

INSPECTION REPORT

RAMSDEN INFANT SCHOOL

Barrow-in-Furness, Cumbria

LEA area: Cumbria

Unique reference number: 112208

Headteacher: Mrs J Holland

Reporting inspector: Mr R Gill
4074

Dates of inspection: 2nd – 3rd December 2002

Inspection number: 247196

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Infant
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	3 - 7
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Thwaite Street Barrow-in-Furness
Postcode:	LA14 1AN
Telephone number:	(01229) 894626
Fax number:	(01229) 894627
Appropriate authority:	The governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mrs L Lamb
Date of previous inspection:	November 1997

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members		
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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Ramsden Infant School is situated in Barrow-in-Furness in the southwest corner of Cumbria. Most of the 150 pupils, 79 of whom are boys and 71 girls, live locally, but a significant minority of pupils travels across town to attend this school. The Nursery class caters for an additional 39 children, who attend part time. The school is smaller than the national average size for primary school. The proportion of pupils known to be entitled to receive free school meals is above the national average. One pupil has a statement of special educational needs and a further 50 pupils are on the school's register of pupils with special educational needs. The majority of pupils with special educational needs have moderate learning difficulties. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs is above the national average for infant schools. A very small number of pupils have an ethnic minority heritage. A very small proportion of pupils is learning English as an additional language and even fewer are at an early stage. The school suffers from the fact that families are regularly moving in and out of the area. Many children attend the school's Nursery before starting school in the Reception class. The pupils' attainment when they start school is well below average. Since the school's last inspection it was recognised in Her Majesty's Chief Inspector's Annual Report (1997-8) as one of the top performing schools in the country. It received an achievement award from the Department for Education and Skills in 2001 for its sustained high standards.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

Ramsden Infants gives a very good standard of education that includes a very high regard for children's personal development and an excellent level of care for their general welfare. Standards reached by pupils by the end of Year 2 are well above the national averages in reading and writing and above them in mathematics as a result of the very good teaching they receive. This represents very good and sometimes excellent achievement, which is very well above that produced in similar schools. Pupils' very good attitudes to work and behaviour reflect the supportive school environment and positive interpersonal relationships within the school. These outcomes are a result of the very good and sometimes excellent, leadership and management provided by the headteacher, governing body and the staff. All pupils are provided for very successfully irrespective of their background or attainment on entry. The school provides very good value for money.

What the school does well

- The pupils attain high standards in reading, writing and mathematics by the end of Year 2.
- Teaching has a strong influence on the very good achievements that pupils make.
- The leadership shown by the headteacher, governors and staff establishes a very positive context for teaching, learning and the sustained high levels of attainment.
- The school provides very well for pupils' personal development and this has a strong effect on their attitudes to work and behaviour.
- The curriculum is rich, exciting and very relevant for all pupils.

What could be improved

- The management and use made of assessment in subjects beyond English, mathematics and science to help improve pupils' achievements even further.

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

When the school was inspected in November 1997 it was judged to be a very good school with some outstanding features. It still is. Moreover, the school has made some good improvements to its high quality provision. In 1998, standards in reading, writing and mathematics were well above average. Since then the high standards in writing have been maintained consistently. Standards in reading and mathematics have fluctuated as the school introduced successfully and amended for their own use, the

National Strategies in Literacy and Numeracy. However, in 2002 reading standards were back to being well above the national average and in mathematics they were above it. The school had no key issues in its last inspection report, but it has tackled minor areas for improvement in a very systematic way to good effect. For example, subjects beyond English, mathematics and science are better provided for now and resources for information and communication technology (ICT) are much more plentiful. Since 1998 the Reception classes have adopted the Foundation Stage curriculum well.

STANDARDS

The table shows the standards achieved by pupils at the end of Year 2 based on National Curriculum test results.

Performance in:	compared with			
	all schools			similar schools
	2000	2001	2002	2002
reading	B	C	A	A*
writing	A	A	A	A*
mathematics	B	B	B	A

Key	
very high	A*
well above average	A
above average	B
average	C
below average	D
well below average	E

The pupils attain standards that are generally at least above the national average by the time they are seven years old. Results in reading have improved since 2000; standards in writing and mathematics have been consistently higher than the national average. The 2002 results in reading and writing were in the highest 5 per cent of those achieved by similar schools, nationally, and well above that achieved in mathematics. Furthermore, the proportion of pupils, as assessed by their teachers, that attained the nationally expected level in science, was in the highest five per cent nationally. The school sets demanding targets for pupils in Year 2 and frequently meets or exceeds them. Current attainment in English, mathematics and science, as judged during the inspection, is at least as good as the levels reached in the national tests and teachers' assessments in 2002. Pupils' achievements are very good.

Children in the Nursery class make a very good start to their education and achieve very well. Many children are on course to achieve the nationally expected levels, particularly in communication, language, literacy and mathematical development by the end of the Reception Year. Pupils with special educational needs and those learning English as an additional language tend to make very good progress throughout the school due to the extra help that they receive. There are no particular differences in the standards achieved by boys or girls.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Pupils have very good attitudes to their schooling.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Behaviour is very good. Lessons are characterised by enthusiastic and polite response from pupils. Breaks and lunchtimes are very active and pleasant social occasions.
Personal development and relationships	Very good. Pupils form strong relationships with each other and with adults. Their self-esteem is greatly enhanced by the school's many opportunities for personal development.
Attendance	Below the national average for primary schools. However, the school is very good at dealing with cases of poor attendance from a small group of families.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils in:	Nursery and Reception	Years 1 – 2
Quality of teaching	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 is very good overall with no unsatisfactory lessons. Teaching is characterised by thorough planning and a very good use of resources, but importantly lessons are lively, imaginative and very well suited to pupils' needs. Role-play and other kinds of practical activity are used very well to develop pupils' learning in all subjects and areas of learning. Some teaching in the Reception Year and in Year 2 is excellent in the way that teachers use their expertise to the best advantage and as a result pupils are engrossed in what they are doing. Teachers use the National Strategies for Literacy and Numeracy judiciously to complement their own successful methods of teaching English and mathematics. Pupils' attitudes to learning are very positive and they concentrate hard on their lessons. The school succeeds well in meeting the needs of all pupils, including those with special educational needs. The needs of higher attainers and gifted and talented pupils are also met very well, although they could do even better in subjects beyond English, mathematics and science.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Very good. The school teaches all subjects of the National Curriculum and religious education and has most effective strategies for teaching literacy and numeracy. The pupils have equal opportunities to learn in imaginative ways that provide many exciting opportunities for first-hand experience.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Very good. Pupils receive strong support and many pupils achieve the expected level for their age when they are seven years old.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	Very good. The school is very supportive of their individual needs.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural, development	Very good. They are taught to behave responsibly and to respect other people. The school provides a strong ethos in which pupils grow to understand other cultures through visits, role-play and music, for example.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Care for the pupils' welfare is excellent. Staff are very sensitive to pupils' needs and the headteacher is outstanding in her work to make sure that all pupils are included in the life of the school. The school is also very good at promoting racial equality. Pupils' behaviour and attendance are monitored very closely. Pupils' work is assessed thoroughly and the information is generally used well to plan new lessons. Assessment in subjects beyond English, mathematics and science does not quite go far enough in benefiting the higher attainers, in particular.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Very good. The headteacher and senior staff lead the school in a very effective way. They ensure high levels of collaboration among the school's energetic team of teachers. The school is very well managed.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	The governors are conscientious and keenly interested in the school. They are proud of its achievements and fulfil their legal responsibilities towards it very well.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Very good. The school produces very thorough planning for development in English, mathematics, science, ICT and pupils' personal development. The annual analysis of the national test results is communicated well to governors, for example. However, the action plan for improving standards in other subjects, within the school's development plan, is not as comprehensive as it could be.
The strategic use of resources	Very good. Teachers and support staff are deployed thoughtfully. Very good use is made of the school grounds to extend pupils' learning. The school's budget is very well managed. Any surpluses are used wisely to cushion the effect of falling roles.

The school challenges itself to improve its performance, consults very well with parents and spends its funds wisely. As a result, the principles of best value are applied very well.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The very good teaching that helps pupils to achieve high standards by the end of Year 2. Children like school and behave very well. The efforts the school makes to ensure that pupils not only work hard and make very good progress, but also become mature and responsible. The ethos of the school in which parents feel comfortable to join in and air concerns. The very good leadership provided by the headteacher, staff and governors. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> There were no issues of significance raised.

The inspection confirms the parents' very positive views of the school.

PART B: COMMENTARY

WHAT THE SCHOOL DOES WELL

The pupils attain high standards in reading, writing and mathematics by the end of Year 2.

1. The majority of children enter the school with a very limited range of social and other skills associated with learning. They do not have, in the Nursery class, the obvious potential to achieve the nationally expected targets by the end of their Reception Year in speaking and listening, reading, writing and mathematics. However, they make extremely rapid progress, right from the start, due to the care and challenges they receive. Most children, therefore, actually reach the expected levels by the end of their Reception Year. The work undertaken in the Nursery and Reception classes results in all children being very well prepared for the National Curriculum at the next stage of schooling. Consequently, by the time they reach the end of Year 2 the majority of pupils have achieved very well in reading, writing and mathematics.
2. Standards were well above the national average at the time of the last inspection in 1997/8. In 2002, pupils' attainment was once again well above the national average in reading and writing and above it in mathematics. This represented very good achievement over a period of four years, particularly in writing, where standards have never wavered. They have fluctuated slightly in reading and mathematics due to the introduction of the National Strategies for Literacy and Numeracy, which caused the school to amend and develop its programme for teaching, losing a slight degree of momentum in doing so. However, the school is back on course again now, achieving in 2002 very much better than the majority of schools in similar circumstances and well above most schools nationally. Currently, the work of pupils in Year 2 demonstrates that last year's standards will be maintained and possibly further improved on in mathematics.
3. The standards achieved by seven year olds have improved greatly, over a number of years, by the school's ambitious and systematic programme of teaching letter sounds, word recognition, writing and calculation with numbers. The strong conviction, held by the headteacher and staff, that pupils can and will achieve beyond what might normally be expected of them, guides all lessons and activities in school.
4. The school's vision for achievement has been very well absorbed into the arrangements for teaching. The very good and sometimes excellent teaching that pupils receive is a prime reason for their success. The work provided is very well matched to the needs of individual pupils and the targets they need to reach. Furthermore, it succeeds in firing the pupils' imagination and interest. The teachers are very knowledgeable about effective methods of teaching and the relationships forged between adults and children are often superb. As a result of these strong aspects of teaching, pupils become confident and successful learners. The cumulative effect of so many very good lessons is that pupils' achievements are very good. This very good achievement applies equally to all pupils in the school including those with special educational needs, pupils who are learning English as an additional language and those who show a gift or a talent in a particular subject.
5. Teaching has many very good and occasionally excellent, features in the Nursery and Reception classes. This causes children to make rapid progress. The organisation and use of accommodation in the Nursery class, for example, is excellent. Children are able to bake, play in role, use computers and tape recorders, read in peace, play with toys and equipment and complete art work all within a relatively small area. The staff and volunteer adults make learning fun by creating demanding challenges and forging excellent relationships, which are characterised by support and care. This concentration on quality play facilities and the high expectations for success in reading, writing and mathematics lie behind the provision in the Reception classes. For example, children play with a high level of sophistication in the Ramsden greengrocers. They use real coinage, dress up for the part and talk with great enthusiasm about the vegetables on

sale. A teaching assistant, who has a marked impact on the children's skills in spoken language, often helps them in these kinds of activities. A lesson devoted to reading and writing was typical of the way in which children make huge strides in their learning in the Reception classes. The lively methods led to a superb collection of words beginning in the letter sound, 's'. Children offered words such as, 'sledge', 'slithery' and 'sensible'. Children all hooted with disapproval when their teacher wrote a reversed 's' on the board, showing that they have a keen eye for the correct usage. Moreover, several children were confident when talking about capital and lower case letters. As a consequence of this effective teaching, many children could write their own name and some simple words. The very good progress made by children in the Reception classes is due to the fact that teachers forge ahead with the knowledge of letter sounds and keywords and reinforce this knowledge very well through the use of play and computers.

6. The school has done very well to make sure that there is a consistency to teaching and learning across all classes. The very positive aspects that are present for the younger children are reflected in Years 1 and 2. In Year 2 literacy and numeracy lessons, for example, learning is very good due to the subject knowledge shown by teachers, the highly structured content of the lessons and the remarkable way in which pupils are involved in their learning. For example, in a Year 2 numeracy lesson pupils made quick progress because the objectives were so clear, the lesson was full of fun and well-timed discussion helped to build up the understanding of the fractions being studied. Pupils were asked what they had learnt in the review section of the lesson. They were able to respond well because they had worked so productively in pairs and teams in the activity section. The teaching also used rhythmic movement and meditation techniques very successfully at strategic points in the lesson to get pupils into the correct mood for learning. By the end of the lesson, pupils showed a solid understanding of three- and two-dimensional shapes and what they would look like if they were divided into parts. They were also talking confidently about simple fractions and how they were part of the whole. This kind of success is typical of the way in which pupils in Year 2 are able to go beyond the expected levels for their age.
7. In literacy lessons, similarly high expectations are expressed through the challenges given to pupils. When writing, for example in Year 2, pupils were composing spells similar to those used in the story, 'Wilma the Witch'. They were able to use, by the end of the lesson, punctuation and bullet points very confidently in setting out their imaginatively conceived ingredients such as, 'a drop of milkshake' and 'a handful of butterflies'. The work was challenging, the pace brisk and the expectations were high; pupils responded with great enthusiasm. These strong factors account for the fact that pupils make excellent progress in their writing from a very low starting point at the beginning of their Reception Year and end up, in Year 2, achieving consistently well above the national average.

Teaching has a strong influence on the very good achievements that pupils make.

8. Teaching was recognised for its strengths at the time of the last inspection. Then, teaching was at least good in seven out of ten lessons. The quality of teaching has improved well since 1997 and now teaching is at least good throughout the school, with many examples of very good and occasionally excellent teaching. This is because the headteacher has deployed staff well to capitalise on their individual strengths. Furthermore, teaching assistants make a well qualified contribution to pupils' learning, the National Strategies for Literacy and Numeracy have been well incorporated into the school's own pattern of teaching and the formal monitoring and evaluation of lessons is effective.
9. This quality of teaching has a strong effect on what pupils' achieve, their attitudes and the way they behave. Lessons are very well planned and resources are used most effectively. The activities provided are lively, imaginative and very well suited to the needs of pupils in the school. Role play is used very effectively to develop learning, particularly in the Nursery and Reception classes. The expertise of the teachers in setting up areas for play results in children being fully engrossed in their learning, for example in the Victorian kitchen. The curriculum in general, which is very well constructed to include many additional activities of relevance to the pupils, is also an outcome of very good teaching and outstanding leadership.

10. However, there are less readily apparent aspects of teaching that also have a great influence on pupils' progress that need to be recognised for their worth. For example, the marking of pupils' work is not only regular and full of praise, but contains challenge, drive and demand. On occasions, teachers write comments such as, 'Come on – you can do better' at the end of a piece of work in a tone that expresses their desire for pupils to do as well as they can. Teachers clearly point out what needs to be improved and how pupils might go about the task and as a result there are many examples of rapid progress being made throughout the school. For example in September 2002 a pupil in Year 2 wrote a few lines only on a story theme about a crocodile who came to play, but by November that same pupil was writing at length in simple and longer sentences that incorporated speech, exclamation and question marks.
11. Pupils' reading standards are high not only because teachers are very good at ensuring that pupils can sound out letters and read whole words. They also, in a more long lasting way, instil a love of books into their pupils. Parents are very convinced that the school does a very good job in this respect. Pupils willingly take books home to read and parents state that they enjoy reading with them. The quality of the books is very good because the school has invested heavily in a wide range of suitable material.
12. Pupils who find learning difficult are catered for very well. They have a written individual education plan that contains clear, precise and manageable targets. Teachers use these targets very well when planning lessons. This results in tasks that are very well matched to pupils' needs in English and mathematics, in particular. Pupils' learning is even further enhanced by the very good use of teaching assistants for special educational needs. They work closely with the teachers and the children to ensure that pupils make very good progress in lessons.
13. Over and above all these separate points about teaching and its effect, the majority of lessons are characterised by a vigorous learning culture in which teachers and their pupils work well together to make sure that success is achieved. For example, the excellent management of a bread-baking lesson in a Reception class resulted in superb concentration by the children. Teaching was dedicated to ensuring that children's vocabulary was enlarged throughout the activities with new words such as, 'knead' being introduced at a fast pace. For their part, children were very keen to learn and took every opportunity to make their own links between the bread they were making and the toasting fork in their class's Victorian kitchen. Similarly, in Year 1 and Year 2 an excellent dialogue is often created between teacher and pupils; for example, in a science lesson in Year 1 where pupils experienced at first hand how shiny objects looked in a darkened cupboard with and without a light shining on them. The pupils really tried hard to talk about their observations as a result of skilful prompting from the teacher. Pupils also joined in very well in a short, sharp English session in Year 1 when they practised their daily words and invented sentences in which they could be used. Sometimes achievement is excellent because teaching confidently brings out the best in pupils, for example in an ICT lesson when pupils read an email about life in Nepal. This was also the case in a Year 2 mathematics lesson in which learning was enhanced by the way in which pupils worked in teams or pairs to wrestle with the topic of fractions and the teacher expertly helped them to summarise their findings towards the end.

The leadership shown by the headteacher, governors and staff establishes a very positive context for teaching, learning and the sustained high levels of attainment.

14. The headteacher's leadership and management skills were described in the last inspection report as outstanding. The staff, governors, parents and children were all part of a grand vision of achievement and pride in their success. This is still very much the case, despite the school having to manage some demanding and time-consuming national initiatives since 1997. The school was so successful five years ago that the headteacher was invited to meet Prince Charles at Highgrove with headteachers of other nationally outstanding schools. Success followed success and the school was subsequently written about, positively, in the 1994-8 OFSTED review of primary school inspection reports for its capacity to reflect on its own practice and make sensible improvements. Parents were proud of the school five years ago and they continue to

speak very highly of it. The vast majority of those who offered an opinion before the inspection spoke enthusiastically of the energy shown by all those who work in the school and the achievement made by their children.

15. The headteacher and governors have had to face some very challenging problems in the last few years and have managed them with thoroughness, wisdom and fortitude. Fewer births in the locality have resulted in fewer children in school and the subsequent threat of staff redundancy. This has been tackled in a very enlightened way that has involved staff in helping to find solutions. This year, for example, the headteacher has undertaken a teaching role for half the week in order to ease the situation. Despite this heavy commitment, the school has gone from strength to strength. For example, the extensive care for children has been extended to include after school arrangements and a pre-nursery group (Ramsden Robins), both of which demonstrate the school's dedication to supporting families and children by providing quality care and further opportunities for learning.
16. Teaching staff, teachers' assistants and governors all contribute strongly to the school's positive ethos. As a result, the relationships that exist in the school are warm, caring and very productive. The vast majority of parents who expressed their views before the inspection stated that teaching was very good and that the school works very well with parents, making them feel at ease in contacting the school about anything. Governors who are conscientious and keenly interested in the school are also very knowledgeable about the strengths of the school and what could be improved. They are closely involved in the school's development and evaluate its progress carefully. They manage the budget very well by ensuring that the school gets the best value from its funds. In essence, the governing body, like the rest of the school, has the high quality of pupils' care and learning at the centre of its affairs.
17. The school's development plan is a key document in the way that the school is managed, particularly in terms of building on the school's links with the community, pupils' personal development and issues related to teaching and learning. However, the theme of leadership that runs through the document is one of deployment and delegation. Teachers are very well deployed in a way that makes maximum use of their talent and expertise. Staff and governors assume their delegated responsibilities well, check progress and evaluate the results of their work. The headteacher's leadership is outstanding, not because one person does all the work; delegation is very successfully used to generate a wide commitment to the school's main tasks and central aims. This represents good improvement from the last inspection in the way that the leadership and management skills of staff members have been developed. For example, the national scheme for the staff's performance management is now managed successfully by a senior member of staff and not the headteacher.
18. The school believes that children learn best by being actively engaged in learning that demands the highest degree of hands-on involvement. Staff are strong advocates of the National Strategies for Literacy and Numeracy and make sure that, in their application, pupils are given as many problem solving and investigative assignments as possible. Learning is often conducted through very well managed educational play activities that ensure the solid development of the literacy and numeracy skills required. The headteacher is instrumental in giving the lead that guarantees that children's learning is managed so well that achievement flourishes.
19. There is a high degree of sharing within the school that has resulted in very collaborative teamwork. Staff have been quick to assume a delegated role of responsibility for a subject of the National Curriculum for example, but the underlying atmosphere in the school is one of collaboration and joint responsibility. This applies to support assistants as well, all of whom are involved in the school's management and whose views are actively sought over any matter related to the improvement of teaching and learning. Curriculum leadership, exhibited by the staff, is characterised by a high degree of teamwork, a wide knowledge of the various subjects or areas of learning, detailed planning for children's needs and a touch of inspiration to make learning fun, for example, in the way that the school grounds are used so well to promote learning.
20. Pupils' personal development, in respect of the spiritual, moral, social and cultural dimension, is

very well catered for as a result of the strong influence exerted by the headteacher and staff. They make sure that these aspects are well integrated into the curriculum and are introduced regularly into collective worship in ways that are thoroughly enjoyed by children.

The school provides very well for pupils' personal development and this has a strong effect on their attitudes to work and behaviour.

21. The school has created a powerful ethos of co-operation and effort. All adults expect that pupils will behave well, at all times and that they will be positive in lessons. In return pupils respond eagerly to these expectations. The headteacher and staff handle wisely pupils who are emotionally disturbed and who behave badly as a result. At their best, pupils behave very well, but the firm, fair and caring atmosphere of the school supports them securely when they cannot achieve this level of success.
22. Pupils' attitudes and behaviour in lessons are often very good. In eight out of ten lessons pupils are at least very good in the way that they pay attention and apply themselves. Reception class children, many of whom have had a very productive start in the Nursery class, are very confident when playing inside or outside. They are keen and alert to the requests of adults and willingly volunteer for jobs around the room. In a bread-making activity, for example, they all joined in very well throughout the session and offered continuously to help with the proceedings. They are capable of working independently due to the most productive relationships that they have formed with the adults around them. They are learning to concentrate and co-operate with one another in small groups. For example, children in the Nursery co-operated very well with each other in acting out the Nativity story. They enjoy the fun of learning that has been engineered by imaginative teaching. Children revel, for example, in a chance to play in the Victorian kitchen that is equipped with old-fashioned equipment such as dolly tubs and washboards, for them to try out.
23. The theme of co-operation, concentration and independence is developed to a high level of achievement as children progress through the school. In Year 1 and Year 2, pupils are at ease with their teachers and enjoy the warm relationships that come from generous praise and positive encouragement. This kind of atmosphere in class sets the climate for sustained interest and concentration. Pupils worked industriously and independently in Year 1, for example, producing well-presented letters to Santa Claus, because they were so fired up by the imaginative device of a 'Golden Envelope' into which they put their finished letters. Furthermore, their confidence grew enormously when asked to discuss the features of healthy eating. They took pride in passing on the knowledge that they had acquired and were very good at taking turns and listening to each other. In Year 2, sensitive teaching and the calming influence of exercises to promote mental focus, reflection and the generation of ideas, cause pupils to show very good and sometimes excellent attitudes. For example, at the end of a mathematics lesson a pupil who had responded well to the calming down exercises, said in a very reflective and mature tone, 'I've been thinking about meeting our numeracy targets....', almost as if the responsibility for the progress made by the class was on that child's shoulders.
24. At breaks, in assembly and in the dining room the pupils generally behave very well. It is easy to see why the parents consider that behaviour and the way in which children are encouraged to become mature and responsible to be strengths of the school. Older pupils relish the opportunity of carrying out administrative tasks around the school and acting as playground helpers. These helpers encourage younger children to play games; they deal with difficult situations and reward good behaviour. They take this role very seriously and it, in turn, has a powerful effect on their self-esteem and general personal development. One helper spoke maturely, in an assembly devoted to caring for others, about the playground helpers' scheme, saying, 'I like the way we can solve problems and make other children happy.'
25. By the time pupils are in Year 2 they use computers in a very independent and confident manner. In using Robbie the electronic robot in groups, they have learnt to share, assist others and deal with the feelings and opinions of others; ie. skills that a typical seven year old is expected to achieve. However, this represents very good achievement for pupils who were so lacking in social skills when they began school in the Nursery class. Pupils' excellent collaboration when using computers was demonstrated graphically when a class of Year 2 pupils was discussing the email that they had just received from a teacher who visits schools in Nepal. Their cultural education was assured, but moreover the real success of this was their obvious joy at such instant

communication; they spontaneously clapped the email on the screen in sheer wonder and collective enthusiasm.

The curriculum is rich, exciting and very relevant for all pupils.

26. The very good quality of the curriculum experienced by pupils is an important factor in their successful academic and personal development. The school incorporates into its programme many of the methods adopted by other schools, but it presents them in varied and exciting ways that give an added zest to learning. For example, the school uses the National Literacy Strategy, but does so in creative ways that result in pupils producing writing of high quality. Pupils in Year 2 had been writing fictional letters from the trenches in World War One, in the week before Remembrance Sunday. They were pretending to be soldiers who knew that their life was in extreme danger. Their powerful writing stood out as heart-rending communication. Pupils wrote plaintively, 'My body is hurting. I have to stand up and it is cold and damp.....My body is aching, but gunpowder is boiling my nostrils.'
27. Visits are very well used to extend pupils' experiences. Teachers organise these visits to broaden pupils' horizons in many interesting ways. For example, Reception class children visit a local Buddhist monastery and reflect on its peace and tranquillity. Children in the Nursery class extend their knowledge of local houses and shops by drawing what they have seen on short walks in the vicinity. This very good use of the locality continues into Year 1 and Year 2. These pupils visit, for example, Grizedale forest to see the sculptures or take the train to Grange-over-Sands to discover another stretch of local coastline. Furthermore, to fire their imagination they look across at the ruined castle on Piel Island. A great deal of thought and planning goes into this well orchestrated plan of visits. The objectives are well met. Pupils show a fascination for their locality and its rich cultural diversity.
28. The school prides itself, justifiably, on having a strong multicultural and multi-faith aspect to its curriculum. World religions and their festivals are incorporated well into the life of the school. Christianity, Judaism and Buddhism are all part of the pupils' experience. Children know, for example, the significance of the Jewish candles used at Chanukah, while being fully involved in thinking about the Christian Nativity. Pupils are used to thinking about the life that people lead in other parts of the world. In one very productive project, for example, pupils created African landscapes using a variety of art techniques including printing, while listening to traditional African music.
29. Educational play is used very well to help pupils experience important parts of the curriculum. Pupils in Year 1, for example, practise writing and reading letter sounds in the class optician's shop. They have plenty of opportunities to develop physically using the climbing apparatus or exercise their imaginations in the wooden chalet in the 'quad' while pretending to be in a hotel or a school. They can even try their hand at gardening by planting daffodils, for example, in the well-appointed and much valued school garden.
30. There are lots of visitors in school who help the pupils understand more about the world in which they live. For example, visiting fire fighters and police officers broaden pupils' interest in people who help us. Drama and role-play is developed by the opportunity to watch theatre groups or professional puppeteers.
31. Pupils' interest in the curriculum is enhanced by the way in which many activities are interconnected. Older pupils, for example, are studying Mexico in geography, particularly the earthquakes that occur there. Pupils are then making some superb Mexican masks in design and technology, taking great care to design them first and write about the process undertaken. Homework, in general, is very well organised and plays a significant part in extending and enriching the curriculum. Breadth of experience is further ensured by the provision of choir, recorder and ICT clubs, for example.
32. The school's varied curriculum works on many levels to excite the pupils' interest. At one level they can be contemplating life in Nepal, visiting an avant-garde art exhibition in Barrow-in-Furness or visiting the local lifeboat station. However, at another level, the most ordinary of activities has a

great deal of potential. For example, as part of the extended curriculum for physical education, pupils were taken to the local ten-pin bowling alley. They had to learn how to score, count their fallen pins and work out the techniques most conducive to achieving a strike. The potential for learning was enormous, well backed up by similarly demanding physical tasks such as country dancing and orienteering in the school grounds.

WHAT COULD BE IMPROVED

The management and use made of assessment in subjects beyond English, mathematics and science to help improve pupils' achievements even further.

33. The school was praised at the time of the last inspection for the methods it used to assess pupils' work and their level of attainment. This was also the reason why it was recognised by OFSTED in its review of inspection reports written between 1994 and 1998. These positive comments applied to procedures in place for English, mathematics and science and is still one of the reasons why pupils do so well in these subjects. Teachers have a very close knowledge of what pupils can do and what they need to do to improve. There have also been some good improvements since the last inspection in this area. The school has successfully reviewed its procedures and refined them where necessary. For example, pupils' work is closely monitored and assessed every half term and the results of this are placed on the school's computer network for all staff to see. It has also put in place the much needed assessment system for subjects beyond English, mathematics and science.
34. However, the new system depends primarily on pupils being assessed at the end of a series of lessons against one question or statement that is designed to demonstrate whether they have understood the work or not. For example, in history, pupils in Year 2 are assessed as to whether they can, 'use common words and phrases related to the passing of time.' This is an acceptable system, but it is pitched at what an average pupil might achieve and therefore those capable of higher attainment and those unable to achieve it are not judged so precisely. This reservation does not apply in English, mathematics and science because teachers use the National Curriculum level descriptors very well to judge whether pupils are attaining at a level above that which a typical seven year old should achieve. There are level descriptors for other subjects but these are not currently being used in school. Higher attaining pupils, for example, could achieve even better if the school incorporated these into its assessment system.
35. Currently, at a school management level, co-ordinators for subjects beyond English, mathematics and science do not have a clear view of how those pupils capable of higher attainment, for example, could improve and what teachers' planning for lessons would need to incorporate for this to happen. Their files demonstrate that they have a very detailed knowledge of every aspect of their subject except the results of assessment and how these results could be used to improve pupils' work. It is not possible, therefore, for co-ordinators to say, annually, what standards are like in their subject and what their action plan is to improve them. This weakens the school's development plan because co-ordinators are not able to be precise about how standards need to improve from year to year.
36. The school has just begun to put in place a system of assessment in lessons whereby pupils are set targets to reach and rewarded when they reach them. The pupils are involved in this because they are asked whether they think they have achieved the target and if so how well. Since this system is in its infancy, different methods are being tried throughout the school and some classes are only just starting the project without a great deal to show as yet. The use of the discussion period at the end of lessons is not uniformly good at the moment. This is a time when pupils can discuss how well they have done, but sometimes teachers do too much talking and pupils' have too little time in which to reflect on their learning and practise their skills in speaking. Very occasionally, the lesson objectives are not communicated clearly to pupils and therefore they have nothing to measure their success against in the discussion period at the end. Furthermore, there are a few lessons in English and mathematics where those pupils capable of higher attainment are not set demanding enough targets, but generally their needs are catered for well and they achieve

very well.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

To improve standards further, the headteacher, staff and governors, with support from the local education authority, should:

- (i) Improve the management and use made of assessment in subjects beyond English, mathematics and science by:
 - devising a system related to the National Curriculum levels of attainment and the requirements for religious education, to judge the success of higher, average and lower attaining pupils; and
 - ensuring that co-ordinators collect and evaluate assessments annually in order to recognise achievements and advise about necessary improvements.

(paragraphs 33 – 36)

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	18
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	11

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very Good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Number	2	10	6	0	0	0	0
Percentage	11	56	33	0	0	0	0

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

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll	Nursery	YR – Y2
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	19.5	130
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	N/A	51

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs	Nursery	YR – Y2
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	0	1
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	10	41

English as an additional language	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	3

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	14

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	6.2
National comparative data	5.6

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	25	22	47

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	25	24	24
	Girls	22	22	22
	Total	47	46	46
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	100 (88)	98 (98)	98 (98)
	National	84 (84)	86 (86)	90 (91)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	24	24	25
	Girls	22	22	22
	Total	46	46	37
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	98 (88)	98 (90)	100 (96)
	National	85 (85)	89 (89)	89 (89)

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

Ethnic background of pupils

Categories used in the Annual School Census
White – British
White – Irish
White – any other White background
Mixed – White and Black Caribbean
Mixed – White and Black African
Mixed – White and Asian
Mixed – any other mixed background
Asian or Asian British - Indian
Asian or Asian British - Pakistani
Asian or Asian British – Bangladeshi
Asian or Asian British – any other Asian background
Black or Black British – Caribbean
Black or Black British – African
Black or Black British – any other Black background
Chinese
Any other ethnic group
No ethnic group recorded

Exclusions in the last school year

No of pupils on roll	Number of fixed period exclusions	Number of permanent exclusions
86	0	0
0	0	0
0	0	0
0	0	0
0	0	0
0	0	0
0	0	0
0	0	0
0	0	0
0	0	0
0	0	0
0	0	0
1	0	0
0	0	0
1	0	0
0	0	0
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 – Y2

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	7
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	21.6
Average class size	22

Education support staff: YR – Y2

Total number of education support staff	5
Total aggregate hours worked per week	50

Qualified teachers and support staff: nursery

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	0.5
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	39
Total number of education support staff	1.5
Total aggregate hours worked per week	48.5
Number of pupils per FTE adult	20

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Financial information

Financial year	2001/2
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	£
Total income	407, 294
Total expenditure	397, 730
Expenditure per pupil	2, 486
Balance brought forward from previous year	12, 156
Balance carried forward to next year	21, 720

Recruitment of teachers

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

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	170
Number of questionnaires returned	76

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	84	14	1	0	0
My child is making good progress in school.	84	16	0	0	0
Behaviour in the school is good.	62	37	0	0	1
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	53	34	3	0	1
The teaching is good.	89	11	0	0	0
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	67	28	5	0	0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	87	12	1	0	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	76	21	0	0	3
The school works closely with parents.	68	28	1	0	1
The school is well led and managed.	86	12	0	0	3
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	80	18	0	0	1
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	49	32	5	0	11