

INSPECTION REPORT

BRANSTY PRIMARY SCHOOL

Whitehaven

LEA area: Cumbria

Unique reference number: 112167

Headteacher: Mrs S Kidd

Reporting inspector: Andrew Clark
21596

Dates of inspection: 3rd – 6th February 2003

Inspection number: 247191

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

© Crown copyright 2003

This report may be reproduced in whole or in part for non-commercial educational purposes, provided that all extracts quoted are reproduced verbatim without adaptation and on condition that the source and date thereof are stated.

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school. Under the School Inspections Act 1996, the school must provide a copy of this report and/or its summary free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the full cost of reproduction may be made for any other copies supplied.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

| | |
|------------------------------|------------------------------------|
| Type of school: | Infant and junior |
| School category: | Community |
| Age range of pupils: | 3 to 11 |
| Gender of pupils: | Mixed |
| School address: | Mona Road Bransty Whitehaven |
| Postcode: | CA28 6EG |
| Telephone number: | 01946 852652 |
| Fax number: | 01946 852653 |
| Appropriate authority: | The Governing Body |
| Name of chair of governors: | Mr Stephen Jackson |
| Date of previous inspection: | February 2001 |

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

| Team members | | | Subject responsibilities | Aspect responsibilities |
|--------------|-------------------|----------------------|---|---|
| 21596 | Andrew Clark | Registered inspector | Art and design; information and communication technology; educational inclusion | What sort of school is it? How high are standards. 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? |
| 8943 | Margaret Manning | Lay inspector | | The pupils' attitudes and values and personal development. How well does the school care for its pupils? How well does the school work in partnership with parents? |
| 21585 | Tony Kingston | Team inspector | Mathematics; geography; physical education | |
| 27591 | Madeline Campbell | Team inspector | Science; design and technology; music; foundation stage curriculum | |
| 18819 | John Atkinson | Team Inspector | English; history; religious education; special educational needs | How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils? |

The inspection contractor was:

QED
Reginald Arthur House
Percy Street
Rotherham
S65 1ED

Any concerns or complaints about the inspection or the report should be raised with the inspection contractor. Complaints that are not satisfactorily resolved by the contractor should be raised with OFSTED by writing to:

The Complaints Manager
Inspection Quality Division
The Office for Standards in Education
Alexandra House
33 Kingsway
London WC2B 6SE

REPORT CONTENTS

| | Page |
|---|-----------|
| PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT | 7 |
| Information about the school | |
| How good the school is | |
| What the school does well | |
| What could be improved | |
| How the school has improved since its last inspection | |
| Standards | |
| Pupils' attitudes and values | |
| Teaching and learning | |
| Other aspects of the school | |
| How well the school is led and managed | |
| Parents' and carers' views of the school | |
| PART B: COMMENTARY | |
| HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS? | 11 |
| The school's results and pupils' achievements | |
| Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development | |
| HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT? | 13 |
| HOW GOOD ARE THE CURRICULAR AND OTHER OPPORTUNITIES OFFERED TO PUPILS? | 14 |
| HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS? | 18 |
| HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS | 18 |
| HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED? | 19 |
| WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER? | 20 |
| PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS | 21 |
| PART D: THE STANDARDS AND QUALITY OF TEACHING IN AREAS OF THE CURRICULUM, SUBJECTS AND COURSES | 26 |

PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

The school is situated in the northern outskirts of Whitehaven in an area of local authority rented accommodation and some private housing. There are 136 boys and girls on roll and 25 children who attend the nursery in the mornings. All the pupils are from white, British backgrounds and there are no pupils with English as an additional language. Almost a third of pupils are eligible to a free school meal which is higher than average. The school houses a unit for 14 pupils with hearing impairments; there are currently six pupils attending, including two nursery children. The pupils are integrated into the main school for most lessons. There are 29 pupils on the school's register of special educational needs and nine pupils with a statement of special educational needs which is well above average. The children's attainment when they start school is lower than that normally found.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

Bransty is a very good school. The pupils' standards of work are very high as a result of very good teaching. The headteacher provides excellent leadership and the school is very well managed. The school gives very good value for money.

What the school does well

- Standards in English, mathematics and science are high
- The quality of teaching is very good and pupils are eager to learn as a result
- The quality of leadership and management are outstanding and guide school improvement very effectively
- The provision for pupils with special educational needs is very good, all pupils, including those with a hearing impairment, are fully included in the life and work of the school
- Relationships and the pupils' enthusiasm for school are excellent
- The school works very well with parents

What could be improved

- There are no significant areas for improvement

Any areas for improvement would form the basis of the governors' action plan.

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

The school has continued to improve very well since it was last inspected in February 2001. The many strengths found at the time have been maintained and standards have continued to rise. The quality of teaching and the learning experiences offered to pupils are now very good. The role of the subject leaders and the governing body in shaping the future of the school has also improved well.

STANDARDS

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

| Performance in: | compared with | | | |
|-----------------|---------------|------|------|-----------------|
| | all schools | | | similar schools |
| | 2000 | 2001 | 2002 | 2002 |
| English | D | A | B | A |
| mathematics | C | A* | A | A* |
| science | B | A* | A* | A* |

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

The asterisks (*) show that the test results are in the top five percent in the country. This is a remarkable improvement over the past five years when results were well below average. As many of the pupils start school with standards that are below average, their achievement is very good indeed. Pupils of all abilities make very good progress. Those with special educational needs, including the hearing impaired pupils, make very good gains in their learning because of the thorough and exciting teaching they receive. The most able pupils also do very well in national tests in all three subjects. The attainment of boys and girls is not significantly different overtime. The pupils make very good progress through the infants. By Year 2 standards are average for reading and writing and well above average for mathematics. They are well above the results for similar schools and the trend of improvement is also very good.

The pupils' speaking and listening skills are high and a strength of the school. They listen attentively and contribute fully to discussions. The pupils read well. They are accurate and expressive. Pupils write well. They construct stories well and basic skills are good. The pupils have very rapid recall of number facts and this forms a good foundation to effective learning in mathematics. The pupils have well-developed skills for investigating and experimenting in science. Standards in information and communication technology are above average by Year 6 and pupils make very good use of computers to support learning in other subjects. In music, standards are well above average. They are above average in design and technology, history and religious education. In art, geography and physical education standards are typical for their age. In all subjects pupils make good and frequently very good progress from their earlier learning.

The children make very good progress overall through the nursery and reception class (known as 'The Foundation Stage') because of the stimulating and well-planned work. Although they start school with low standards by the time they start Year1 they are working at average levels in personal, social and emotional development, communication, language and literacy, mathematical development and knowledge and understanding of the world. They often work at higher levels for physical and creative development.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

| Aspect | Comment |
|--|--|
| Attitudes to the school | Excellent. The pupils thoroughly enjoy taking part in school activities and their lessons. |
| Behaviour, in and out of classrooms | Very good. Pupils care about each other and are work and play well together. |
| Personal development and relationships | Very good. They take their roles on the school council very seriously and show initiative in their many responsibilities. Relationships are excellent. |
| Attendance | Good. It is above the national average and pupils come to school in good |

| | |
|--|-------|
| | time. |
|--|-------|

The pupils' attitudes towards school and their relationships with each other are excellent. This contributes to the very good ethos for learning.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

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

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

The quality of teaching and learning is very good. Over half the lessons seen were very good or better and the majority of the rest were good. The quality of teaching is consistently high because of the close teamwork, detailed planning and very high expectations established by the headteacher and deputy. The teaching of English and mathematics is very good and basic skills are well taught through other subjects. The children make a very good start in the nursery and reception classes because activities are well planned to make them think and take an interest in their learning; for example, through the use of puppets. There is very good teaching for pupils with special educational needs by both specialist staff and their regular teachers. There is very close communication between teachers and teaching assistants so that the most appropriate support is to hand. Lessons almost always begin with a brisk introduction that involves pupils from the start. Those with a hearing impairment benefit from the good knowledge of sign language many staff and pupils have. The teachers pose interesting and challenging questions so that all pupils, including the most able, have to think and draw on previously learned skills. This was very evident in work on computers. Teachers have a good knowledge of most subjects and their enthusiasm and confidence spreads to the pupils. This is particularly effective in mathematics, science and music. Pupils are often independent in their learning, sharing ideas and researching for themselves because the teachers prepare them well.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

| Aspect | Comment |
|---|--|
| The quality and range of the curriculum | The learning opportunities are very good. All subjects are well planned to make sure pupils make the best progress. Every opportunity is taken to involve and excite the pupils. Out of school activities are very good. |
| Provision for pupils with special educational needs | Very good. There are detailed individual plans for pupils that support teaching very effectively. The pupils, including in the attached hearing impaired unit, are fully included in the curriculum. |
| Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development | Very good. Assemblies are based on a strong ethos of love and compassion and give pupils confidence in who they are. Social development is excellent because of the many opportunities for them to work collaboratively and take responsibility. The school provides many opportunities for pupils to reflect on the beliefs and cultures of others through history, art, music and religious education. |
| How well the school cares for its pupils | Good. Day to day routines are very well established and all staff are aware of pupils' needs. There are good procedures to track and promote pupils' learning in all subjects. |

The school works very well with parents, who have positive views of the school. They receive very good information on all aspects of the school's work. The well-developed methods for measuring pupils' progress in English and mathematics form the backbone to their good learning.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

| Aspect | Comment |
|--|---|
| Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff | Outstanding. The headteachers' enthusiasm, energy and strategic planning is a strength of the school. The deputy headteacher and other senior staff form a very effective team promoting high standards in all areas of school life. |
| How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities | Very well. They use a wide range of good methods to monitor and support the work of the school. The chair of governors and headteacher work very closely together and all aspects of management are very open. |
| The school's evaluation of its performance | The subject leaders, headteacher and governors analyse the results of tests very carefully to identify significant trends and plan together to address any shortcomings. They draw from a wide range of information in setting priorities for future improvement. |
| The strategic use of resources | The school is well resourced for all subjects and very good use is made of them. For example, the very good computer provision provides a good link with parents and the wider community. |

The headteacher has created a high quality staff team who are very motivated and confident. There are good levels of staffing and resources. The accommodation is very good and used effectively. The school provides very good value for money and ensures that it gives best value in all its major expenditure.

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 enjoy school • The teaching is good • Children are well cared for • The school is well led and managed | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No significant concerns were expressed |

The inspection team totally agrees with the positive views of the parents.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and pupils' achievements

- 1 Standards are very high and the pupils' achievement is very good. There has been a strong trend of improvement in many subjects over the last few years. Improvement since the last inspection is very good. This is the direct outcome of the high quality of teaching and learning arising from excellent leadership.
- 2 Children make a very good start in nursery and reception classes. Many children start school with standards which are below those typically expected, especially for speech and language. As a result of thorough curriculum planning and very good teaching children reach the goals expected for their age in all areas of learning. In physical and creative development many children show skills which are above those normally expected.
- 3 There has been a good improvement in standards by the end of the infants, Year 2. They are average for reading and writing and well above average for mathematics. The results of national tests are well above those for similar schools (schools with a similar percentage of pupils eligible for free school meals) for reading and mathematics and above for writing. The results for mathematics are in the top five percent in the country. This is because of the pupils' very good learning of basic number facts and their ability to use them.
- 4 The more able pupils also do very well in the national tests for reading and mathematics. In writing, few pupils attain the highest level expected for their age but are close to it. The school is focusing its efforts towards addressing this group and there are indications of good improvement for the current Year 2 pupils. Pupils of all abilities are achieving very well through their time in the infants.
- 5 The very good progress continues in the juniors so that by the time they are in Year 6, the standards of pupils work are above the national average for English and well above for mathematics. Standards are again well above those of similar schools. The percentage of pupils attaining the higher levels in both subjects is good. The pupils basic skills are very good in both subjects. So, for example, pupils read accurately and with feeling and enjoy books. In mathematics they know their multiplication and division tables very well and are confident to use them to solve problems.
- 6 The school recognises that as standards improve from Year 2 the pupils require more challenge. They are well equipped to rise to this challenge because the teachers make very accurate assessments of pupils' attainment and adjust their planning to meet their needs.
- 7 There are no significant differences in the attainment of boys and girls, although because of the relatively small numbers of pupils taking tests there are variations from year to year.
- 8 Pupils with special educational needs achieve very well. The teachers set challenging, yet manageable targets for the pupils and support them very well in lessons. The specialist knowledge of the teacher for the hearing impaired unit has a very positive impact on the standards that the pupils attain. The school makes good use of additional provision to teach pupils who are working at just below average levels to attain the highest standards they can.
- 9 Standards in science are very high by both Year 2 and Year 6. They are in the top five per cent in the country. This is because the teachers instil an enthusiasm for investigation into the pupils and give them a very good knowledge of basic facts. The school is well placed to maintain these standards.

- 10 In information and communication technology the pupils attain average standards by Year 2 and above average by Year 6. The pupils have very good basic skills in data handling and communication technology and are making good use of these in several subjects.
- 11 In music standards are very high. The standards of performance and composition are particularly high. Again pupils make effective use of very good basic skills, for example, in choral singing. Standards in several other subjects are above those normally expected and reflect particularly good subject knowledge of the teachers and often very good teaching. The pupils' understanding is often deep so they are able to make good use of their knowledge. Standards are good in design and technology, history and religious education. An example of the depth of understanding pupils have is the very good contribution pupils' appreciation of different beliefs and faiths contributes to their personal development. Standards in geography, art and design and physical education are typical for the pupils' age. There are no specific weaknesses to pupils' learning in these subjects but they lack the depth of other subjects. For example, in art and design pupils in the juniors are not confident in choosing skills or techniques they might use in a particular task.
- 12 The school is constantly reviewing and analysing the standards of pupils' work and makes very good use of this knowledge to set targets for higher standards. The school is well placed to attain them.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

- 13 Pupils have excellent attitudes to school and very much enjoy taking part in the activities that it provides. This was seen when the school choir sang to the whole school in assembly, taking great care with their performance. Such attitudes are closely linked to the excellent relationships among pupils that are fostered in the positive ethos of this school. There is a very relaxed atmosphere around school although there is a buzz of activity in classes. Staff trust pupils to behave responsibly without question and are right to do so. Pupils' attitudes and behaviour are even better than was reported at the last inspection.
- 14 Behaviour around school is very good and pupils play together happily at break. There is a pleasant atmosphere in the dining hall at lunchtime. Parents are pleased with the standard of behaviour in school and there have been no exclusions. In lessons, behaviour was very good overall and was never less than good. Pupils show a lot of interest in what they are doing and are very ready to work together. In an upper junior lesson on problem solving in mathematics, they showed excellent attitudes and were very responsive to the subject. The very youngest children in the nursery have good attitudes and these become very good as they become more used to school routines. Reception children are able to think about what makes people happy for example by "being kind" showing that they are becoming aware of other people's feelings. Infants making puppets worked very well together and listened to each other when they were evaluating their work.
- 15 Pupils respond very well when given responsibilities. The school council is giving them good chances to debate and discuss matters of interest to all pupils and to take responsible action to make improvements. They readily talk about their decisions, for example, how they hope to spend the budget they have been given. They have also reported to governors about their work. They happily take on duties around school and decide themselves when they need to do litter picking in the playground or carry out boxes of playground equipment. Pupils also take the initiative in classrooms as was seen in a lower junior design and technology lesson. Here pupils checked their own equipment such as batteries and sorted out replacements when necessary without bothering the teacher. Children in the nursery tidy away after activities as a matter of course.
- 16 Attendance at school is good and is above that seen nationally. There is very little unauthorised absence and most pupils come to school in good time.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS OR STUDENTS TAUGHT?

- 17 The quality of teaching and learning is very good and is a key reason for the school's continuing success. Over fifty per cent of lessons observed were very good and sometimes excellent. The remainder were good and one lesson satisfactory. The teaching has continued the trend of improvement evident at the last inspection. The teachers actively teach the pupils to become good learners by giving them useful strategies for tackling their work. The headteacher has created an excellent ethos for learning through the care, respect and high expectations of all involved in the school. The support staff make a very good contribution to the quality of teaching. The quality of teaching and learning is very consistent throughout the school.
- 18 The quality of teachers' planning is very good. They make full use of national strategies in literacy and numeracy to guide their planning and match activities carefully to the pupils' needs. They also make good use of the regular and accurate assessments made of pupils' progress in most subjects. Teachers consider the vocabulary they intend to teach carefully so that it can be a tool for pupils later on. For example, in science the teacher discussed the meaning of words such as 'fair test' and 'experiment' in depth so that the pupils used the terms successfully throughout the lessons. Teachers match the activities in the lessons well to the time available and the abilities of pupils. For instance, at this early stage of the year literacy and numeracy introductions in the nursery and reception class are short and brisk, very focused and involve a good range of familiar stories to involve the children. The 'plenary' or end sessions of the lessons are regularly well planned to assess the progress pupils have made and set them thinking about the next stage of the lessons. There has been a good improvement to the plenary sessions as a result of careful monitoring and training.
- 19 The quality of teaching in English is very good. Literacy skills are very well taught throughout the curriculum. Teachers set good examples in their lively reading of well-chosen texts to develop reading skills. There is a very strong focus on developing language skills such as speaking and listening and activities are motivating and challenging. The teachers question pupils thoroughly and allow pupils many opportunities to explain their thinking. As a result pupils become competent learners, able to use their reading and writing skills well to further their understanding in other subjects. They are given good strategies to enable them to find the meaning of words and how to spell them, which increases their confidence in writing in all subjects.
- 20 The teaching of mathematics is very good. The teachers start lessons with very effective, quick-fire mental sessions during which counting and computation skills are developed progressively. Pupils take pride in striving for faster times and more accuracy. The teachers make use of good techniques to allow pupils to explain their strategies for mental computation to others and this reinforces their learning. They model good ways of making written calculations. There are very good opportunities for practical, first-hand experience which makes learning enjoyable and encourages very good progress in the practical application of the number skills. The pupils also make good use of the mathematical knowledge and skills in science and design and technology.
- 21 The teaching of information and communication skills is also very good. This is rapidly leading to pupils who are confident to apply their skills to different situations. For example, the Year 6 pupils follow their own Internet research for history and geography. The teaching in music is very good because the specialist skills of several members of staff allow the pupils to develop great depth to their learning so that compositions are lively and interesting.
- 22 The staff's relationship with pupils is excellent, resulting in excellent management of pupils. Lessons are stimulating and so pupils are motivated. Teachers talk to pupils in quiet and friendly tones. The pace of almost all lessons means there is very little opportunity for pupils to become bored and pupils are eager to hear what is coming next. The tidy, well-organised

classrooms allow pupils maximum independence whilst they are collaborating closely. The nursery and reception classes are very well organised with activities representing all areas of learning which are constantly accessible to children. The outdoor area and the soft play in the school hall, provides a good range of physical activities to motivate and challenge the pupils.

- 23 The quality of teaching for pupils with special educational needs is very good. Teachers know their pupils well. They make very good use of assessments of pupils' progress to set targets for pupils to achieve and plan work that is very well matched to their individual needs. Classroom assistants are used very well to support learning. All adults develop excellent relationships with pupils, which has a positive effect on learning. The hearing impaired pupils are fully integrated in to all lessons because the teaching is so well planned.
- 24 The quality of marking is very good. Teachers are supportive of pupils in lessons and praise their achievement effectively. They also mark work closely and draw out points for future improvement. In English Year 6, for example, the marking becomes a helpful dialogue between pupil and teacher. The quality of marking feeds the regular assessments made by teachers and supports the continuous improvement. The teachers make good use of homework in many subjects. Pupils are often set tasks to find out additional information or complete particular tasks.
- 25 The very good quality of teaching is very consistent throughout the school, because all staff work very effectively as a team. The outcomes of monitoring by the literacy and numeracy subject leaders and the headteacher are openly shared and incorporated into everyone's practice. This approach has been particularly successful in improving questioning techniques and developing plenary sessions. The school is well placed to continue improving the quality of teaching and learning.

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

- 26 There has been a significant improvement in the quality of the curricular provision since the time of the last inspection. The school now offers its pupils a very good, rich and full curriculum. It is very well planned and makes sensible and interesting links between many subjects. The curriculum meets all statutory requirements and is enhanced and enriched by a very good range of extra-curricular activities. Most of the work undertaken by pupils carefully builds on previous learning. This is because the school has devised and implemented effective and systematic assessment procedures. They are used with consistency and purpose throughout the school to inform teachers of what pupils know, understand and can do so that the next steps to learning can be planned. These qualities have facilitated the development of a rich, relevant and lively curriculum which serves to interest, involve and excite pupils. They are significant contributory factors to the standards achieved by the school
- 27 The school makes very good provision for pupils with special educational needs. The special educational needs co-ordinator supports colleagues, parents and pupils well ensuring that a close partnership exists amongst each and every one of them. Teachers ensure that pupils with special educational needs are given tasks which build systematically on what they already know, understand and can do. Teaching assistants and students provide very good support to pupils with special educational needs and their skills make a significant contribution to the good gains in learning.
- 28 Work is well matched to the particular needs of pupils with special educational needs, Individual Education Plans have clear targets which are based on the very good knowledge which teachers have of pupils and additional support is carefully targeted to help ensure that they make good progress.

- 29 There are very good learning opportunities for the youngest children in the nursery and reception classes. The personal development of children is paramount to the planning. As a result children quickly learn to feel comfortable and confident. For example, the children in reception come straight into the classroom at the start of the day and settle straight down to exciting and creative play activities. The children experience a broad curriculum from the beginning, developing basic skills through all areas of learning.
- 30 The very good teaching of literacy and numeracy is the bedrock of the school's curriculum. The skills learned in these subjects underpin and serve the quality of the work seen in many areas across the curriculum. Pupils listen well both to their teachers and their friends, their very good reading skills help them to find facts from books easily and their well developed writing skills enable them to express themselves with ease and clarity. Approaches to improving standards of attainment in mathematics have been very successful and pupils are equipped with an effective range of strategies with which to perform accurate calculations. However, they do not meet shortened formal methods of written calculations until late in the junior stage of their education and this limits the quantity of work higher attaining pupils are able to get through. Information and communication technology is used well across the curriculum to assist pupils' learning. They use it to consolidate work in number, to write captions for displays, to present their poems and to present data in the form of spreadsheets and graphs.
- 31 There is a very good range of interesting clubs for pupils of this age including mixed football, girls' football, cross country running, basketball and choir. There are a number of visits which support pupils' work in classrooms including museums, the local church, Yottenfews Environmental Education Project and residential visits to Hawse End. The vicar of the local church, a World War II air raid warden, visiting musicians and other visitors are also used very effectively to enrich the curriculum. There are many opportunities to bring the curriculum to life for pupils by using materials which they can handle and learn from first hand, for example in design technology Year 1 and Year 2 pupils were inspired by the vast and exciting range of puppets brought into school for them to evaluate in the design and making process.
- 32 The school ensures that all pupils have equal access to all areas of the curriculum and that they have equal opportunity to succeed in them. Teachers make every effort in all lessons and activities that support the curriculum to ensure that the contributions of all pupils are celebrated and valued. Teachers give very good emphasis to pupils' personal, social and health education. They promote these areas actively and consistently as part of a carefully structured programme, which is embedded in the life of the school. For example, caring for others is given high priority in regular discussions in all classes. The programme includes suitable emphasis, through physical education, on the importance of exercise for maintaining a healthy lifestyle. Teachers constantly give praise and encouragement to enhance pupils' self-esteem.
- 33 The quality of curriculum provision in all areas of learning is good. The balance and breadth of the whole curriculum is good with staff providing stimulating, relevant and exciting ideas and resources.
- 34 Overall the school's policy for special educational needs embraces the principles and practices of the Code of Practice. There are good arrangements for identifying and assessing pupils with special educational needs. Provision for pupils with special educational needs is a combination of withdrawal for individual and group support by learning support assistants and appropriately differentiated work by class teachers. The strengths of the school in this area are the detailed administrative arrangements, the quality of the learning support assistants and their deployment and the commitment of teaching staff to meeting the individual needs of pupils. These strengths are reflected in the positive attitudes and collaborative approaches of all pupils and the quality of the individual education

plans which set clear targets and are monitored by class teachers and the special needs co-ordinator. These individual plans are effectively implemented and pupils' work is carefully assessed. As a result these pupils make very good progress throughout their time in the school. There are very good links with local support services and the school strives hard to ensure that parents are kept well informed of their child's progress.

- 35 There are very good links with a number of partner institutions but most particularly with Whitehaven School. For example:
- junior pupils use the sports facilities at the secondary school
 - members of the physical education department demonstrate lessons and support the junior's work in dance; and
 - the art department shares their expertise with Year 5 and 6 teachers and pupils
- 36 The school's provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is very good, which is a very good improvement since the last inspection. The provision makes a very strong contribution to pupils' personal development.
- 37 Spiritual development is very good and a strength within the school. During daily assemblies, pupils are given time for reflection and join together in prayer. Assemblies are based strongly on a Christian ethos of love and care for each other. The children know who they are, they have a strong self belief and are given ample opportunity to find out what they like. In religious education pupils celebrate differences in special beliefs and in personal, health and social education lessons, young pupils consider what makes them happy.
- 38 Pupils' moral development is very good. Pupils are valued in the school and their efforts are recognised with praise and celebration by staff and pupils alike. School and class rules are displayed but there is little evidence of deviant behaviour. Pupils understand the difference between right and wrong and understand the implications of their actions on others. Pupils are thoughtful and helpful to others and express their views openly. Behaviour is very good and this is because of attention to detail by all staff. They have high expectations of all pupils and the mutual respect between all members of the school is very apparent. Relationships throughout the school are excellent and older pupils take responsibility such as answering the telephone before school or allowing visitors through the security doors.
- 39 The pupils care for others very well. They are able to discuss sensitive issues with confidence and security. For example, Year 6 pupils discussed the treatment of other human beings after watching a programme on the Anne Frank museum and the terror of the concentration camps. They also discussed the issue of under-age employment.
- 40 Social development is excellent. Pupils' movement around the school is well ordered and sensible and they respect each other in a civilised way. They co-operate very well in pairs and in groups, often of mixed gender, both in the classroom and in the playground. They work collaboratively in many lessons, notably science and physical education, and are confident to express their opinions in discussions. Pupils are given significant responsibility around the school and the school values these efforts. The School's Council meets regularly and reports back to the head teacher. It is also represented on the area school's council. School visits are a feature of the school to increase curriculum opportunities.
- 41 Cultural development is very good. Pupils are introduced to a range of beliefs in religious education, such as Hinduism and Judaism. In infants and in juniors, pupils are well prepared for living in a world of many different peoples and beliefs by continuing to learn about them. The school has an understanding of the strong local culture and plays an active part in community celebrations such as the local carnival and the annual maritime festival.

Hearing support unit.

- 42 In addition to the mainstream special educational needs provision there is additional provision for hearing impaired pupils who hold a statement of special educational need. The provision for these pupils is very good. The unit's provision has continued to improve since the last inspection. There has been an improvement in the level of inclusion in mainstream classes and pupils are fully involved in all aspects of school life. The quality of teaching, aided by the professional expertise of the learning support assistants, has improved and as a result the standards achieved by pupils is better. There is a good degree of liaison between the unit and class teachers, illustrated by the improvement in the signing skills of teachers classes. All pupils are fully included in mainstream classes for a substantial part of the school curriculum. They spend an appropriate proportion of their time in a specialist base. The base is well resourced, well staffed and well managed. Pupils are achieving below the national expectations in English, mathematics and science. However pupils receive very good levels of support from the specialist teacher of the hearing impaired and specialist learning support assistants. Consequently pupils make very good progress towards the specific learning targets set out in their individual education plans. This is most obvious in the pupils' improvement in their listening, language, literacy, numeracy and social skills.
- 43 The school has established an excellent ethos for the inclusion of hearing impaired pupils. The curriculum is taught through a combination of spoken language and sign language. All pupils and staff have very positive attitudes towards hearing impaired people and willingly undertake further training in the use of sign language. This helps to promote respect and understanding of differences between groups of pupils. The specialist support assistants are good role models for pupils and use their talents and skills to ensure that pupils are purposefully engaged in all learning activities.
- 44 The quality of the specialist teaching of hearing impaired pupils is very good. There are very thorough procedures for joint planning between class teachers, the teacher of the hearing impaired unit and support staff. This leads to lessons with challenging activities which are accurately matched to pupils' abilities. The teachers have high expectations of what pupils can achieve and how they should behave. As a result pupils have very positive attitudes to learning, apply themselves conscientiously and persevere with tasks. Consequently they have high levels of self-esteem and their confidence in communicating with others is impressive and an excellent example of the benefits of the inclusion policy of the school. The teacher has secure subject knowledge, questions pupils skilfully and provides many opportunities for them to be actively involved in lessons. In the very good lessons a range of strategies are used to captivate pupils' interests and build upon the excellent relationships between teachers, support staff and pupils. In these lessons, teachers transmit their enthusiasm for the topic being taught, give supportive feedback and set targets for pupils to help them make progress. Pupils are able to work individually and co-operatively in groups, are always engrossed in the activities and have a real enjoyment of learning. The high level of expertise and hard work of the learning support assistants considerably enhance the teaching and learning.
- 45 The curriculum provision is good. Pupils have full access to the National Curriculum and are making very good progress in all subjects. They are fully included in every aspect of school life and are valued members of the school community. The individual education plans effectively identify specific learning targets, particularly in language and literacy. They are implemented to a very good standard by all the staff. Pupils' progress is carefully assessed, monitored and evaluated. The school is rightly proud of its provision and has the active support of the whole school community.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

- 46 The school cares for its pupils well. Parents are confident that their children like to come and it provides a safe and happy place in which they can learn.

- 47 The school pays good attention to all aspects of health and safety and in some it is very good. In particular, most staff have attended a course to train them in child protection. Governors have shown a close interest in child protection and one of them is nominated to represent the governing body in looking after this area. Many staff hold certificates for first aid and the school has clear procedures for sending out “bumped head” letters to parents, for example. Staff are given clear guidelines in the staff handbook for routines and procedures such as fire drills which are done regularly in the school. Proper attention is paid to checking equipment and basic risk assessment is done around site, including checks on access to the Internet.
- 48 Attendance is well monitored and registers are well maintained to allow this to be done. Parents are very conscientious about letting school know if their children are away for a particular reason but on the rare occasions that they do not, the school phones home after three days. The educational welfare officer follows up any problems that arise.
- 49 Very good behaviour is promoted well and the headteacher takes care to record the few occasions where she needs to monitor behaviour more closely. In such cases parents are contacted by telephone so that they can be kept informed and they appreciate this care and concern. Staff put on sessions of “circle time” in addition to those timetabled to resolve any conflicts that may arise and to reinforce pupils’ positive attitudes.
- 50 The school has improved its assessment and monitoring of pupils’ academic performance since the last inspection. The procedures are now good and the information is used well. The school rigorously analyses the results of previous national tests and uses this information to identify areas of the curriculum that need further support, development, training and resources. The school implements good procedures to assess and track the performance of pupils in English, mathematics and science. Teachers assess the standards of attainment that pupils achieve on a regular basis and set specific targets for individuals and groups of pupils. Teachers’ assessments of pupils’ attainments are accurate and this enables teachers to plan what pupils need to do next to reach their targets. This is making a very effective contribution to the raising of standards. Teachers evaluate their lessons thoroughly and make very effective use of their assessments when planning the next set of activities. This means that the learning needs of all groups within the class are well met.
- 51 The school does not formally record and monitor the personal development of its pupils but the relationships are so strong and supportive that teachers know the pupils well. Parents speak highly of the personal support that their children receive and feel that no one is missed out. This starts from when their children begin in the nursery. Celebration assemblies are used to recognise pupils’ achievements and all pupils are regularly encouraged to take part in festivals, for example, showing what they can do and setting a good example to others.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

- 52 The parents’ views of the school are very positive and are even stronger than they were at the last inspection. No significant issues were raised in the questionnaire or at the parents’ meeting and parents spoken to around school during the inspection were similarly positive. Parents feel particularly strongly that the school is well led and managed, that they would feel comfortable approaching school, that teaching is good and that their children like school and are helped to become mature and responsible. The inspection confirmed these positive views very definitely.
- 53 Parents receive very good information from the school. They have plenty of opportunities to talk to staff formally about how their children are doing and on open days they get a more general view of the school’s work. Pupils’ annual reports to parents are written in a readable style. They give them a clear idea of what and how well their children are learning and what

they need to do to improve. The school's prospectus is very comprehensive and includes information that is also presented in the governors' annual report. The school sends out newsletters twice a month with useful information and, in addition, parents are told at the beginning of the year which topics their children will be working on. Parents have been consulted for example over homework. A particularly good link has been developed by the school to keep parents of hearing impaired pupils aware of what they are doing each day, academically and socially.

- 54 Pupils are supported by their parents well as many come in to school events and the vast majority come to talk to teachers at parents' evenings. The governors' annual general meeting is well attended in comparison with that in many schools. The school has offered workshops to involve them further in their children's education. Interest in these has not been strong in the past however nine parents of lower juniors attended a mathematics demonstration during the inspection. While there is little regular help given in school except in the nursery, the help parents give for special events, extra-curricular activities and for fund raising through the Friends of Bransty is much valued.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

- 55 Leadership and management are excellent. The headteacher has established a very positive and high achieving ethos, continually building on the strengths identified in the last inspection. She is energetic, enthusiastic and committed setting a good example in all her work. She is very well supported by a strong senior management and the rest of the staff team. The strengths in the leadership are the main reason the school has improved so well from the time it was put in special measures in 1999. The governing body fulfil their statutory requirements very well and provide excellent support in planning the strategic development of the school.
- 56 The headteacher is thoroughly involved in the life of the school and her work is a significant strength. The quality of her own teaching sets a good example to all staff. The pupils warmly welcome her on regular visits to their classrooms and the parents have nothing but praise for her open and approachable style of leadership. Similarly, working relationships with teaching and non-teaching staff are very easy and open and there is considerable mutual respect. The school plans and operates as a team with clear direction from the headteacher. She is very well supported by the deputy headteacher in both day-to-day management and strategic planning. The ethos of openness and support has led to continued improvement to the quality of teaching and learning. There is a very good structure to management systems and all staff are very clear about their roles and responsibilities. All subject leaders, especially those for literacy and numeracy, are fully involved in monitoring standards and the quality of teaching. They also lead by setting a very good example through shared teaching activities and maintaining a good quality of display. They ensure the school is well resourced and that staff are given every opportunity to maintain their training needs. All staff contribute effectively to school improvement planning through producing detailed action plans based securely on their own monitoring activities. The regular staff meetings and curriculum groups are planned for well and detailed minutes are maintained. This makes it easier for staff to work as a team with every staff member clear about their role in developing new initiatives. This had led to the school being involved in a wide range of successful awards such as the Active Mark Gold, Artsmaker Silver, Investors in People and School Curriculum Award 2002.
- 57 The governing body plays a full role in planning for future improvement. The governors have a full programme of monitoring activities including lesson visits, observations of pupils' work and regular presentations from subject leaders. They have worked very closely with the local education authority to improve provision. They also participate in a good range of training both jointly with the school staff and through specific governor training organised by the local education authority. The commitment and enthusiasm of the chair of governors is very motivating in itself. He works very closely with the headteacher to analyse test data

and prepare presentations for the governing body. They are effective in closely monitoring financial provision and ensuring that those providing services to the school, such as payroll, give good value. They receive good analytical information on the results of both national and internal tests and the headteacher's good natured and informative regular reports to governors contribute to their ability to take a useful role in school improvement.

- 58 The management of provision for pupils with special educational needs is very good. Pupils are identified at a very early stage and their progress is carefully monitored. All staff are made aware of the needs of individual pupils and work well as a team. The management of provision for children in the nursery and reception classes is very good. The staff work as a team to make sure that education is focused effectively on the needs of young children. They make good use of national guidance for provision for these pupils and there are effective procedures in place to measure children's progress. This has contributed to the successful induction of newly qualified teachers who quickly become part of the school team.
- 59 The school maintains good staffing levels at present. Very effective use is made of the specialist skills of the special educational needs unit teacher and support staff. The headteacher has a significant and regular teaching commitment. There are adequate levels of support staff who are very effectively deployed. The induction of new staff is very good, as is the professional development of all teachers. The headteacher is quick to identify and support teachers' particular strengths and provide real opportunities for managerial development. However, she is careful not to overburden staff and the governors match staff responsibilities to pay as effectively as overall finances allow. The procedures for professional developments are very good. Teachers set challenging targets for improving their pupils' performance and developing their own skills. They are given good support through careful monitoring by the headteacher and deputy headteacher and regular reviews on their progress towards meeting the targets. The system sits comfortably alongside the ethos of sharing and striving towards high achievement.
- 60 The financial procedures are very good. The budget is well managed and tightly matched to the school's identified needs. The governing body monitors expenditure closely on a regular basis. They make good use of information and communication technology to support this monitoring. The most recent audit report concurs with the inspectors' views that finances are well managed. The school gives very good value for money. Day to day administration is very good. The very good administrator works closely with the headteacher to offer good quality support. The quality of accommodation is very good. It is spacious and well maintained. Very good use is made of the computer suite and it provides a good link with the community.
- 61 The outstanding quality of leadership and management makes a significant contribution to the school's success and potential for the future.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

- 62 There are no key issues facing the school.
However to continue the positive trend of improvement the following, lesser issue, should be considered for inclusion in the action plan:
- Closely evaluate provision in art and design, geography and physical education where attainment is average to raise it to the good or better standards seen in other subjects.
- (Paragraphs: 107 – 110, 117 – 122, 138 – 146)

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed

33

Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils

19

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

| | Excellent | Very good | Good | Satisfactory | Unsatisfactory | Poor | Very Poor |
|------------|-----------|-----------|------|--------------|----------------|------|-----------|
| Number | 4 | 16 | 12 | 1 | - | - | - |
| Percentage | 12 | 49 | 36 | 3 | - | - | - |

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

Information about the school's pupils

| Pupils on the school's roll | Nursery | YR – Y6 |
|---|---------|---------|
| Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils) | 12 | 136 |
| Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals | | 38 |

FTE means full-time equivalent.

| Special educational needs | Nursery | YR – Y6 |
|---|---------|---------|
| Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs | 3 | 6 |
| Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register | 3 | 26 |

| 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 | 13 |
| Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving | 5 |

Attendance

| Authorised absence | % |
|---------------------------|-----|
| School data | 4.4 |
| 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 | 11 | 5 | 16 |

| National Curriculum Test/Task Results | | Reading | Writing | Mathematics |
|---|----------|---------|---------|-------------|
| Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above | Boys | 10 | 10 | 11 |
| | Girls | 5 | 5 | 5 |
| | Total | 15 | 15 | 16 |
| Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above | School | 94 (82) | 94 (88) | 100 (94) |
| | National | 84 (84) | 86 (86) | 90 (91) |

| Teachers' Assessments | | English | Mathematics | Science |
|---|----------|---------|-------------|-----------|
| Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above | Boys | 10 | 11 | 11 |
| | Girls | 5 | 5 | 5 |
| | Total | 15 | 16 | 16 |
| Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above | School | 94 (82) | 100 (94) | 100 (100) |
| | National | 85 (85) | 89 (89) | 89 (89) |

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

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

| Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2 for the latest reporting year | Year | Boys | Girls | Total |
|--|------|------|-------|-------|
| | 2002 | 12 | 10 | 22 |

| National Curriculum Test/Task Results | | English | Mathematics | Science |
|---|----------|---------|-------------|-----------|
| Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above | Boys | 10 | 12 | 12 |
| | Girls | 10 | 10 | 10 |
| | Total | 20 | 22 | 22 |
| Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above | School | 91 (92) | 100 (100) | 100 (100) |
| | National | 75 (75) | 75 (75) | 75 (75) |

| Teachers' Assessments | | English | Mathematics | Science |
|---|----------|---------|-------------|-----------|
| Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above | Boys | 7 | 11 | 12 |
| | Girls | 10 | 10 | 10 |
| | Total | 17 | 21 | 22 |
| Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above | School | 77 (92) | 95 (100) | 100 (100) |
| | National | 73 (72) | 74 (74) | 82 (82) |

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

Ethnic background of pupils

Exclusions in the last school year

| Categories used in the Annual School Census | No of pupils on roll | Number of fixed period exclusions | Number of permanent exclusions |
|---|-----------------------------|--|---------------------------------------|
| White – British | 122 | 0 | 0 |
| White – Irish | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| White – any other White background | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Mixed – White and Black Caribbean | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Mixed – White and Black African | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Mixed – White and Asian | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Mixed – any other mixed background | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Asian or Asian British - Indian | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Asian or Asian British - Pakistani | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Asian or Asian British – Bangladeshi | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Asian or Asian British – any other Asian background | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Black or Black British – Caribbean | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Black or Black British – African | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Black or Black British – any other Black background | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Chinese | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Any other ethnic group | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| No ethnic group recorded | 0 | 0 | 0 |

The table refers to pupils of compulsory school age only. It gives the number of exclusions, which may be different from the number of pupils excluded.

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers and classes: YR – Y6

| | |
|--|----|
| Total number of qualified teachers (FTE) | 6 |
| Number of pupils per qualified teacher | 23 |
| Average class size | 27 |

Education support staff: YR – Y6

| | |
|---|-----|
| Total number of education support staff | 6 |
| Total aggregate hours worked per week | 113 |

Qualified teachers and support staff: nursery

| | |
|--|----|
| Total number of qualified teachers (FTE) | 1 |
| Number of pupils per qualified teacher | 24 |
| Total number of education support staff | 1 |
| Total aggregate hours worked per week | 15 |
| Number of pupils per FTE adult | 12 |

FTE means full-time equivalent.

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.

Financial information

| | |
|--|-----------|
| Financial year | 2001/2002 |
| | |
| £ | |
| Total income | 352,173 |
| Total expenditure | 349,897 |
| Expenditure per pupil | 2,364 |
| Balance brought forward from previous year | 809 |
| Balance carried forward to next year | 3,085 |

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

| | |
|-----------------------------------|-----|
| Number of questionnaires sent out | 148 |
| Number of questionnaires returned | 77 |

Percentage of responses in each category

| | Strongly agree | Tend to agree | Tend to disagree | Strongly disagree | Don't know |
|--|----------------|---------------|------------------|-------------------|------------|
| My child likes school. | 84 | 16 | - | - | - |
| My child is making good progress in school. | 79 | 19 | 1 | - | 1 |
| Behaviour in the school is good. | 66 | 34 | - | - | - |
| My child gets the right amount of work to do at home. | 53 | 26 | 4 | - | 17 |
| The teaching is good. | 88 | 12 | - | - | - |
| I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on. | 78 | 18 | 3 | - | 1 |
| I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem. | 93 | 3 | 1 | - | - |
| The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best. | 81 | 18 | - | - | 1 |
| The school works closely with parents. | 73 | 23 | 4 | - | - |
| The school is well led and managed. | 95 | 4 | - | 1 | - |
| The school is helping my child become mature and responsible. | 85 | 14 | 1 | - | - |
| The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons. | 77 | 17 | 1 | - | 5 |

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

AREAS OF LEARNING FOR CHILDREN IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

- 63 Children in the Foundation Stage (Nursery and Reception classes) work towards the nationally expected early learning goals. They are given work that is stimulating, interesting and of a good quality. This motivates all children, including those with special educational needs, to learn well. By the time children leave nursery to enter full time education, they are working at, or slightly below, the nationally expected levels for children of their age. By the end of Reception, most children are likely to have reached most of the Early Learning Goals and some children will be working within the early levels of the National Curriculum. This is due to very good teaching in all areas of learning. A real strength is the effective team work. The nursery nurses and classroom support assistants, including placement students, are fully involved in teaching and bring much enthusiasm and skill to the children's learning. They work very well with the children, for example, by careful questioning and by developing vocabulary. Every opportunity is taken to reinforce literacy and numeracy skills, and this helps the children to make good progress in all areas of work.
- 64 Curriculum planning is very good. The children's learning is supported by thoroughly prepared activities that are wide-ranging and interesting. Other key strengths of the teaching are the consistently high expectations of all teachers and their skilful management of the children. Throughout Nursery and Reception, emphasis is placed on learning through practical, imaginative experiences. In the reception year, although activities are planned based on the Foundation Stage curriculum, as the children get older they are introduced to more formal ways of working in order to prepare them for the infant curriculum. The nursery is attractively organised into specific areas of learning with many interesting resources which successfully support the children's learning. The nursery accommodation is of good quality, although rather small, including good, secure outdoor facilities which the staff use with great effect as an additional learning resource. This newly enlarged area is still being developed. The layout of the reception class is also organised into learning areas but uses a central courtyard for outdoor play activities and a well resourced wide corridor area for painting, sand and construction activities.

Personal, social and emotional development

- 65 The children in the nursery and in reception make good progress in this area of learning because they receive patient, caring and appropriate teaching. They reach and sometimes exceed typical levels for their age. Progress is good because teachers specifically plan activities to promote the associated skills through other areas of learning where they have high expectations of the children. The children quickly get to know regular routines and take turns well. In nursery, older children provide good role models for younger children. They take part willingly, for example, at tidy-up time, because they have learnt that working together makes the task easier. On admission, children soon realise that good behaviour is expected. Staff praise good behaviour and explain calmly why certain behaviours are not acceptable, like shouting out or taking somebody else's belongings. As a result, children show good levels of self-discipline at this young age.
- 66 Similar routines are in place in reception, so that the children are aware of expectations in terms of behaviour, tidying up and responsibility for making choices. For example, only a small group can work at the outside painting table at any one time. Independence is encouraged in the nursery and expected in the reception class.
- 67 Relationships are very positive in the warm, caring classrooms and help to play a significant part in the children's learning. Children enter the nursery full of enthusiasm and are keen to become involved in the exciting range of activities. They enjoy their work and do it

confidently. They respond positively to new experiences such as role play in the palace of the Queen of Hearts, using the new class computer or making biscuits.

- 68 Children in the nursery who move into reception do so with confidence. Learning is well planned with all staff so that once in Reception, learning is consolidated and taken further. Registration and snack time are used as learning time where the staff celebrate and share successes with all the children.

Communication, language and literacy

- 69 Children in the nursery are working towards the steps set for their age. By the end of the reception class most children have achieved the Early Learning Goals and some are working above these levels. They make good progress because of good teaching.
- 70 The children speak with increasing confidence because the staff engage in almost continual conversation with them. They chat, question, and encourage the children to extend what they say. Nursery and Reception classrooms are rich environments for promoting the use of language. Staff use every opportunity to develop vocabulary, speaking, listening and writing. The children initiate their own conversations because they are interested in the well planned activities, as they play - for example, in the post office or the Queen of Heart's palace in the nursery or the pirate boat in reception.
- 71 The children listen well to class stories such as 'Guess how much I love you' joining in when they can. In the Reception class, higher attaining children can identify the names and sounds of certain letters and they are able to sort objects on to letter groups. Clear labels, descriptions and pictures are prominently displayed and used to encourage the development of early reading skills in both classrooms.
- 72 Children use the book areas independently to 'read' books and are developing a good interest in books and stories. Children use the writing areas to address letters to send from the post office or to the visiting pirates. Outside literacy time, teachers provide many well-chosen experiences to enhance children's skills, especially in speaking and listening, such as children in reception telling what makes them happy 'Playing football with my granddad' or 'What would make your mummy happy?' 'A hairdryer'. Children take books home to read or share with adults.

Mathematical development

- 73 The children's attainment in mathematics is average. They experience a wealth of opportunities to use mathematics in practical ways and across other areas of learning. In nursery, children counted out the number of chocolate buttons as they decorated their biscuits and counted cherries on their play dough cakes. They use cutters of different sizes and they know the names of the square and circle shapes. In Reception, pupils also know the names of shapes, can recognise 2D shapes from descriptions, can recognise 3D shapes such as sphere, cube and cylinder and can count to 20 forwards and backwards. When asked what has one face and can roll, children knew it was a sphere. When the children in the nursery and Reception choose activities for themselves, mathematical activities are always available. Whilst biscuit making, vocabulary linked to shape is emphasised and nursery children begin to think about estimation. In the reception class, the numeracy strategy is gradually introduced and builds well on the practical work done earlier.
- 74 Nursery children take part in baking where ingredients are weighed out and the number of chocolate buttons are counted. In reception, children apply their shape knowledge to problem solving, trying to make a castle using 3D shapes. Staff encourage children to use mathematical vocabulary as they explain their methods. Much attention is given in both classes to consolidating children's learning through play situations.

- 75 In nursery and reception, teaching is very good, offering children opportunities to consolidate previous learning and extend their mathematical thinking. By the end of the reception year, most children are likely to achieve the early learning goals in this aspect of development and some will be working at a higher level.

Knowledge and understanding of the world

- 76 Most children attain above average standards by the end of the reception year. The children make good progress in their learning because staff plan an interesting range of activities which help children learn about the world about them in a variety of ways. For example, they use wet sand with a variety of toys and dry sand with different equipment. They experiment outside using water and guttering to investigate flowing water or use baking activities to investigate changes that take place when certain materials are mixed together and cooked. In Nursery, children undertake digging activities in their garden, use play people to 'skate', watching how ice melts and are given opportunity to use a variety of tools and equipment. The attractive nursery displays bear evidence of the exciting activities that the children are offered.
- 77 In Reception, children begin to investigate simple scientific activities. They study light and dark and make boats from a variety of materials to investigate floating and sinking. Such activities form the foundations for more advanced investigative work later in the year. Visitors enrich the curriculum and reception children questioned a local vet about her job. They studied animal x-rays and donned masks, gloves and overalls. Children make pancakes and pizzas and extend their food technology work.
- 78 All children have good access to computers. They are given opportunity to practise mouse control, work with letter recognition programs and a concept keyboard is used in reception.
- 79 Children take part well in discussions to raise an awareness of their own traditions and those of other cultures. This has helped the children to learn the need to respect the views of others and raise their awareness of the importance of belonging to a group.

Physical development

- 80 Children reach good standards by the end of the reception year. The children learn quickly and make good progress because they participate in structured and purposeful activities both indoors and outdoors. In nursery, they benefit from a recently enlarged, secure outdoor play area and the use of the hall. Children in reception use the outdoor place area and also make effective use of a central courtyard area. The children really enjoy outdoor activities because they are so varied and interesting. They use large wheeled toys and follow the chalked roadway capably. They use the balancing and climbing equipment, use a basketball stand to practise throwing and catching and hop and jump along the shape line.
- 81 Reception children use the playground for their outdoor play as well as the large school courtyard. They are able to run, jump, climb and balance so that they have plenty of daily exercise. All Foundation stage children use the school hall for physical activity. They have to change them selves and fold their clothes. This is an important aspect of their social development. Once ready, they are able to use the space well, running, hopping and walking. Direct teaching of such skills enables children to make good progress in the development of their physical skills.
- 82 In the classrooms, children are given plenty of opportunity to develop hand eye co-ordination. They manipulate the computer mouse and mould play dough. They are supervised closely so that they acquire a correct pencil grip when learning to write. When they are ready, they cut paper with scissors, roll and use cutters with play dough and small

tools such as printing rollers and paint brushes. Most children are on course to meet the early learning goals in this area of learning and many will surpass it.

Creative development

- 83 The children's attainment in creative development is above the levels expected. Their progress is good because they have access to excellent daily activities, and the older class builds on the excellent foundations established in nursery. The youngest children create, draw and paint animals, they print using rollers and they use a variety of different papers to create hearts for the Queen's Palace. The resources provided in the nursery to promote learning and to motivate children in this area is a strength. Such high quality activities are continued in Reception. Children use paints to copy the works of Claude Monet and they draw and paint villages and cities when comparing different places to live. Children are taught basic skills and techniques in their creative work and the effect of this very good teaching can be seen in the quality and scope of children's work. Musical opportunities are provided through singing, action songs and assemblies.
- 84 Children's creative skills are developed further by the provision of a wide range of activities in the role play areas. Children use resources imaginatively. Nursery children play in the Post Office and in the Palace of the Queen of Hearts. Reception children use the pirate boat, complete with treasure, created in the classroom. Staff talk to the children as they play to develop their ideas and to encourage their understanding of the need to share and help others.

ENGLISH

- 85 By the end of Year 6 standards of attainment are above national average and pupils' achievements are very good. By the end of Year 2 standards of attainment are in line with the national average and pupils' achievements are good. Pupils with special educational needs, including those with hearing impairment, make very good progress.
- 86 Since the last inspection standards of achievement have significantly improved. Standards are high for a number of reasons. Teaching is very good, pupils' progress is systematically monitored and pupils are highly motivated to achieve the targets that are set.
- 87 Pupils' attainment in speaking and listening is above the national expectation and is a strength of the school. Infant and junior pupils express themselves confidently and clearly, listen attentively to their teachers and each other and contribute spontaneously to group and class discussions. Pupils listen intently to stories, are very willing to ask and answer questions and are very enthusiastic about contributing their own ideas. Pupils express opinions about events in a sensitive and mature manner; for example when Year 2 pupils were discussing their feelings about how Jewish children would feel at a party. Speaking skills are particularly enhanced when there are links with other subjects; for example in history when Year 3 pupils were discussing why Romans settled in particular parts of Britain. There is good use of drama to support the development of speaking skills when pupils act out the role of characters and events; for example Year 2 pupils acted out a dialogue between characters from a fairy story and took on the identity of the different people in a very animated manner.
- 88 The school is very successful in whetting the pupils' appetite for reading. There is a very good range of books available that meets the interests and abilities of the pupils. The school has a well established system of working collaboratively with pupils' homes that leads to pupils having a desire to read frequently. Pupils are listened to regularly at home and at school and there are good procedures for monitoring pupils' progress. This results in pupils reading a good range of fiction and non-fiction books. Many pupils are fully independent readers and read accurately and fluently with a good standard of expression. Pupils read for

pleasure, can justify who is their favourite author and review books critically. By the end of Year 6 the standard of reading is good and the majority of pupils have a reading age above what is expected.

- 89 Attainment in writing is in line with the national expectation in infants and above the national expectation in juniors. By the end of Year 2 pupils' writing shows clear structure and the appropriate use of verbs, adjectives and adverbs. Pupils in Year 1 are able re-tell fairy tales. Pupils are secure in their construction of sentences and write for a good range of purposes; for example Year 2 pupils write clear instructions about 'How to make a book'. In Key Stage 2 achievement is good. By the end of Year 6 the majority of pupils are able to plan and redraft stories, drama scripts, instructions, narrative, poetry and letters. Pupils write in a range of styles, paying good attention to punctuation and employing specific techniques such as the use of similes and alliteration. The good work done in developing pupils' skills in persuasive writing is a significant contribution to pupils' personal development; for example pupils make thoughtful arguments about the age at which children should undertake paid employment. They are able to construct good writing in the form of articles about characters in Macbeth and this shows how well pupils understand the texts that they study.
- 90 The quality of teaching is very good. Teachers have a good knowledge of English, teach with enthusiasm and confidence and, as a result, pupils enjoy what they are learning. This leads to pupils being highly motivated, working hard and concentrating for a sustained period of time. Where teaching is very good, lessons are thoroughly prepared, expectations are high and challenging activities push pupils to achieve their best. As a result pupils show interest in what they are learning, behave very well and respond enthusiastically to the teachers' skilful questioning. There are very good relationships between teachers and pupils and this encourages pupils to participate willingly in discussions, freely offering their opinions and feelings. Teachers have high expectations of both behaviour and learning, give supportive feedback and set targets for pupils to help them make progress. Teaching has a good balance of class, group and individual work. Pupils are very good when working both independently and collaboratively and this leads to very good relationships with each other. A strength of the teaching is that teachers and support staff collaborate effectively to ensure that pupils with special educational needs are fully included in all English activities.
- 91 The subject is well led and managed and clear priorities for its future development are in place. There are very good systems for assessing pupils and teachers have a good understanding of what pupils need to do to improve. There are good formal procedures for monitoring and evaluating the teaching of English throughout the school. This results in teachers constantly striving to improve the quality of pupils' learning and their standards of attainment.

MATHEMATICS

- 92 Pupils enter the school with standards in mathematics that are generally below that expected for their age. By the time they are seven and when they leave school at eleven standards in mathematics are well above the national average, with a high percentage of pupils who achieve highly. The progress pupils make, including those with special educational needs, is very good. This is a very good improvement since the time of the last inspection and is due to:
- confident teachers who have applied the National Numeracy Strategy well, particularly the mental and oral aspects of mathematics
 - the systematic and structured approach to the teaching of mathematics which is consistently applied throughout
 - the very good assessment procedures which inform future planning and are applied consistently throughout the school
 - the excellent leadership of the mathematics co-ordinator

- 93 Throughout the school, emphasis is placed on the rapid recall of number facts. This enables the majority of pupils to add, subtract, multiply and divide accurately, a skill that provides a very good foundation for much of the work in mathematics. Pupils in Year 2 work with two digit numbers and count forwards and backwards in twos, fives and tens and can double numbers to make totals beyond 20. They are adept at working with numbers 'in their heads', for example, when working with money many used their very good knowledge of number bonds to calculate the change they would receive from 20 pence after spending 4 pence. They can also describe the particular strategy used in their calculation such as, 'I know that 4 and 6 is 10 so my change would be 6 and another 10. That's 16 pence!' They know the properties of two- and three-dimensional shapes and most can name all the common ones.
- 94 Throughout the juniors pupils explore and use the relationship between fractions, decimals and percentages. They have a very good understanding of symmetry, length, shape and time and talk confidently about their work, explaining what they have done and why. They construct and interpret different forms of graphs and charts, calculate the areas and perimeters of regular and irregular shapes and thoroughly enjoy the challenge of applying their knowledge to the solving of problems. By the end of Year 6 the majority of pupils work confidently with decimals to two places, carry out long multiplication and division and work with fractions and ratios. Lower attaining pupils have a range of effective and efficient strategies to multiply two digit numbers by splitting them into manageable parts and can calculate fractions of numbers. Pupils have very good opportunities to learn about shape, space, measure and data handling. They record their work in a variety of ways using tables, graphs and spreadsheets. Teachers recognise the importance of giving pupils opportunities to use and apply their knowledge in practical situations and investigate mathematical problems and time is allocated for this in lessons. Pupils undertake this type of work with considerable enthusiasm and confidence, using their 'Maths Jotters' to work out their answers. A great strength in mathematics is this confidence which, coupled with the lively enthusiasm observed, builds very successfully on what pupils already know. There is no noticeable difference in attainment over time between boys and girls.
- 95 Pupils achieve very well and learn at a very good rate because of the very good quality of teaching. During the inspection teaching was never less than very good and was, on occasions, excellent. Teachers base their lessons on the national guidelines for teaching mathematics and follow their plans carefully. As a result, pupils' knowledge and understanding is developed systematically through the lesson so that they achieve at the end what they set out to learn at the beginning. The mental arithmetic session at the beginning of lessons are managed extremely well. The pace is brisk and everyone is fully involved. Pupils try hard to work out answers mentally and make use of a wide range of strategies, tips and short cuts. When asked, they can explain their methods of calculation, using appropriate mathematical language.
- 96 In the main part of lessons teachers give very clear explanations of what they want pupils to learn. In the best lessons seen teachers involved their pupils fully in these sessions. They were encouraged to demonstrate teaching points, contribute answers and to explain them to the rest of the class. In a particularly effective lesson on angles the teacher kept the pupils fully involved throughout. They played games, worked in pairs, asked and answered questions and completed exercises as they were led skilfully to an understanding of how to calculate the values of unknown angles by using their knowledge of triangles, squares and straight lines. Pupils were absorbed by the activity and very enthusiastic about their learning – few wanted the lesson to finish! Pupils in the infant classes are equally enthusiastic about the mathematics lessons because teachers use many practical activities to make learning fun.
- 97 All teachers have a secure knowledge and understanding of the subject. They plan work carefully and make good use of formal and informal opportunities for pupils to practise their

number skills. Teachers assess pupils' work regularly to keep track of progress and group pupils by ability. The excellent questioning skills used by teachers inform them of how well their pupils are progressing. This information is used very effectively to make slight but successful adaptations to the lesson structure and thereby ensure that appropriate reinforcement, consolidation and challenge is offered. This makes a very positive contribution to pupils' learning and achievement. Homework is set regularly, is marked and provides reinforcement and extension to the work covered in class.

- 98 All pupils have individual targets and they make good progress towards them. In all lessons pupils with special educational needs and those who learn at a slower rate receive very good support from both the teacher and the classroom assistants. Pupils who learn more quickly are given appropriately challenging tasks.
- 99 Teachers set an excellent example in the way they value pupils' contributions and relationships are excellent. This increases pupils' self-respect, their respect for each others' contributions and their skills of co-operation and collaboration. It ensures that they behave extremely well in lessons, concentrate hard and enjoy their work. Most pupils enjoy the subject and many are very keen to succeed.
- 100 The subject co-ordinator provides excellent leadership, inspiring her colleagues and supporting their teaching through the monitoring of lessons. A significant contributory factor in the raising of standards is the subject co-ordinator's analysis of test results aimed at identifying the school's strengths and weaknesses in the teaching and learning of mathematics, the effectiveness of the action taken and the commitment shared by all staff to succeed. The school has good resources to support the teaching of mathematics and they are used well.

SCIENCE

- 101 Standards are well above average and pupils of all abilities make very good progress.
- 102 By the end of year 2, pupils know that a range of household appliances uses mains electricity or batteries and that electricity can be dangerous. They know that some foods keep us healthy, they recognise the importance of having healthy teeth and that exercise helps keep us healthy. They are able to compare and contrast human variations by using pictures or involving role play.
- 103 Pupils in Year 6 showed a clear understanding of the work they had covered recently and knowledge was above that expected for their age. Pupils know how to carry out a scientific investigation and that repetition is necessary to validate results. They know what forces were and can identify which variable can be changed and which needs to be kept the same. They investigate how much an elastic band stretches when different forces are acting on it. They carry out investigations with care, measuring accurately and recording the results in a table. They are able to interpret their findings from the table and draw conclusions from the results. They know forces are measured in Newtons and that 'the pull from gravity was stronger than the pull-back from the elastic band'. They understand a 'fair test'.
- 104 They know that green plants photosynthesise and that food chains enable communities to survive. They are able to investigate dissolving different substances in water of different temperatures and are enthusiastic when learning about which materials conduct electricity and heat. They know that evaporation results in solutions forming crystals and that the size of the crystals depends on the rate of evaporation. Pupils take care when recording their science and use mathematics well for example in measuring time and recording in graphs. Information and communication technology is used to facilitate graphing and also for research but there is scope here for further development.

- 105 The quality of teaching is very good overall, with evidence of excellent teaching in some lessons. Teachers plan work very thoroughly and there is clear detail how different tasks cater for the needs of pupils with different abilities. The standard of work, especially investigative work, have much improved since the last inspection but there is further development still to be undertaken. Teachers' subject knowledge is quite secure and they have creative approaches to their lessons. For example, in a Year 1 and 2 class, students helped pupils dress up and paint faces in order that the class could understand how people have similarities and also marked differences. Pupils' attitudes are excellent and they report that they enjoy the subject especially practical work. They work equally well with a partner or in groups. Behaviour is very good and generally pupils work very hard and concentrate on the tasks set.
- 106 The subject co-ordinator has a very clear understanding about the standards of science in school. National test results are closely analysed and inform future planning. The subject is very well resourced and termly monitoring takes place. Planning taken from government schemes is scrutinised as are adaptations to these schemes of work. The marking of work is constructive with suggestions as to how pupils might improve their work. All areas of the curriculum are covered and the school grounds are also used to enrich the quality of science teaching. The subject co-ordinator provides very good leadership.

ART AND DESIGN

- 107 Standards are average by the end of Year 2 and Year 6 and pupils of all abilities make at least sound progress. No lessons were observed during the inspection because the subject is taught in blocks alternating with design and technology although there is overlap between the subjects. The judgements made are based on discussions with pupils and staff, an analysis of work in sketchbooks and on display and termly planning. The indications are that teaching in the subject is at least satisfactory.
- 108 By Year 2 pupils make sound progress in developing basic skills in drawing, painting and colouring using a wide range of different media such as chalk pastels, thick and thin paints, crayons and pens. They are developing good design skills. For example, they design light catching mobiles for Christmas making good use of different papers and textures, They evaluate the strengths and weaknesses in their designs.
- 109 By Year 6 pupils have made sound progress in all aspects of the subject. They appreciate the work of different cultures for example in Japanese style art based on 'Aspects of Life'. They improve their ability to sketch moving figures in Year 5 and develop this into interesting three-dimensional work using a plaster-based material. There are some good examples of work representing the style of Matisse in Year 3 and 4. Pupils practise basic skills in shading and the use of tone in colour blending. The Year 6 pupils make interesting pictures to show their understanding of perspective. There is some good use of computers for design and painting and effective links with word processing. The pupils have also undertaken work on artists on the Internet. Overall, the use of information and communication technology in the subject is at an early stage of development.
- 110 The curriculum for the subject is suitably broad and progress is systematic. However, there is not the depth of understanding that is evident in other subjects. The basic skills are taught well but they are not necessarily transferred to selecting the best media or technique to use and there are few examples of extended projects initiated by pupils. However, there are several examples of interesting projects with visiting artists such as the mosaics in the court yard and fabric work. The subject leader is new to the role, but has clear and appropriate plans in place to continue to improve the profile of the subject and so raise standards.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

- 111 By the end of Year 2 standards are typical for the pupils' age and Year 6 standards are above national expectations. Pupils' achievements across the school are very good. There has been good improvement since the last inspection.
- 112 By Year 2, pupils are evaluating puppets they have seen and are beginning to design and make their own puppets. They evaluate different types of puppets such as finger, glove and string. They identify various types of fabrics used and discuss the qualities of each such as fluffy fabric for a lion and smooth fabric for a frog. They consider additions such as eyes made from buttons and beads, and then consider why the puppets were made, 'To keep a little girl happy.'
- 113 Year 6 pupils study shelters. They consider the fitness for purpose of different types of shelter such as a bus shelter and then test the strength of paper which could be rolled, bent or folded. Shelters are designed, tasks allocated within a group and after shelter completion, the product is thoroughly evaluated in terms of the success of the original design and modifications that are used. However, this aspect of the design process needs to be further developed throughout the school.
- 114 Teaching is good with aspects of very good teaching. Where teaching is very good, there are very good relationships between teacher and pupils which allows for a positive work ethos to prevail in the classroom. Pupils are enthusiastic about their work and enjoy the learning that is taking place. They show high levels of co-operation and collaboration. All pupils make contributions that are valued and pupils are thoroughly prepared for the next step in their puppet project. They appreciate the importance of designing and know that this guides the making stage.
- 115 Teachers make good use of the opportunities that the subject provides for development across other areas of the curriculum. Year 6 link their shelter work to the history of World War II, Year 1 biscuit making is linked to science and changes in materials and Years 3 and 4 work on alarms is linked closely with electricity work in science.
- 116 Staff use the government scheme and adaptations to teach the subject and the enthusiastic co-ordinator is very well informed on standards and provision in the school. Resource provision is good and she feels that there is clear progression in skills and subject knowledge across the school. Pupil tracking ensures the necessary subject coverage, pupils enjoy the subject and school has made its own changes to the curriculum such as in the Year 6 module on making slippers, the older pupils design and make the footwear for Reception children

GEOGRAPHY

- 117 Standards in geography by Year 2 and Year 6 are in line with national expectations and pupils, including those with special educational needs make good progress. Standards have been maintained since the last inspection.
- 118 Although it was possible to see only one lesson, the school has kept a variety of displays, examples of work and photographs from the previous year. These clearly show the value placed upon geography and the standards achieved. Year 2 pupils have a good knowledge of the locality. Teachers draw pupils' attention to similarities and differences between places in which people live and many can explain the differences between a village and city. Pupils begin to gain some knowledge and understanding of different countries and are able to compare similarities and differences between their lives in Whitehaven and that of a little girl in Chereponi, Ghana. Pupils have good opportunities to use maps, photographs and artefacts to bring the subject to life and bring far distant places into the classroom. Pupils

follow closely the adventures of Barnaby Bear as he journeys around the world, sending postcards from destinations far and wide to his friends left at home in Bransty.

- 119 Throughout the juniors pupils are given the opportunity to study other world locations. For example, Year 4 pupils compare their own lifestyle with that of children living in Chembakoli, India. In discussion with pupils in Year 6 it is clear that they are aware of topical environmental issues such as conservation and pollution and talk knowledgeably about how the use of land around Sellafeld and Yottenfews has changed since 1865.
- 120 They also have a good understanding of the water cycle and link their knowledge well to their Year 5 visit to Yottenfews Environmental Project where, using maps, aerial photographs and practical fieldwork, they followed the course of the River Calder from its source to the mouth where it flows into the sea. They use appropriate vocabulary such as, meander, erosion, oxbow lake and confluence and have a sound knowledge of seas, oceans, continents, mountain ranges and capital cities of the world.
- 121 The curriculum provides good opportunities for pupils to discuss real life experiences and national and international issues so that the subject comes to life. It is further enriched by well planned visits and field trips. Planning is thorough and focuses sensibly on a carefully structured programme of study which each year builds on pupils' previous experiences. A strength of this programme is the emphasis placed upon developing geographical terminology so that pupils become increasingly confident in its use. Good opportunities are provided for pupils to make use of their skills and understanding of information and communication technology. This is achieved through, for example, the use of web cams situated in various geographical locations around the world and by creating 'Powerpoint' presentations of their fieldwork experiences which they then present to a variety of audiences including the governing body.
- 122 The subject co-ordinator manages resources well and provides good leadership. She has ensured that the programme of study meets the requirements of the geography National Curriculum over a two-year cycle. The units of work provide a clear structure which allow local world issues to be considered. A simple but effective system of assessment which matches pupils' work against the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority's exemplification materials is well established and is making a positive impact on standards.

HISTORY

- 123 Infant pupils are working at a level that is expected for their age and make good progress. By Year 2 pupils understand the difference between past and present and old and new; for example by visiting the toy museum pupils clearly identify the similarities and differences between toys from the past and those that they play with today. They have a good knowledge of famous people from the past; for example Year 2 pupils know about the life of Florence Nightingale, what her achievements were and how they compare with achievements of current famous people. By Year 6 pupils are achieving above the levels expected for their age. They are knowledgeable about the periods in the past that they have studied, are able to explain the main causes of World War II and identify how and why minority groups suffered from persecution; for example they have visited the Anne Franks exhibition and appreciate how Jewish people were treated. Pupils are aware of how sources of evidence can inform them of the past; for example Year 3 and 4 pupils are able to examine an inventory of houses in Tudor times and assess whether rich or poor people were likely to be living there. Good features of the history curriculum are the development of historical language, the opportunities for extended writing and pupils' understanding of how events from the past have influenced their own lives.
- 124 Teaching is good because planning is thorough, artefacts and resources are used effectively and activities are interesting and challenging for all pupils. Teachers place an emphasis on looking for evidence to justify opinions and provide opportunities for pupils to

investigate events from different perspectives. As a result pupils are well motivated, listen attentively and are keen to contribute to discussions. This helps their confidence in speaking, increases their vocabulary and develops their powers of persuasion.

- 125 The co-ordinator provides good leadership by monitoring the planning and pupils' standards of achievement across the school. History is well planned by adapting a national scheme of work to the particular needs of the school. There is a good range of resources and very good use is made of the local area and visits to places of interest to develop pupils' understanding and extend their knowledge.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

- 126 Standards are average by Year 2 and above average by Year 6. Pupils of all abilities make good progress. The progress is due to the very good teaching and excellent use of resources. The pupils have very good attitudes to the subject and are eager to use their skills in other subjects.
- 127 By Year 2 the pupils have good basic skills. They select the program they wish to use from an on screen menu and open files. They save their own work and print it off as required. The good basic skills are the result of regular access to computers and systematic teaching. The pupils have good skills in controlling a floor robot. They understand how to give a series of commands to guide the robot around a course. The more able and average pupils see the value of writing the instructions down in advance and the need for a simple key to the commands. Pupils with special educational needs, particularly the hearing impaired, are fully involved because of the care taken to communicate the main points of the lesson through hand signs and other visual means. The pupils make effective use of the computer to write for different purposes and combine pictures and text.
- 128 By Year 6 pupils have good skills in handling information on the computer and using it to create formulae and graphs of a good quality. They ask very sensible questions to clarify their thinking and organise their thoughts. They have a good understanding of the advantages of using a computer based spreadsheet over pencil and paper methods but also appreciate that there are limitations to its use. They need very little support to collate their own information on a range of subjects and set questions on the graphs they produce. This very effectively furthers their mathematical understanding. The pupils continue to build well on their word processing and communication skills. In Years 3 and 4 the pupils use their skills to create a newspaper combining text and pictures well and organising borders and tables. By Year 6 they make presentations using digital photography and video. They make good use of specialist resources on residential visits. They extend their knowledge of controlling technology through a project based on funfair games. There are close links to design and technology. The pupils also make sound use of the Internet and CDs for research in different subjects.
- 129 The quality of teaching is very good. The new computer suite provides enough resources for every pupil in a class to work on their own computer. The teachers make very good use of this by preparing extended, challenging tasks for the most able and simplified activities for the less able and those with special educational needs. For example, when most pupils in Year 6 were working with complex numerical data for their spread sheets the less able had simple data on pets. However, they all learned the same information and communication skills. The pace of teaching is very good with brisk introductions and clear instructions given. Sometimes teachers expect too much. For instance, pupils in the infants needed simple signs and symbols to help them sort which direction they were sending their floor robots in. The problem was reduced by the very good support of students working with the class. Also, some less able pupils in Year 4 had to spend too long loading basic information so they had less time than others on the data handling task. The teachers encourage the pupils to work alongside each other and offer support.

- 130 The leadership and management of the subject is very good. The subject leader works closely with a governor linked to the subject to monitor standards and progress through the school. She has ensured that full advantage is taken of training opportunities and is fully involved herself. The resources are very good and used well. Teachers are very confident in their own computer skills and reinforce them through good use of the Internet for planning. Pupils' achievement is carefully assessed so that skills are systematically built upon. The school facilities are use well for adult training funded through community projects and this has a positive impact on the pupils' personal development.

MUSIC

- 131 Standards at the end of Year 2 and Year 6 are well above national expectations and pupils make very good progress throughout the school. This is due to the planning of a broad and balanced curriculum largely based on national schemes of work which is richly enhanced by the use of a published scheme. Also there are three music specialists on the staff and they inspire confidence and enthusiasm for the subject in pupils and staff. Pupils with special educational needs make similar progress to the rest of their classmates. Pupils have excellent attitudes towards music and participate in lessons with enthusiasm and enjoyment. Behaviour is very good and where opportunities are provided for pupils to work together, they co-operate and collaborate extremely well.
- 132 Pupils in Years 1 and 2 undertake adventurous work composing a piece of music for four types of instruments, tapping, shaking, scraping and striking. They are becoming aware of the need to write music down and are introduced to the idea of notation using simple pictures and symbols. They work well together and perform their composition to the rest of the class. Pupils are attentive, highly motivated, mature and sensible in handling and playing instruments, appreciative of each others' performances and thoroughly enjoy the lesson.
- 133 By the end of year 6 pupils have continued to make very good progress in the acquisition of musical skills and in understanding the elements of music. They are given many opportunities to compose and are developing an understanding of the purpose of notation as a means of understanding music for performance and for recording their own work. They understand what is meant by lyric and spend time analysing the words of two contrasting songs from different periods of history. The choice of songs chosen by the class teacher enables them to be recognised by all pupils and help them make very good progress during the lesson. Pupils begin to think about their own future song writing and are thoroughly prepared for the next step in their learning.
- 134 Children sing well during assemblies from a range of different songs and hymns and they are given opportunity to practise these in order to extend their repertoire, improve their singing and as preparation for forthcoming events. The school choir also performs in assemblies and the pupils know that it is good to sing as witnessed in one classroom during the inspection period where at the end of a lesson, the pupils performed songs well for the rest of the class, with clear diction and a good sense of rhythm.
- 135 The quality of music teaching is very good overall. Pupils have opportunities to develop their own ideas in making music together. For example, Year 1 and 2 pupils can create their own symbolic representation to record their composition and Year 6 pupils create a diary of phrases that they might wish to use in their own song writing depending on the mood they wish to create. They make sound use of information and communication technology. The pupils respond very well to the tasks because of the enthusiasm and confidence of the class teachers who obviously enjoy their teaching. However, there is still scope in school for some teachers to develop their own confidence to teach their own class music. Very

good relationships are apparent in classrooms and, coupled with very good planning and teaching, ensure all pupils make very good progress.

- 136 There are a number of pupils in school who play musical instruments and who receive tuition from peripatetic music teachers. These teach flute, violin and keyboard.
- 137 There is a broad range of musical instruments, many from other cultures. The school has also built up a collection of CDs for listening including African, Indian and Chinese music. The newly purchased published scheme supports teaching with CDs, CD-ROMs and Video clips. The school takes part in local musical events and festivals and extra-curricular musical activities include choir and recorder groups for older and younger pupils. The specialist co-ordinator leads and manages the subject very well. She is aware of strengths and weaknesses in the subject and the need for support to be offered to some of her colleagues.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

- 138 Standards of attainment in physical education are in line with national expectations by the age of seven and eleven. This is similar to that at the time of the last inspection when standards were judged to be average. The provision for pupils with special educational needs is very good and this results in these pupils making very good progress.
- 139 At all ages pupils know why lessons always have a warm-up and a closing cooling-down activity. They also understand the need for safe practices when handling sports and gymnastics equipment. Consistency in this approach throughout the school means that pupils respond well and have very good attitudes to their work.
- 140 In gymnastics lessons infant pupils show good control as they remember, repeat and link movements together with precision. They move and position their bodies with good levels of control and co-ordination showing good awareness of others working in the space around them. They build linked sequences of moves using balances, rolls, springs, jumps and slithers of good variety and imagination. In one very good lesson the use of demonstration by the teaching assistant and by Year 1 and Year 2 pupils in addition to the excellent subject knowledge of the teacher enabled pupils to understand what they needed to do to improve their level of performance. The progress made by pupils in this lesson was very good. Juniors are provided with opportunities to develop their performances by taking part in well constructed skills practices designed to challenge and improve their throwing, catching and passing skills. Skills are practised in twos and threes and then applied to small games situations where co-operation, tactics and positional play are essential components. Pupils try hard to take into account and apply tactics and basic principles suitable for attacking and defending. Overtime this has a very beneficial effect on the standard and quality of their team performances as demonstrated by their ability to travel with, receive and send a rugby ball effectively. They enjoy the competitiveness of the games situation but apply rules fairly and praise the performances and skills of others.
- 141 Pupils' progress satisfactorily and by the end of each lesson the majority had raised their levels of achievement. They show extremely high levels of co-operation, keen competitive spirit, good levels of co-ordination and an appreciation of the skills of others. Pupils are encouraged to evaluate and analyse their own performance and that of others and to identify how they could improve it. Demonstrations by the teacher and pupils are used very effectively with the teacher focusing pupils' attention on particular features by skilful questioning. This is a significant contributory factor in the progress pupils make.
- 142 Teaching is mainly good and never less than satisfactory. Lessons are well organised and brisk with well timed sessions which allow the pupils to be continually involved in physical activity rather than standing around. By the end of the lessons pupils are tired. In the best lessons teachers give clear directions and instructions and set clear boundaries in which

groups of pupils are to work. Teachers are quick to see where pupils need help and intervene with constructive and encouraging comments. High expectations of appropriate behaviour ensure a very high level of concentration and pupils are given plenty of time in which to practise and refine their skills.

- 143 Teachers' good coaching, skilful intervention and effective use of pupils and teaching assistants as good examples have a very positive effect on pupils' learning.
- 144 Pupils thoroughly enjoy their physical education lessons and respond exceptionally well. They show a keen competitive spirit and an excellent appreciation of the importance of rules, fair play and sportsmanship. The excellent relationships are very positive features of all lessons.
- 145 The school is strong in its wide provision of sporting activities which include cross country running, line dancing and a week's residential visit to Hawse End near Derwentwater where they can experience archery, fencing, climbing and carting. The school also ensures that its pupils have opportunities to take part in competitive district sports events such as football and athletics.
- 146 Resources are plentiful and of good quality and range. The co-ordinator has held the post for only a few months but has already had a significant impact on the quality of provision and teaching. She is very enthusiastic, knowledgeable, committed to the raising of standards and has a clear grasp of what is needed to improve the subject further. A simple but effective assessment strategy has been implemented and which, although in its early stages of development, is having a positive impact on the progress pupils make.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

- 147 By the end of Year 2 pupils' standards of attainment in religious education broadly match the expectations of the locally agreed syllabus and by the end of Year 6 they are above. A particular strength is the contribution that religious education makes to pupils' personal development in helping them to be sensitive to and appreciative of the differences in faiths and beliefs.
- 148 Achievement by infant pupils is good. Pupils are aware that different people have different places of worship and that they celebrate special occasions and people. Pupils are introduced to the basic beliefs of the Jewish religion and are very aware of how Jewish families celebrate family events. Their knowledge of Christianity and Bible stories is good and they can describe the key features of the story of Christmas and Easter. Achievement by junior pupils is good. Pupils are introduced to the essential principles of Christianity, Hinduism and Judaism and know which journeys are special to the each religion. Year 6 pupils carefully analyse how the Bible influences the behaviour of Christians and investigate the message behind parables and how they apply to their own world. This is reflected in their recognition of the importance of working together, helping neighbours and treating disabled people as equals. A particular strength is that pupils apply their knowledge to the practical problems that they may face. For example pupils are very well equipped to deal with dilemmas such as conflict and how to treat the environment. This results in pupils who are considerate and aware of the dangers of selfishness.
- 149 Teaching is good. Lessons are well planned, learning outcomes are clear and the pace is brisk. Teachers have a very good relationship with pupils, are aware of their individual needs and approach issues sensitively. The skilful questioning of these teachers encourages pupils to express and justify their opinions resulting in pupils who are confident, mature and value difference. Teachers make good use of resources to capture pupils' attention and motivate them to find out more about different religions. A strength of the teaching is the use of role play to help pupils to understand the ways of life in different religions.

- 150 The very good leadership of the subject is evident in the significant improvement in the support given to teachers through the thorough and constructive monitoring of teaching, planning and pupils' work. Very good use is made of visits, such as the synagogue in Newcastle and the Anne Franks exhibition, and visitors, such as members of different faiths to explain their personal views.