and behaviour is often very good and pupils handle materials and equipment sensibly. Relationships between adults and pupils and amongst pupils themselves are generally very good. This gives children the confidence to answer questions and contribute to lessons because they know that their efforts will be respected and valued. This also enhances the collaborative skills of pupils so that, for example, Year 2 pupils worked well together on setting up a fair test on the conditions necessary for plant growth. Teachers mark pupils' work regularly and provide comments which are supportive and help pupils to understand what they need to do to improve. For example, in Year 2, the teacher commented on the work on shadows by a lower achieving child. *I like how you have used labels on your picture*. However, teachers do not sufficiently plan work which is suited to the different abilities of pupils and this results in lack of challenge for higher achieving children. Although these pupils usually produce more, and present their work better and give clearer explanations, opportunities are missed to deepen their understanding and extend their skills. This can best be illustrated by the lack of opportunity for more able pupils to use their own ideas and explain and reflect on the outcomes of their own investigations. Teachers plan carefully organised practical activities and provide clear explanations and make effective use of classroom support assistants, lower achieving pupils make good progress and achieve better than would be expected.

88. Teachers promote mathematical skills in science. This helps to give a relevance to their work and to deepen their understanding. For example, in Year 2 pupils carefully measured their hand spans and recorded their measurements of the growth of plants using a graph. Literacy skills enhance learning as pupils record their findings. Year 2 pupils produced clear descriptions of how mechanical toys function as part of their work on forces and energy. The school makes good use of its technology resources such as the digital camera and the computer microscope to record fieldwork and investigate seeds.
89. Science very effectively promotes pupils' spiritual development as they learn to appreciate the beauty of the world and also their role in protecting it.
90. The subject is managed effectively. Assessment information has been analysed and the need to extend investigative skills identified and acted upon. Teaching and learning are monitored and this has increased the co-ordinator's knowledge of the subject and there is a clear understanding of the way ahead in order to raise standards.

ART AND DESIGN

91. **Strengths in the subject include:**

- opportunities to work in groups and produce large attractive collages;
- good links are made with other subjects;
- the opportunities to learn about famous artists.

Areas for development include:

- the use of sketch books;
 - the variety of activities;
 - the opportunities available for the subject leader to find out about standards in the subject.
92. No lessons were seen during the inspection. The evidence available shows pupils are working at the level expected for their age. Achievement is satisfactory overall. Pupils with special educational needs follow the same curriculum and also make satisfactory progress. The school identifies some pupils as especially talented in art and they extend their skills in the school's craft club. Examples from these pupils are imaginative and show a wide variety of activities including working with textiles. Overall standards are similar to those identified in the last inspection.
93. Pupils in Year 2 have given close attention to detail in their sketches of mini-beasts. The large collage of creatures and their habitats has been enhanced by the imaginative use of painted pasta, seeds and pipe cleaners. A few examples in the Year 1 class show some lack of challenge. For example, pupils marking veins on pre-cut leaves or filling in the centres of sunflowers. Standards are better when paper has been curled and twisted and other flowers show better creative skills. The subject promotes pupils' cultural development as they look at the work of famous artists Pupils have drawn pictures of sunflowers to resemble Van Gogh's work. However, crayon was used to colour the picture and so pupils were unable to create texture in their work.

94. No lessons were seen so it is not possible to make an overall judgement on teaching and learning. The review of pupils' sketchbooks shows expectations are not always high enough. Some work is untidy and it is unclear which artistic skills are being developed.
95. Management is satisfactory. The subject does not receive a lot of time and the range of activities is not as wide as it could be. Limited examples of painting and mixing colours were seen. The co-ordinator has started to collect samples of work for a school portfolio which is a useful start to checking on standards. However, it does not allow the co-ordinator to see how skills are being taught and to identify the teachers' needs to improve the subject.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

96. **Strengths in the subject are:**

- understanding of the planning, designing, making and evaluation process;
- the use of a sound range of materials, tools and techniques.

Areas for development are:

- opportunities to investigate and evaluate familiar products;
- subject co-ordination.

97. During the inspection no lessons were seen so it is not possible to give an overall judgement on teaching. However, evidence from pupils' work and discussions with children and teachers indicates that by the end of Year 2 standards are average. This is the same as the findings of the previous inspection. Achievement for most pupils, including those with learning difficulties, is satisfactory.
98. Teachers plan tasks that are interesting and relevant so that children are eager to be involved. An excellent example of this is the pupils' involvement in designing the very attractive Nursery playground. This makes the activities very exciting as pupils see their ideas come to fruition. Year 2 pupils show a range of skills in their neatly finished and efficient "pop up" Easter eggs which show pupils can make simple levers using, split pins and adhesive. Because teachers have a sound knowledge of the subject and explain the designing and making process clearly pupils produce carefully labelled diagrams of their Easter eggs. This promotes their literacy skills in a purposeful way. Pupils do not have sufficient opportunities to investigate a variety of every day objects in order to learn how they function. This limits the breadth of their knowledge. Pupils in Year 2 have a thorough understanding of how the taste, texture and appearance of yoghurt might be made more appealing. This is because teachers provided them with opportunities to add fresh fruit and to test if this improved the flavour. Teachers insist on high standards of hygiene so that pupils' understanding of the need for cleanliness in food preparation is increased.
99. Management of the subject is satisfactory. The subject co-ordinator has a sound understanding of the subject and ensures good organisation and support for colleagues. However, she does not have opportunities to observe teaching and learning. This does not provide her with a complete picture of the subject in order to identify areas for improvement in order to raise standards.

GEOGRAPHY

100. Strengths in the subject are:

- standards are above average;
- pupils experience a stimulating range of activities;
- teachers make the subject exciting by the use of practical activities and visits.

Areas for development are:

- the marking of children's work;
- the management of the subject.

101. There is no overall judgement on the quality of teaching because it was not possible to see any lessons during the inspection. However, from the evidence available, including talking to pupils about their work, it is clear that standards are above average by the end of Year 2. This is in line with the findings of the previous inspection. The achievement of most pupils, including those with special educational needs, is good.
102. Pupils in Year 2 have a good understanding of the purpose of a map. They produce careful maps of their journeys from home to school and identify features in the locality, such as shops and houses. Higher achieving pupils produce accurate keys in maps of building and land use, although the use of keys by lower achieving children is less accurate. Most pupils identify the countries of the British Isles and locate London and know it is a long way from Maryport. Pupils in Year 2 move on from giving simple directions, to locating places and objects in relation to the compass points.
103. Teachers make work interesting so that pupils are keen to learn. When they go to visit a nearby river they make good use of their observational skills to notice and record details of their study. Discussions with pupils show a good understanding about the pollution of the river and about how they would seek to improve the environment by removing graffiti and litter. Pupils make predictions about the likely consequences of heavy rain and flooding. Their work is enhanced because teachers make good use of the digital camera to help pupils to record their observations. However, teachers do not sufficiently make helpful comments to indicate how pupils might improve when they mark their work. This results in missed opportunities to extend pupils knowledge and skills. Teachers make good use of the neighbourhood in order to develop pupils' geography skills. People who work locally such as fire fighters and ambulance staff visit the school to talk to pupils about their work. Pupils conduct a traffic census and sketch and describe houses, shops and the school, so that they gain a good understanding of the locality. This helps them to compare life in a contrasting location. They recognise how different their lives are to those of children in an African village.
104. Overall management of the subject is satisfactory. The co-ordinator reviews planning and organises visits and resources efficiently. However, limited opportunities are available to check teaching and learning in order to obtain an overall view of the subject so that improvements can help to further raise standards.

HISTORY

105. **Strengths in the subject include:**

- standards are above average;
- visits to places of interest;
- knowledge and understanding of events and people in the past;
- skills of historical enquiry.

Areas for development include:

- management of the subject;
- the marking of pupils' work.

106. During the inspection no lessons were seen so it is not possible to give an overall judgement on the quality of teaching. Evidence from pupils' work and discussions with teachers and pupils indicates that standards are average. The achievement of most pupils, including those with special educational needs, is good. This is an improvement since the last inspection and reflects the focus on learning through first-hand experiences.

107. Teachers plan stimulating activities to make history relevant to the experience of these pupils. Photographs show pupils were enthralled at the visit to the local Helena Thompson museum. They were fascinated with the old sewing machines and clothes and so gained a real insight into how everyday items change over time. This knowledge was increased by the visit to a toy museum and the follow up talk by a grandparent who showed pupils toys from the past. As a result of these experiences, pupils in Year 2 understand that they can find out about the past using a range of sources. This was enhanced when they listened to accounts from Samuel Pepys' diary about the Great Fire of London and watched a video. Literacy and information and communication technology skills are promoted in history. Pupils use books and the Internet to find out about people from the past such as Mary Seacole. Pupils make thoughtful comparisons between life in the past and the present. For example, pupils in Year 2 understand that the materials used in the construction of houses exacerbated the spread of the fire of London. They know that housing materials and fire fighting techniques are different today. Children understand why people did things in the past because the story the Gunpowder Plot is explained carefully, although the work of lower achieving children is less clear. Pupils in Year 2 know about international rivalry when they write accounts of the race to the moon. Higher attaining pupils write extended pieces and include lots of interesting detail. They name the dogs used by the Russians and explain why these were involved. As they move through the school, teachers ensure that work builds carefully on what has gone before so that children's understanding of chronology is deepened. In Year 1, pupils produce personal time lines. By the end of Year 2 they accurately sequence events in the life of Alfred the Great. Pupils' work could be further improved if teachers included comments which told pupils what was good and what needed more attention.

108. The co-ordinator organises the subject efficiently. The richness of the curriculum makes the subject exciting for the pupils and promotes their cultural development as they learn more about the history of their own locality. Currently, the co-ordinator does not have an opportunity to see how history is taught and this makes it difficult to gain an informed picture of what is going well and what needs more attention.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

109. Standards in information and communication technology are similar to those expected for pupils at seven. They make satisfactory progress. Pupils with special educational needs benefit from opportunities to work with an adult and also make satisfactory progress. A policy ensuring safeguards for Internet access is in place. Standards have been maintained since the last inspection.

Strengths in the subject include:

- the school makes a conscientious effort to use the computers in all subjects;
- most pupils are enthusiastic and confident about using the computer, digital camera and computer microscope.

Areas for development include:

- greater depth and more systematic development of all the skills in each strand of the required curriculum;
 - an assessment procedure to chart skill acquisition;
 - more computers so that teachers can teach new skills to the whole class;
 - a greater range of software, especially to support mathematics and history;
 - the development of pupils' independence in loading/accessing programs and saving their own work.
110. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 are fascinated by the power of the computer. They watched intently, as teachers drew their attention to red and green lines underneath words in a simple text. With help, they were encouraged to recognise that red signified an incorrect spelling and green told them to think about whether the text made sense. They gasped with delight and amazement as the teacher moved the cursor, added a space, changed a letter or deleted a superfluous word. The lines vanished. They were convinced that the computer could quickly do things which took them a long time with pencil and paper. Year 2 did not have time to try their hand at it themselves. A few pupils in Year 1 did. Whilst they were able to make sensible suggestions to the teacher or to a classmate, when faced with the whole text with red and green lines, they were at a loss where to start. One deleted the lot and when left with a blank screen, realised that that had not been a good option! Teachers have not yet perfected the art of designing very short but interesting tasks that focus on the practice and application of basic keyboard or mouse skills. As a result, the whole class is unable to advance their computer skills within one lesson. Thus their knowledge remains theoretical or is forgotten, so that basic skills are acquired quite slowly. Pupils' confidence and enthusiasm are such, that with systematic hands-on time, their level of skills rapidly increases. They show that they have assimilated the demands of the digital camera: they take photos scan and print them.

111. Teaching and learning are satisfactory.

The best teaching and learning is characterised by:

- confidence in the use of the computer;
- the use of the computer in a range of subjects;
- clear demonstrations of new techniques.

Where teaching and learning is less effective, there is:

- limited opportunity for every pupil to practise a new skill as soon as it has been introduced;
- rather slow acquisition of basic computer skills;
- no systematic recording of successful, independent application of these new skills;
- no systematic recording of each pupil's time at the computer;
- insufficient challenge, especially for the high attainers or those with experience of computers at home;
- generally expectations could be higher.

112. Leadership and management are satisfactory. The co-ordinator has clear plans to move the subject forward but has limited time to gather information about what is happening in classes. Assessment is in the early stages of checking on pupils' skills to give teachers a clearer picture of the next steps to take.

MUSIC

113. **Strengths in the subject include:**

- the opportunity to play instruments and work in groups;
- pupils enjoy the practical activities including singing;
- opportunities to sing in the choir and perform in front of an audience.

Areas for development include:

- the challenge to evaluate their work and make suggestions to improve;
- the co-ordinator has limited opportunity to extend teachers' skills to teach music and to check on the continuity of learning as pupils move from year to year.

114. Pupils in Year 2 are working at the level expected for their age. They maintain a rhythm clapping and using percussion instruments when accompanying the reading of the story, *We're going on a Bear Hunt*. Close attention is given to the pictures and pupils understand that symbols can represent sounds. Many understand and respond correctly to *high* and *low* and the higher attaining pupils recognise this is *pitch*. The tasks are too directed by the teacher and pupils are not encouraged to use their own ideas or make improvements to their work. Singing is tuneful and pupils have their favourite songs. They enjoyed singing, *The flowers that grow in the garden* and sang tunefully. In the whole school assembly the singing of the end of day prayer, *We're going home to our families*, created a very spiritual moment and a real sense of belonging to a community.

115. Teaching and learning are satisfactory. There is a variation between classes of the expectations of teachers. In Year 1 the lesson was brisker and pupils were working at a higher level than some of the Year 2 pupils. This is linked to the lack of opportunities for teachers to share good practice so that tasks build more on previous learning. In Year 2, the repetition of tasks led to pupils losing their enthusiasm for the task and learning was not as good as it could be. Pupils are given good encouragement and their enjoyment is well promoted through opportunities to sing and play instruments. Teachers have a secure knowledge of the subject and encourage the correct use of musical terminology.

116. The subject is soundly led. The school is in the process of adapting their planning guidelines and providing more resources to meet the needs of this planning. Currently, no time is made available to check on teachers' confidence in teaching music and so opportunities to share good practice are missed. Teachers use assemblies effectively to encourage pupils to listen and appraise music. Conditions for careful listening are set up effectively and pupils are eager to show off their knowledge of famous composers. Photographs show that music makes a very positive contribution to school's popular productions. Wearing their baseball caps back to front they obviously gained great pleasure from performing the *Netherton Rap*. The curriculum is enriched by the school choir. The school's secretary gives willingly of her time to organise the choir and successfully shares her enthusiasm and personal musical skills. The choir sings to a high standard and parents expressed great appreciation of the opportunity pupils have to sing in front of an audience. This very effectively promotes their self-esteem.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

117. **Strengths in the subject include:**

- standards are above average;
- teaching is very good with some excellent lessons seen.

Areas for development include:

- it was only possible to see gymnastics and games and no major areas of improvement were identified.

118. Pupils in Year 2 are very confident controlling their movements. They use interesting and interpretative movements in response to their teachers' instructions. They quickly find different parts of the body to bear their weight and they make imaginative twisted and curled shapes. Movements are joined together to form a simple sequence. Many are giving considerable thought to their actions. They take note of other pupils' demonstrations and adjust and improve their own movements. Pupils transfer their ideas to the apparatus and are confident changing level and direction as they climb and crawl. They find many different ways to travel along the apparatus. Pupils are similarly competent in games. They pass and receive the ball showing good control and are agile moving to receive a pass. In a small game situation they recognise the need to follow simple rules. The start to lessons always includes a very thorough warm up. Pupils have an in depth knowledge of how this is beneficial and makes their *muscles soften as they relax and go hard as they contract* because the teacher explains this to them.
119. Teaching and learning are very good and in two lessons taught by the headteacher the teaching was excellent. These were most effective because of the teacher's enthusiasm for the subject which shines through and inspires the pupils. Teachers play a full part in lessons and provide very good role models and pupils strive to meet their high expectations. Teachers show a very good understanding of the subject. They recognise the importance of demonstrations both to celebrate and clarify expectations. Time is given following a demonstration for pupils to improve their learning by reflecting on what they have seen and try out new ideas. Management is based on warm relationships and lessons are carried out in a safe and orderly atmosphere.

120. Management of the subject is very good. The headteacher has the role of subject leader and has a very clear understanding of standards because she teaches all classes in the school. She leads by example running the popular gymnastic club. This is well attended and is especially helpful for those who are talented in gymnastics because expectations are high and pupils considerably extend their gymnastic skills.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

121. Standards achieved in religious education are in line with the expectation of the locally agreed syllabus. Discussion with pupils, work in books, display, and teachers' planning provided evidence because no lessons were observed. Pupils, including those with special educational needs, make satisfactory progress. The school has sustained the quality of work noted in the last inspection.

Strengths in the subject include:

- religious education reflects the ethos of the school;
- the school makes very effective use of the local authority guidelines and assessment criteria;
- pupils enjoy the stories in religious education;
- good links are made with personal, health and social education;
- the emphasis is on reflection;
- good links with local churches have been established.

Areas for development include:

- the presentation of pupils' work;
 - the monitoring role of the co-ordinator;
 - the number of artefacts, especially those relating to other religions and cultures.
122. The scheme of work appeals to the pupils. It ensures that they learn about religion and also learn from it. Over the year, pupils in both infant classes demonstrate that they have become more independent in their response to the topics discussed in religious education. The higher attainers commented that they had written stories and accounts, several pages long, and felt a sense of achievement in this. However, the presentation of their work is not good. Early in the year, much of the work was copied and therefore gave little insight into individual pupil's response to the subject. Besides recalling lots of stories about Jesus, and commenting that they also heard these in the hall in whole school worship, they were most eager to talk about the work they had undertaken about people who helped them, at school, at home, and in the community. This had great relevance for them and makes a very positive contribution to pupils' social and moral development.
123. It is not possible to make an overall judgement on teaching and learning because no lessons were seen.
124. Leadership and management are satisfactory. Links with the local churches have been established to enrich the experiences offered to pupils. The subject is used effectively to promote pupils' understanding of what is right and wrong and how they can help each other. The role of the co-ordinator in monitoring the teaching and quality of work is not yet fully developed and so it is unclear how areas for future development are identified.