

INSPECTION REPORT

YARLSIDE PRIMARY SCHOOL

LEA area: Cumbria

Unique reference number: 112214

Headteacher: Mrs B Lowes

Reporting inspector: E Jackson
3108

Dates of inspection: 16th – 19th June 2003

Inspection number: 247197

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, with nursery
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	3 – 11
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Red Oak Avenue Barrow-in-Furness
Postcode:	LA13 0LH
Telephone number:	01229 894610
Fax number:	01229 894677
Appropriate authority:	Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr C Smith
Date of previous inspection:	February 1998

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members			Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
3108	E Jackson	Registered inspector	English as an additional language Mathematics Art and design Design and technology French Physical education.	What sort of school is it? How high are standards? How well are children taught? How well is the school led and managed?
9952	L Brock	Lay inspector		Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development. How well does the school care for its children? How well does the school work in partnership with parents?
30651	M Entwistle	Team inspector	Foundation Stage Science Geography History Music	How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to children?
32363	S Gale	Team inspector	English Information and communication technology Religious education	Educational inclusion Special educational needs

The inspection contractor was:

Schoolhaus Limited
Suite 17
BPS Business Centre
Brake Lane
Boughton
Newark
Nottinghamshire
NG22 9HQ

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?	15
HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?	17
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?	22
PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS	23
PART D: THE STANDARDS AND QUALITY OF TEACHING IN AREAS OF THE CURRICULUM, SUBJECTS AND COURSES	28

PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Yarlside is an average-sized primary school with 241 children on roll and a part-time nursery for 26 children. Although some socio-economic indicators are broadly average, eligibility for free school meals is well below average. Children's attainment at entry to the school varies year on year, and covers a wide range, but is broadly average. Almost all the children come from white families, but there is a small number of children of minority ethnic heritage. A few of these children learn English as an additional language. The percentage of children with special educational needs is broadly average, as is the number with a statement of need. These needs range from specific and moderate learning difficulties, to hearing and physical disabilities. The school is part of a Barrow-wide Education Action Zone (EAZ), including work in the school on critical skills, philosophy for primary children, behaviour management and the development of writing skills. The school is in the middle of a major training initiative for its teachers as part of the EAZ work in critical skills. The school has had staff absences, some for prolonged periods, including the head teacher.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

Yarlside Primary offers the children a satisfactory education with some good features. The head teacher provides clear leadership in pushing through the EAZ initiatives, with support from the staff and a committed team of governors. The school is soundly managed. The staff provide a good curriculum, enriched by a wide range of visits, visitors and 'challenge' activities as part of the development of children's critical thinking skills. This has led this year to above average attainment in reading, writing and science by age seven, and well above average levels in English and mathematics by age eleven. Teaching and learning are satisfactory overall. Children in the nursery and reception classes, Year 2 and Year 6 make good and sometimes very good progress because the teaching in these classes is generally good, sometimes very good, and occasionally excellent. The school provides sound value for money.

What the school does well

- Standards have risen this year to be above average by seven in reading, writing and science, and well above average in English and mathematics by age eleven.
- Teaching is good in the nursery and the reception classes and Years 2 and 6 so children here make good progress.
- The support staff make a good contribution to the learning and progress of those children with special needs, and those few learning English as an additional language.
- The curriculum helps children develop problem-solving skills well and provides them with a wide range of interesting activities.
- Provision for children's social and cultural development is good.

What could be improved

- Progress in some years because of weaknesses in teaching, including the pace of lessons and the management of children's behaviour.
- The use of information gained from monitoring and evaluating the work of the school to plan and take effective action to improve areas of weakness.
- The space available for teaching and learning overall, and for the teaching of information and communication technology (ICT).

The areas for improvement will form the basis of the governors' action plan. Aspects of all of these are covered in the current school improvement plan.

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

The school was last inspected in 1998, and has made satisfactory improvement since then. In some areas of its work, including the key issues from that inspection, it has made good progress. The quality of the school's work has been maintained in most aspects, but not in others. There have been good improvements in both the provision for and standards in ICT. The staff are generally more confident in their own skills, so help the children more effectively, and the subject leader has a good grip on the further development needed. The governing body has become more closely involved in monitoring the school's work, and now agrees plans that are costed and include success criteria. However,

the governing body does not yet evaluate the information it receives sufficiently in its role of 'critical friend'. Standards by age seven have been maintained since the last inspection. By age eleven, standards have improved, although results in national tests have fluctuated year on year. The quality of teaching and learning has declined, and there is now some unsatisfactory teaching, unlike at the last inspection, particularly in physical education. However, the good quality of the curriculum and support for children with special needs has been maintained. Pupils' standard of behaviour has declined to be satisfactory from having been very good, and children's attitudes to their work vary from being very good in some classes to being unsatisfactory in others. The addition of a nursery has been a good improvement, and the quality of education for these children is good, as it is in reception. Some of the recent initiatives as part of the school's involvement in the EAZ have good potential, but have so far had a variable impact on the quality of education offered.

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				<i>Key</i>
	all schools			similar schools	
	2000	2001	2002	2002	
English	C	E	A	C	well above average A above average B average C below average D well below average E
Mathematics	C	E	B	C	
Science	D	D	C	D	

Results in national tests vary considerably year on year at both seven and eleven years of age. In 2002, the school's results for pupils aged eleven were above the national average overall, and in line with those in schools in similar circumstances. This was a big improvement on the previous year's results, which were well below average overall. This year, standards by age eleven are well above average in English and mathematics, and above average in science, showing further improvement. Standards for seven year olds are above average in reading and writing, and average in mathematics. The trend in the school's performance is slightly below the rate of improvement nationally, mainly because girls' attainment has fallen from well above average for girls nationally at the last inspection to below average in the 2002 tests. The children make good progress in the nursery and reception classes, especially in personal, social and emotional development and in reading, writing and mathematics. The school meets its challenging targets and so ensures improvement year on year. By age 11, children achieve well in English and mathematics, science, ICT, art and design, design and technology (based on Year 5 observation), and gymnastics, and by age seven in English, science and design and technology. In other subjects achievement is satisfactory and standards are broadly average. Progress in learning and achievement are good in the nursery and the reception class, in Years 2 and 6, and for those with special needs and those few learning English as an additional language. However, progress in learning is variable across the school, and too slow at the beginning of key stages 1 and 2, and in physical education. Support for gifted and talented pupils from the head teacher is good.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Good, but varies from class to class. Very good in the nursery, reception, Year 2 and Year 6. Children are generally enthusiastic when lessons are interesting.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Satisfactory overall. Often good and occasionally excellent in lessons, but varies with the quality of teaching. Good behaviour at play and lunchtimes, although supervision of children entering and leaving school in the morning and at playtime is not always tight enough.
Personal development and relationships	Satisfactory. In some classes, children co-operate well in pairs and groups, and develop good personal skills. In others, the teachers do not manage these aspects

	effectively enough. The school and class councils make a good contribution to developing a sense of responsibility.
Attendance	Well above the national average, having a positive effect on learning. The school does not sufficiently emphasise the need for better time keeping.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

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

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

The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory but there is room for improvement in some classes. In the best lessons, the interweaving of the focus on critical thinking skills and the teachers' high expectations of children's behaviour and progress, allied to good classroom management even in cramped spaces, leads to exciting and rapid learning for the children. For example, a class council meeting in the reception class involved all these young children in discussion and decision-making about new playground equipment that was very good for their age. Similarly, in Year 6, children responded very well to a mathematical challenge that engaged all of them successfully, and also stretched a group of very high attaining children effectively. Where teaching is unsatisfactory, the pace of the lesson is often spoilt because too much time is spent dealing with inappropriate behaviour, or trying to gain children's interest when they have become bored or begun to chatter. This is because appropriate classroom routines are not well established in these classes, or the teacher's relationship with the class is not authoritative enough, as in some physical education lessons. Provision for pupils with special educational needs, and for those few learning English as an additional language, is effective. Systems are well established, and both teaching and non-teaching staff work successfully as a team to meet the needs of the pupils. Literacy is satisfactorily taught, as is English. Numeracy is taught well, and children make good progress and achieve well in mathematics. A variety of useful training activities have taken place for teaching and support staff. Specialist teachers and other external providers support the school well.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Good, with several strengths. Meets all statutory requirements, and is broad and balanced. Enrichment is strong, and EAZ initiatives are improving work in some classes. However, links are not drawn sufficiently between subjects.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Good. The support team is enthusiastic and dedicated, offering good, focused support to identified children. Support from outside agencies is also used well to help these children make progress in their learning.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	Good. Children learning English as an additional language are well integrated, and given specific help that ensures good progress. They are confident and happy in the school.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural, development	Good. The programme for personal, social, health and citizenship education is good, and improved by work on critical skills and philosophy for children. Provision for social and cultural development is good, and is sound for moral and spiritual development. Children enjoy taking responsibility.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Good procedures, and governors are fully involved in risk assessment. Child protection procedures are good. Good procedures for managing behaviour, but not always carried through effectively. Generally, a caring school.

The school's partnership with parents is satisfactory, and there is a range of good procedures for its work with them, including effective documentation and opportunities for formal consultation. Many parents are involved in school, as governors or helpers.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the head teacher and other key staff	Sound. The head teacher pushes through agreed developments to improve the school's work. Most key staff fulfil their roles effectively, such as for the Foundation Stage, English and mathematics. Most aspects of management work satisfactorily, but some systems are too slack.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Improved. Good overview of the school, and governors fulfil their duties satisfactorily. Many governors are involved and committed as subject partners with co-ordinators but do not evaluate the information they receive about teaching and learning and standards critically enough.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Satisfactory. Much data is collected, but the evaluation of key information about parents' views, teaching and learning, management, and behaviour does not always lead to effective action. The improvement of writing is a good example of when this works well.
The strategic use of resources	Good. Governors check expenditure to ensure best value, and use money and other resources effectively. Good initiatives have been taken for cleaning and meals contracts.

Staffing is adequate, and support staffing good, helping children well in lessons. Learning resources have improved to be good now, and are used effectively to support learning. The accommodation is used effectively but has weaknesses: class space; separation of nursery and reception classes; access to ICT resources; space for project work; accessibility for those with impaired mobility. These limit children's learning opportunities, and restrict storage of ongoing work. However, class space for the younger children is satisfactory, and used well, and there are good grounds and outdoor play areas, shared well with the community outside school hours.

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 school expects their children to work hard and achieve their best. • Children are helped to become mature and responsible. • Parents are generally pleased with the standards achieved. • The support for children with special needs, and for gifted or talented children. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Homework arrangements. • The information they receive about their children's progress. • Aspects of leadership and management. • The range of activities outside lessons.

There was much critical comment from the 12 parents at the meeting prior to the inspection, and this was reflected to a degree through the 58 questionnaires returned. In general, the inspection confirms the parents' positive views, but also finds evidence to support some of the criticisms about communication, aspects of the management of the school, and behaviour. However, the quality of information to parents from the school is good, and the range of activities outside lessons, including day and residential visits, is also good.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and pupils' achievements

1. The children make good progress in the nursery and reception classes, especially in personal, social and emotional development and in reading, writing and mathematics. They achieve above average levels in these areas by age five, and also meet the nationally recommended levels in the other areas of learning. This is because the staff provide good learning experiences, firmly based in the national guidance for children of this age. For example, developing the children's skills in early writing is very well linked to talk and discussion, often recorded for the children on flip charts so that they accept writing as a regular form of communication. In mathematical development, children in the reception class count reliably up to ten and beyond, know how to double single-digit numbers, and count backwards accurately. This is good for their age.
2. Attainment at seven and eleven varies year on year. This is partly due to the different levels of attainment at entry, and also to the changing circumstances of the school. For example, there have been a number of staff changes in recent years, and a number of staff absences.
3. The school's results by age eleven in 2002 were above the national average, and in line with those in schools in similar circumstances, from being well below average overall in 2001. This year attainment by age eleven has improved further to be well above average in English and mathematics, and above average in science. Results in national tests have gone up and down at both seven and eleven years of age for the past few years. For example, results for seven year olds fell from well above average in reading, writing and mathematics in 2001 to only above average in reading, and average in writing and mathematics in 2002, well below results in similar schools in writing, and below them in mathematics. This year, test results for seven year olds are above average in reading and writing, and average in mathematics.
4. Those children with special educational needs are well supported, and make good progress. Although some of them attain levels below expectations for their age, a number of them make sufficient progress to attain close to average levels. Similarly, those few children learning English as an additional language make good progress, and those who have been in the school for some time work at good levels across the curriculum, using English effectively as bi-lingual learners.
5. By age seven, attainment in English is good, and by eleven it is very good. This year, there has been a marked improvement in the number of children achieving the higher than expected Level 3 by the end of Year 2, and a high proportion of pupils have attained the above average Level 5 at the end of Year 6. Year 6 pupils read fluently and with real enjoyment, and the school works hard to widen the scope and range of books and other texts that they read. Writing has improved well at both seven and eleven in response to targeted developments. For example, in a poetry club led by the headteacher, techniques and skills learned in class were extended so that children offered each other positive and insightful comments about their work.
6. In mathematics, standards are broadly average by age seven, and well above average by age eleven. This represents good improvement on last year's results in national tests by the end of Year 6. In a lesson in Year 2, children worked on number challenges to extend sequences and patterns. This work stretched many of them, but with good support from the teacher and the support assistant, they made good progress. Similarly, children in Year 6 tackled a challenge requiring the application of a variety of calculations to achieve a target in a competitive situation. Higher attaining children set a problem for the

rest of the class skilfully, and demonstrated confident knowledge and understanding of number operations beyond their years.

7. Standards in science are improving for both seven and eleven year olds, and are now just above average. The performance of Year 6 pupils in national testing improved from below average in 2000 to average in 2002, as almost half the pupils reached the higher levels. Boys achieved higher levels than girls. The work of pupils currently in Year 6 shows that they have understanding and knowledge that are slightly above those in most other schools by the end of year, because of good teaching during the year. Younger pupils have also made good progress by the end of Year 2, and although teacher assessment places them around the average mark, the quality of their recorded work and spoken understanding is better than this.
8. The trend in the school's results is slightly below the national improvement, mainly because girls' attainment has fallen from well above average for girls nationally at the last inspection to below average in the 2002 tests. This is not so evident this year, and boys and girls in Year 6 attain well, although the highest achievers in mathematics and science are boys. The school has achieved its targets for attainment by age eleven last year, and appears to have achieved them this year. This represents good progress from a low point in 2001.
9. By age 11, children achieve well in art and design, design and technology (based on Year 5), and gymnastics in PE, and by age seven in design and technology. In other subjects, achievement is satisfactory. A success story for the school is in the improvements in ICT, where attainment is average by seven, and above average by eleven. There is a good emphasis on skills teaching, so that children in Year 6 confidently write control programs to switch lights on and off, for example. However, achievement in most subjects is variable across the school, as the pace of learning varies from class to class. It is best in the nursery, reception, Year 2 and Year 6 classes. The speed of progress is often too slow at the beginning of Key Stages 1 and 2, and in physical education.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

10. Pupils' attitudes to school and their attendance are good. Their behaviour, personal development and relationships with others are satisfactory. Pupils are enthusiastic about school and show a keen interest and involvement in activities.
11. Pupils walk into school smiling and enjoy all that the school provides. Children in the nursery and reception classes have very good attitudes to learning, settle quickly into the daily routines and play happily together. Jobs for the day are allocated in the nursery and children take responsibility for tidying up and sharing activities. In the reception class, attitudes to learning were excellent as children made decisions as a class council on the type of play equipment they would like to buy. Year 2 pupils showed good attitudes to their work as they designed a winding mechanism to help 'Incy Wincy Spider' to climb the water spout. The school's involvement in the critical skills initiative is beginning to have an impact on some pupils' learning, as when Year 6 pupils embarked on a problem-solving exercise in the school grounds. The teacher skilfully made the link with problem solving in mathematics as pupils conducted a review and evaluation of their own learning about solving problems involving ratio.
12. Pupils' behaviour is satisfactory in most lessons but in almost one in ten it is unsatisfactory or poor. Pupils generally behave well when moving around school and in the playground. Examples of good, very good and occasionally excellent behaviour were seen in lessons in the Foundation Stage classes and in Years 2 and 6. However, when pupils are not actively involved in practical tasks or when lessons lack pace and challenge, behaviour deteriorates and pupils' concentration wanders. This is also the case when children are not supervised closely enough at the start of the day, or when leaving the classroom at playtimes. Some teachers are skilled at capturing and maintaining pupils' interest. For example, pupils in Year 2 enjoyed writing humorous poetry and were so enthralled and involved in their work that they behaved very well and achieved success. In the playground, play is lively and happy and no examples of

aggressive or inappropriate behaviour were observed. Pupils enjoy receiving rewards and understand the reasons when sanctions are imposed. There have been no exclusions from school in the past ten years.

13. Pupils' personal development is satisfactory and is improving as a result of the various initiatives in school. Through the critical skills project and the philosophy for children initiative, pupils in some classes are learning to co-operate and collaborate with a real team spirit to meet 'challenges' in both their academic work and their personal and social education. Class councils and the school council give good opportunities for pupils' personal development. The school council is very active in providing pupils with a voice in the school and it has raised funds for playtime equipment and for charities as well as conducting a risk assessment of the premises. Most pupils get on well with each other and with their teachers and are learning to respect and value the beliefs of others. The personal and social education programme is giving pupils the skills and knowledge to make decisions that will affect their lives in and out of school.
14. Pupils' attendance is good, and well above the national average. There is no recorded unauthorised absence. However, many pupils have a casual attitude to arriving at school on time. During the inspection, pupils came into school up to ten minutes late with no apparent concern for the disruption they cause to lessons. There was no apparent urgency to resolve this in the school during the inspection.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?

15. Teaching is satisfactory. There is some high quality teaching in some year groups, but there is also some unsatisfactory teaching. It is this inconsistency in teaching in the infants and the juniors that reduces its quality to being less strong than it was at the last inspection. Good teaching in the Foundation Stage and very effective teaching in Years 2 and 6 pulls up pupils' rate of learning in these year groups and is a significant factor in pupils' good attainment.
16. The school has had a prolonged period of disruption due to staff absence through illness. The effects of the absences in particular are cited by the school as disruptive of routines and organisation, criticised strongly by a minority of parents. The classroom accommodation is cramped for the junior classes, and this affects some children's concentration. It also limits children's opportunities when they need more space for group or project work.
17. The staff are in the middle of a major training initiative as part of the EAZ work in critical skills, and teaching philosophy for children. The initiatives to promote more thoughtful and challenging approaches to teaching and learning have the potential to transform the way that staff and children interact, and the progress children make.
18. Indeed, in Year 2 and Year 6, where both teachers have achieved the second level of training in promoting pupils' critical thinking skills, and are confident in their general organisation and management, the quality of teaching and learning is high. The challenging approach here has added different levels of stimulus and independence for the children. For example, a class council meeting in the reception class involved them in talking about new playground equipment and was very good for their age. In a Year 2 design and technology lesson, children worked well to design winding machinery using a pulley, whilst others used saws to cut wood in preparation for the construction of the models. This was at a good level for their age, and children developed specific skills in the subject well.
19. In an outstanding lesson, the Year 6 teacher, building on high quality previous work using a variety of artists' approaches in portraiture, inspired the children to portray one of the teaching staff from photographs: a wickedly engaging idea for these mature eleven year olds. The challenge, as part of critical skills development, was to use the style of one of the focus artists. Because the teacher's relationship with, and expectations of, the class were outstanding, she wasted no time in setting them off, and they devoured the task with great enthusiasm, concentration, and purposeful discussion, fully including those with special needs, or learning English as an additional language. Personal development and

independence were strongly reinforced as children chose a wide variety of media to realise their ideas. A teaching assistant supported a group of lower attaining pupils very well, including one with severe learning difficulties, insisting that they choose how they worked for themselves. The children, boys and girls, achieved well above average levels for their age, showing great technical skill, very good knowledge of the artist's style, and great imagination. The lesson built on and extended previous work skilfully, with high intelligence, using the techniques from critical skills learning very purposefully.

20. However, where teachers lack confidence in the new methods or they are not applied properly, the desired positive effect is lost because of a lack of basic class management and control. The pace of the lesson is often spoilt because too much time is spent dealing with inappropriate behaviour, or trying to gain children's interest when they have become bored or begun to chatter. This is mainly because appropriate classroom routines are not well established, or the teacher's relationship with the class is not authoritative enough. The needs of the higher attaining children are not always met, and more challenge is required in some lessons. The teaching and learning in physical education are unsatisfactory overall, although outstanding work was seen in Year 6. The weaknesses mainly relate to weak organisation of the lessons, and unsatisfactory control of the pupils.
21. The teachers' planning of lessons and activities in the nursery is very good, and good in the reception class. Nursery plans for each half term are imaginatively based around a theme. They are detailed and show when each of the areas of learning will be taught, referring to the stepping stones leading to the Early Learning Goals. Assessment is of an exceptionally good quality, and adds to the good teaching because observations feed into the subsequent planning. Planning and assessment in the reception class are good. The recently appointed teacher has shown commitment and skill in following the school's planning systems effectively.
22. The standard of English and literacy teaching and learning across the school is satisfactory, although much better in some classes. Where teaching is good, teachers share the learning objective for the lesson with the children, they have good knowledge of the subject, and the pace of the lesson allows children to make effective progress in their learning. This has led to the good improvements seen this year, particularly in writing. The school has begun to adapt the national guidance on teaching literacy to its children's needs effectively in most cases. For example, the head teacher works with a higher attaining group of Year 2 children to push their English work to higher levels than expected for their age. In the weaker lessons, however, learning tasks do not meet the precise learning needs of different groups of children effectively, and in some there is an over-reliance on inappropriate worksheets.
23. The quality of teaching and learning in mathematics and numeracy is good overall, but varies from being satisfactory to outstanding. Children develop sound numeracy skills in the infants, building effectively on work in the nursery and reception classes. In a very good lesson with Year 2 children, the teacher and support assistant helped all the class to improve their skills in finding number patterns and sequences. The teacher spotted that some children had become confused, and skilfully ran through the task with them to set them on the right track again. Teaching in Year 4 used the information gained from marking the children's work from the previous day to set new tasks in understanding symmetrical relationships between shapes using one line of symmetry. This was effective in challenging the different groups at their own level, and higher attaining children had to think very carefully in order to complete their task. In Year 6, the teacher's confident and demanding relationship with the class leads to high quality work at high levels for their age. However, the marking of pupils' work is variable across the school, and the recording and presentation of work in books are not consistent from class to class.
24. In science, the quality of teaching is sound, but stronger in some classes. The effective teachers find a range of ways to make science interesting, so that pupils say they enjoy science. In good lessons, planning is exemplary, and, in Year 6 especially, resources are beautifully produced and highly motivating. The organisation is smoothly effortless because of this. The teaching assistants give very good support, as for instance in sharing laboratory roles within the Year 6 criminal investigation lesson, and in supporting pupils

with a special educational need in Year 2. Good questioning helps the pupils to explain what they have found out and make comparisons. The teachers mark the pupils' work very carefully, encouraging them to make connections between one set of skills or body of knowledge to another.

25. Teaching and learning in ICT have improved to be at least satisfactory and in some classes they are good. Staff training has been effective and most staff have a sound knowledge of the required skills and how to teach them, although some teachers still lack confidence. Learning assistants provide good support to pupils. The best practice is found in Year 2 and Year 6. There are some difficulties for the staff and children because the reception and Year 5 classrooms house a good proportion of the ICT equipment. This necessitates swapping classrooms, or another class using the ICT resources whilst the host class is at physical education, and limits full access for a number of children, slowing their progress. The children's achievement in these circumstances is good.
26. Provision for pupils with special educational needs, and for those few learning English as an additional language, is effective. Systems are well established, and both teaching and support staff work successfully as a team to meet the needs of the pupils. Effective training has taken place for the support staff, and they comment that they feel valued and effective in their roles. Specialist teachers and other external providers support the children well.
27. Class teachers are involved in setting targets for individual education plans for children with special educational needs, and targets and teaching strategies are appropriately linked to class work.
28. Provision for pupils identified as gifted and talented is very good in those sessions specifically designed for them. They are identified from the nursery upwards and an extended support programme is planned, although the process for assessing progress is not fully in place. Currently, pupils follow a programme of work with the head teacher which is literacy based and which includes some of the strategies introduced through the critical skills programme – mind mapping, for example. With four other local schools, they are involved with a variety of activities, including 'challenges' at the weekly Saturday School. The portfolio of their work is of a very high standard. Although the head teacher encourages all pupils to 'aim high' this is not reflected in some lessons where the needs of the more able pupils are not met, and where more challenge is required.

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

29. The school has a good curriculum, broad and balanced, with several strengths, some of which are new since the last inspection.
 - The critical skills programme offers the teachers a coherent teaching and learning strategy that has the potential for unifying and energising the whole curriculum. This is already effective in some classes, especially where the staff have attended the second level of training.
 - The influence of the Education Action Zone and the introduction of its philosophy for children initiative are enhancing pupils' thinking skills across the subjects in those classes where teachers are confident in its application.
 - Teachers and teaching assistants work together well to make sure those pupils with a special educational need, or with English as an additional language, achieve well.
 - The range of extra-curricular and enrichment activities is very good.
 - There is a balanced personal, social and health education programme, and the critical skills and philosophy for children programmes make a good contribution to citizenship.
 - The school takes seriously its responsibility to prepare its pupils for life in a multi-cultural, multi-faith society.

30. However, the curriculum does not flourish as well as it should, given the good features in its construction, and where teaching is least effective it does not have sufficient impact on the children's attitudes to learning, or their behaviour.
31. A number of factors help to explain this.
- The impact of new initiatives has not yet been evaluated sufficiently .
 - The critical skills programme is not always used appropriately by those teachers who are less certain of its philosophy and intentions or whose class management is weak.
 - Some teachers do not link work in history, geography, design and technology, art and music to learning in literacy, numeracy and ICT consistently enough, so that opportunities are lost to connect children's development of skills and knowledge in related areas.
32. The recently introduced critical skills programme is a central feature of the curriculum. It is intended to bind the school together through a common approach to teaching and learning, and raise achievement. Currently, this is successful for those classes where the staff have embraced and use its principles skilfully. Throughout the building, displays remind pupils and staff that Yarlside is a 'learning community' and working together collaboratively is a common feature of lessons. The concept of 'challenge' is used in most subjects, although at times it creates an undesirable uniform approach in all activities that lessens its impact for the children. In classes where the teaching is not strong, the programme is not well embedded and often distracts rather than supports learning.
33. A success of the curriculum is the sense of community and inclusion that is developing. In those classes where the staff have embraced the methods well, the critical skills ethos of group work identifies everyone as an expert with a special gift, and pupils work well in mixed groups of more and less competent pupils. This approach helps to include well those pupils with special educational needs. The special needs co-ordinator gives good advice, so that, in literacy and numeracy particularly, the work is set at the right level for these pupils, and classroom assistants give high quality support. The teachers of the two pupils who speak English as an additional language are conscientious about involving them and improving their English. Gifted and talented pupils are identified, and as part of their timetabled work as a group, are learning to assess their own learning and set themselves targets.
34. As at the time of the last inspection, the curriculum is enriched by a good programme of visits, community participation and extra-curricular activities. Year 6 pupils picked this out as a key feature of the school. For example, the whole school listened with empathy as Year 3 pupils shared the thrills and joys of a residential visit. A variety of out-of-school clubs extends the curricular entitlement. As well as the more usual sporting clubs, there are poetry, computer, newspaper and art clubs. There is also an after-school care club on site. Links with the community are plentiful. The school has secured a business partner to support the school's ICT provision. The choir sings at the local residential home for the elderly and the hospital at Christmas and there are links with local charities. Visitors to the school include a parent governor who gave a valuable science lesson during the inspection week, an optician, and a nurse to talk about drugs education. A teacher of Egyptian dance taught the girls in Year 3 a simple dance, as is the tradition, so they left the hall glowing with pride and high self-esteem. These events make a strong contribution to the pupils' personal and social development, as well as their learning.
35. Occasionally, children miss their full entitlement to physical education lessons in some classes because lessons are curtailed due to inappropriate behaviour. However, the good use of the school's extensive grounds for play and lunchtimes gives children wider opportunities than in many schools for vigorous and active play, and the greater than usual opportunities for residential visits to outdoor activity centres for the juniors expand their physical and creative development well.
36. The provision for personal, social, health and citizenship education (PSHCE), including sex, and drugs education, is also good. Much is in place. A range of activities relate to PSHCE, including timetabled

philosophy for children and circle time, and the co-ordinator is drawing up a new scheme of work to incorporate the new initiatives. A particularly strong feature is the provision for citizenship. The school council meets weekly. It is well conducted by the pupil chair and vice-chair, with a set agenda, democratic procedures and well-kept minutes, overseen by the head teacher. Decisions are made that genuinely affect the running of the school, such as the purchase of new play equipment for lunchtimes, and fund raising for lockers in cloakrooms.

37. The overall provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. The provision for spiritual and moral development is sound but it is good for social and cultural development. These findings are lower than at the last inspection, when provision for moral and social development was very good, and for spiritual and social development it was good.
38. There are some opportunities for pupils to grow spiritually, especially in assemblies and religious education. Assemblies are organised through well-thought out themes and provide time for pupils to reflect on the main message of the assembly. Philosophy is taught from nursery on and pupils are encouraged to share their thoughts and feelings in PSHCE lessons, as seen when pupils told others what makes them happy. In a science lesson for Year 4 pupils, they expressed amazement and delight when a balloon failed to burst when it was pierced with a skewer dipped in oil and when they investigated how forces made a helicopter spin. In religious education, pupils closed their eyes and reflected on the significance of 'light' in religious belief.
39. The provision for pupils' moral development is satisfactory but does not have the expected impact on the behaviour of some pupils. Pupils write their own classroom rules and sign a contract to behave well but in some classes, they have to be continually reminded of the rules. Good behaviour and caring attitudes are celebrated in assemblies and the school seeks to reinforce pupils' self-esteem through personal and social education. The school council is very conscious of its capacity for moral leadership and displays a strong pride in the school. For example, the senior mid-day supervisor met with the council to draw up rules for the playground and for wet playtimes.
40. The provision for pupils' social development is good and its impact can be seen in the way pupils work well together in groups and in the way they interact in the playground. The playground 'Buddies' are instrumental in supporting any pupil who feels lonely or left out of activities. The critical skills initiative is having a good impact on many pupils' social development because they work as a team to solve the 'challenges' facing them. Pupils have a social conscience and build bridges with the local senior citizens by inviting them to Harvest and Christmas celebrations. Certificates on display show that pupils have considered those less fortunate than themselves by contributing to charities at home and abroad.
41. There is good provision to promote pupils' cultural development. There has been a celebration of Chinese New Year and other festivals and Year 6 pupils study the French language. Pupils study a range of faiths in religious education and there are displays of artefacts from them. As part of their work in geography, pupils in Year 1 chose suitable clothes to pack for Barnaby Bear's latest adventure in Spain or Scotland. Pupils have a good awareness of local culture as, for example, through their participation in the South Cumbria music festival. Drumming and dancing are included in the wide range of extra-curricular activities as well as sporting activities. There is a planned programme of visiting artists. Pupils in Year 4 made a sound attempt to design sculptures after examining the work of Andy Goldsworthy and the sculptures in Grizedale Forest.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

42. The school continues to provide the safe and supportive environment noted at the time of the previous inspection. There is good provision for the welfare, health and safety of pupils. Effective child protection procedures are in place and teachers are sensitive to the needs of pupils in their care and work hard to

ensure their welfare. Pupils with special educational needs are well supported and fully included in all aspects of lessons.

43. The school has a responsible attitude towards health and safety matters. Parents are asked not to use the main entrance to the school when bringing their children due to the close proximity of the car park, but some parents ignore the warning. Governors carry out an annual risk assessment and more specific risk assessments are made during the year. There are procedures in place for assessing potential risks before a visit is planned and these are the result of much hard work and effort from the governing body and teachers. There are appropriate first aid procedures in place and staff are aware of the medical needs of pupils in their care. There are two designated teachers and a governor to share the responsibility for first aid and there are clear first aid procedures in place. There is good support for pupils with special educational needs and they make good progress in achieving the targets in their individual education plans.
44. The procedures for monitoring and promoting behaviour are good but do not have an impact on the behaviour of all pupils. Most pupils have a clear idea of what is expected of them and know that bullying or any form of harassment will not be tolerated. They appreciate the system of rewards and understand what will happen if they do not conform to the school's expectations that all should learn in a calm, purposeful environment. Pupils enjoy receiving stickers, certificates and points and value their entry in the Golden Book or receiving the Golden Spoon award from lunchtime assistants. Pupils have set school and classroom rules and the school council has been a prime mover in getting them established. However, a few pupils challenge the accepted codes of behaviour, and some staff do not deal with these instances effectively.
45. Every teacher has a data analysis file containing clearly set out performance information, used to track individual progress. The deputy head teacher works with teachers to set targets in English and mathematics for individuals and classes. National test results are analysed to inform planning, and other areas are highlighted for improvement – this year for example, targeting the performance of high attainers, and introducing specific strategies to improve writing. In Year 6, a useful record of pupils' learning styles is included in the file. The head teacher monitors the files and provides written feedback.
46. There are some good examples of teachers using assessment information to inform their lesson planning. For example, in Year 6, teaching targets follow from analysis of spelling and mental mathematics tests. Although all teachers' files contain some information which can be used for future planning (in science and non-core units of work for example), there is insufficient evidence to show performance data is used to target particular groups or individuals. This is reflected in the lack of activities appropriately set for groups of different levels of attainment in some lessons, particularly for high achievers. The school has recognised this, and there are plans to extend staff training so that all teachers and support staff understand and apply the agreed processes.
47. Pupils' involvement in setting their own learning targets is beginning to develop. For example, in Year 2 English books, there is dialogue between pupil and teacher with reference to a specific target. Further work is required here as at present pupils do not always understand why teachers have targeted certain areas, and what strategies they can employ to improve.
48. The ICT co-ordinator has begun to store work samples on the computer so that each child's progress can be tracked and monitored. This good practice is not yet shared sufficiently across the school, resulting in some children repeating work they have done previously.
49. The procedures for monitoring and promoting attendance are good, leading to good attendance overall. Whilst most pupils attend school regularly, they do not always arrive on time. A governor has been appointed as attendance co-ordinator and is in the process of monitoring attendance and punctuality with a view to setting up a panel for parent consultations. Registers are neat and in good order and conform to legal requirements. Records of attendance are analysed and evaluated and prompt action is taken to

investigate absence. The procedures for monitoring and supporting pupils' personal development are good. The PSHCE programme is good and is being developed to include critical skills, philosophy and the Healthy Schools initiative. Sex education is delivered to pupils in Years 5 and 6 with support from the school nurse. Drugs awareness is a feature of the programme and parents have been invited to workshops to raise their awareness of this.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

50. The effectiveness of the school's links with parents is satisfactory. The majority of parents hold the school in high regard, but a number are not satisfied with some aspects of the school's partnership with them. Some parents are not happy about the number of supply staff who have been teaching their children this year. Questionnaire returns indicate concerns about homework arrangements, the range of extra-curricular activities, the information they receive on the progress of their children, and some aspects of leadership and management. Inspection findings are that the amount of homework children receive is satisfactory overall with some inconsistencies across year groups and that there is a good range of activities to enrich learning. The three opportunities for parental consultations are similar to those found in most primary schools except that they are held over a full week each term to enable all parents to participate and spend longer with the teacher. However, some parents still feel that the head teacher's communication with them is sometimes unclear, or that their views are not heard, or acted on.
51. The school's documentation for parents, such as the school prospectus, is of good quality. Together with the opportunities available for personal contact with teachers, it is sufficient to ensure that parents are well informed about events and developments at the school and about the progress of their children. There is a wide range of constructive links between school and home, such as induction for parents of nursery and reception children. Parents of children with special educational needs are fully involved in their children's education plans and the school provides them with the opportunity to participate in termly reviews.
52. The prospectus and governors' annual report comply fully with statutory requirements. Reports to parents are of good quality and contain targets for improvement. The quantity of general information that parents receive in the form of newsletters, information on the curriculum and events in the school is good. There is a good induction programme for parents of children new to the school that includes visits to school during the summer term and home visits from teachers.
53. Parental involvement in the life of the school is good. Nineteen parents help regularly in school and more can be called upon to support special events. Parents help with reading and other activities and some parents have worked hard to enhance the library provision. In return, the school offers them training and parents appreciate this. The school seeks parents' views through questionnaires and the involvement of parents in children's learning at home is good. The Parent Teacher Association is a good example of parental involvement as this active and hard-working group of parents not only raise funds to enhance children's learning, they raise substantial amounts for charity. For example, they recently donated a sound system for the hall and pupils were seen using it well. There is a suggestion box in the school foyer and a notice board near the children's entrance. The school is involved in 'Parent Aid', a project to offer personal advice and support, but parents have yet to take full advantage of this.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

54. Leadership and management are sound. The head teacher was in post at the last inspection, when her leadership was judged to be strong, and is well supported by her deputy, also still in post. Between them, they have overseen good improvements against the key issues from that inspection in ICT, the fuller involvement of the governing body, and better information for parents. The school's development planning is also improved, and a new nursery has been established following a successful campaign by governors, staff and parents. All statutory requirements are met, and systems for performance management for the

staff are in place, including for the support staff. Governors have good understanding of the principles of best value judgements, and are beginning to apply them in their overview of the school. However, some other important areas of the school's work and achievements have declined since 1998, such as the quality of teaching, aspects of leadership and management, pupils' behaviour, and their punctuality to school.

55. The head teacher provides a clear lead in promoting key developments, such as in implementing ideas and good practice through the EAZ in critical skills and other initiatives, supported by the nominated co-ordinator. In discussions with the head and the deputy director of the EAZ, it was made clear that the programme was intended to be long term, and that monitoring and evaluation of its success were taking place, but any results from this so far were tentative. The head monitors its effect in school, and feels that those staff having attended the second level of training are more confident in using the approach than those at the first level. Inspection evidence supports this. She also leads the development of the curriculum successfully, including for the identified gifted and talented group, and has recently taken over the co-ordination of English and literacy. Despite the variability of attainment by age eleven over recent years, there is a stated and reinforced expectation of high standards throughout the school. This year, this has resulted in these expectations being realised, particularly for Year 6 children, so that standards are higher than at the last inspection. This has been in part because the head teacher has deployed staff skilfully at key points, and has also made good appointments to the nursery and reception classes to develop younger children's learning well.
56. Key staff make an effective contribution to the school through their leadership and management of their areas of responsibility. The deputy head ran the school successfully last year when the head teacher was absent for two terms due to illness. During this time the deputy instigated a number of initiatives, some of them as part of the school's submission for Investors in People status. She continues to lead by example in her teaching, and in her co-ordination of mathematics. She discusses the school's development at regular meetings with the head teacher, and has been closely involved in the induction of a teacher new to the school.
57. The leader of Key Stage 1 and the Foundation Stage is also effective in his role, leading by example in his teaching. Having good experience in teaching from nursery to Year 2, he has overseen the successful development of the recent partnership between the nursery and reception class teachers. He shares a good vision with the other staff of what they are aiming for in trying to achieve excellence. He is also subject manager for ICT which he oversees successfully, and for design and technology. The inspection focus was on the progress made in ICT, and he has clearly had good influence here.
58. The special educational needs co-ordinator provides good leadership, and has a clear overview of pupils' needs throughout the school. Through lesson observations and discussions with staff, provision is well co-ordinated, and the policy provides guidance about the level of this provision for each pupil. The needs of younger pupils are prioritised. Parents are actively involved in supporting their children and this has improved during the past year with 75 per cent of parents meeting with the special educational needs co-ordinator at the last Parents' Meeting. A governor with responsibility for special educational needs also participates in monitoring provision and has copies of reviews. Other staff with co-ordination responsibilities fulfil their roles satisfactorily.
59. However, the governing body has become much more involved in the work of the school since the last inspection. The system of school improvement planning is more effective, and priorities are set out in a three-year cycle. Through a system of committees and individual governors linked to different subjects and areas of the school's work, they now have a clearer view of what is happening. They also initiate and follow through developments, such as for the establishment of a nursery, the direct management of the catering and cleaning contracts, and bids for an extra classroom. Although this has so far not met with success, they have set up a fund to pursue the issue further.

60. Governors have met the terms of the key issue to improve their work from the last inspection well in the main, but are not yet involved sufficiently in critically evaluating the work of the school. For example, when teachers are given targets for the improvement of their work, there is no effective mechanism for governors to check that improvements have been maintained over time. Similarly, governors linked to subject coordinators are not always made aware of weaknesses as well as strengths in these areas. However, they are knowledgeable about the school through regular visits and information from staff, and have a good understanding of the application of best value principles to the outcomes of the school's work. Financial management and control are effective, and funds are directed to appropriate areas, including designated priorities.
61. Support for children with special needs is a strength, and the admission of a small number of children learning English as an additional language has been handled well, so that they also make good progress. The staff continue to provide a caring environment where children feel secure, and health and safety are monitored by governors. The curriculum has kept pace with national developments, and changes have been adopted and adapted in most cases successfully. The current work in developing teaching and learning skills, and new approaches to curriculum delivery, also have good potential to strengthen the already good learning opportunities offered to the children. So far, this has been most effective in those classes with most skilled teachers. Curriculum enrichment through visits out and visitors to the school, and through links with a business partner, the EAZ, the local authority and parents, also enhances children's learning well.
62. The school's initiative to bring about better teaching and learning through enabling pupils to use their ideas and respond to challenges is working well in some classes but not others. The checks undertaken to ensure that the better rate of pupils' learning is maintained in all classes have not been sufficiently robust, and so some year groups are not doing as well as they should. Some weaker teaching is not being effectively identified or properly supported to bring about improvement. This is the case at the beginning of both Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2, and in physical education in some classes. This is because the monitoring and evaluation of these areas of the school's work is not rigorous enough.
63. There are procedures and systems in place to cover all the major areas of the school's work. These ensure that the school runs smoothly on a day-to-day basis, and that administration and general organisation are sound. However, on occasion these are not monitored sufficiently. For example, teachers do not always supervise children effectively whilst still in school but on their way to the playground.
64. Parents' views of the school have also declined since the last inspection, when it was reported that they held it in high regard. Now, whilst the majority of those expressing an opinion support the school, a significant minority have some concerns. Whilst inspection evidence does not support some of these concerns, the managers of the school currently do not take sufficient account of some of the issues raised by parents. For example, a few parents are concerned that the start to the day is too relaxed and there is no urgency about punctuality. Inspection evidence confirms this.
65. There have been some difficulties in recruiting and retaining teaching staff recently, and this has been made more problematic for the school because a number of staff have had long-term illnesses. There is a full complement of staff currently, but some parents have concerns about the number of sessions taken by supply staff, particularly when parents feel they have not been properly informed of who is taking classes. For example, as staff are trained for the critical skills teaching programme, supply staff take their classes. The school has not yet explained this clearly to parents so that they understand the benefits that should accrue for their children eventually.
66. Support staffing is strong, and these staff make a good contribution to children's learning. Learning resources are also good, and used effectively. ICT resources have improved considerably since the last inspection, but there are still difficulties of access to some of these. The accommodation is well cared for and used effectively, and has been improved by the addition of a nursery with good outdoor play space.

The reception class and the nursery are situated a long way from each other which makes joint use of resources and space difficult. Conditions are cramped in some of the other classrooms, particularly for the older children, and there are few areas for small group work, or large project work such as construction.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

Key issues

67. In order to further improve the children's standards of attainment, and the overall quality of education, the head teacher, staff and governors should:

1. In those classes and lessons where the pace of learning is too slow:
 - a. ensure that teachers take account of children's needs when planning and delivering their lessons, particularly how they can gain and sustain children's interest;
 - b. help teachers to manage children's behaviour more effectively through better and more consistent routine organisation and higher expectations of both teachers' control and children's self-discipline, particularly in physical education in some classes, so that time is not wasted.

(Paragraph 12, 15, 20, 22, 30, 31, 35, 39, 62, 87, 90, 91, 97, 104, 111, 123, 130, 134, 145)

2. Use the evidence from more rigorous monitoring of the work of the school to determine the priorities for further development, including the improvement of the general management of the school's activities and the effectiveness of initiatives to improve teaching and learning, so that pupils' progress is promoted successfully in all year groups.

(20, 24, 46, 47, 50, 55, 60, 62, 63, 64, 65, 70, 89, 92, 130, 145)

3. As funds allow:
 - a. improve the teaching and learning space so that there is sufficient room for all the children to work effectively;
 - b. review the deployment of ICT resources, and access to fixed equipment, with a view to providing access without disturbance to other groups or classes

(16, 25, 66, 69, 116, 132.)

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	62
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	34

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Number	4	5	22	26	4	1	0
Percentage	6	8	36	42	6	2	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 one percentage point.

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)	13	215
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	N/A	11

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	0	3
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	2	42

English as an additional language	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	4

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	5
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	2

Attendance

Authorised absence	%
School data	4.2
National comparative data	5.4

Unauthorised absence	%
School data	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	12	18	30

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	10	10	12
	Girls	17	17	18
	Total	27	27	30
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	90 (100)	90 (100)	100 (100)
	National	84 (84)	84 (84)	90 (91)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	10	12	11
	Girls	17	18	17
	Total	27	30	28
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	90 (100)	100 (100)	93 (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	21	14	35

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	19	19	18
	Girls	11	9	13
	Total	30	28	31
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	86 (61)	80 (58)	89 (86)
	National	75 (75)	73 (71)	86 (87)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	19	19	20
	Girls	12	9	10
	Total	31	28	30
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	89 (75)	80 (75)	86 (86)
	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	182	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	2	0	0
Mixed – White and Asian	0	0	0
Mixed – any other mixed background	1	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	3	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)	9
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	26.8
Average class size	30.7

Education support staff: YR – Y6

Total number of education support staff	5
Total aggregate hours worked per week	87

Qualified teachers and support staff: nursery

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	0.5
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	26
Total number of education support staff	1
Total aggregate hours worked per week	22
Number of pupils per FTE adult	13

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Recruitment of teachers

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	2
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	2

Total number of vacant teaching posts (FTE)	0
Number of vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of a term or more (FTE)	1
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	2002/3
	£
Total income	504024
Total expenditure	505096
Expenditure per pupil	2087
Balance brought forward from previous year	38052
Balance carried forward to next year	36980

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	420
Number of questionnaires returned	58

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	50	38	10	2	0
My child is making good progress in school.	33	53	9	5	0
Behaviour in the school is good.	45	38	10	0	7
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	24	36	31	5	3
The teaching is good.	36	50	7	5	2
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	36	41	17	5	0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	41	41	14	3	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	45	48	7	0	0
The school works closely with parents.	24	59	14	3	0
The school is well led and managed.	26	52	12	7	3
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	31	57	9	0	3
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	16	45	14	10	16

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

AREAS OF LEARNING FOR CHILDREN IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

- 65 Children make a good start to their education in the nursery and reception classes. The nursery is situated in a separate building close to the main school, and is attended by 26 children in the mornings only. The majority of these children transfer into the school's reception class. Attainment on entry is broadly average, although it varies from year to year. The children make good progress, especially in personal, social and emotional development and in reading, writing and mathematics, in response to the good teaching. They are currently above average in these areas by the time they leave the reception class, and meet the nationally recommended targets (termed Early Learning Goals) for children at the end of reception in the other areas of learning, where the teaching is sound, and sometimes good. Teaching and learning are good for children in the nursery and reception classes for a number of reasons. There is good liaison and teamwork between teachers and support staff that ensure continuity of approach and have enabled a temporary teacher to fit in and teach well. Links with parents are good. Planning and assessment are strong. The curriculum is well suited to the needs of very young learners.
- 66 The teachers and classroom assistants work together very well as teams. This has been hard won, because of staff changes and because of the split site and there is still some way to go. For instance, the teachers do not yet plan the curriculum as a two-year whole, although plans are afoot to develop this. The team leader (Year 2 teacher) and the two teachers in the nursery and reception class have already formed a good working relationship in a short time. The team have good procedures to smooth the transition from the nursery to the reception class. Induction into the nursery is gradual and involves a home visit. Parents are very much included in the process, and communications such as the guidance booklet for parents strike a friendly, helpfully clear tone.
- 67 The teachers' planning in the nursery is very good, and good in the reception class. Nursery plans for each half term are imaginatively based around a theme, and show in detail how, when and at what point each of the areas of learning will be addressed, with close reference to the stepping stones leading to the Early Learning Goals. Assessment is of an exceptionally good quality, rigorous and exact, and is a reason for the good teaching because observations feed into the subsequent planning. Planning and assessment in the reception class are good, especially given the present situation of a teacher newly employed in the school. She has shown commitment and skill in following the school's planning systems effectively. The teaching assistants plan for their lessons in equal detail which adds much to the quality of the overall teaching package.
- 68 The nursery accommodation is adequate, but detached from the main building, and is a long way from the reception class. This impedes the sharing of space and resources between the two classes of the Foundation Stage. The internal accommodation is spacious for the reception class, and used well. However, it houses much of the fixed computer equipment, as a small ICT suite, and is used by other classes during the day. This is disruptive, and also means that the room cannot be fully adapted to the needs of the reception children. The addition of dedicated outdoor play space is an improvement, shared by the two classes.

Personal, social and emotional development

- 69 Most children exceed the Early Learning Goals in this area because the teachers have high expectations, and teach this aspect well. Children make very pleasing progress in developing a sense of community, in working as part of a group and in behaviour and self-control. Reception children listen very well in the more formal, longer lesson introductions and are keen to answer questions and make suggestions. There

is some loss of independence during the reception year as the afternoon curriculum is timetabled into largely teacher-led activities, so that there are fewer opportunities for choice and decision making.

- 70 The critical skills and philosophy for children programmes are having a good impact on the children's attitudes to learning. Visits by nursery children to the Year 2 classroom to see the rainbows there help them to connect one piece of learning with another, and recognise their place in the jigsaw of learning. By the end of reception, the children showed a very good sense of community as they prepared their contribution for the weekly school council meeting. In this excellent lesson, little heads huddled in small groups over an enlarged catalogue page of playground apparatus, making very balanced decisions such as "We have those already", "Those cost a lot of money" and "That wouldn't be very safe". This happened so successfully because the teacher and teaching assistant structured the lesson beautifully, working together to model good listening, turn taking and discussion.

Communication, language and literacy

- 71 The children come to school with average levels of competence in the language area. Because of the good teaching, they learn the beginnings of reading and writing well, and the majority go beyond the targets for their age by the end of the reception year.
- 72 Reading is promoted well in the nursery. Stories and rhymes play a large part in the curriculum. As a result, children move into the reception class confident about books and know that print tells a story. By the end of the reception class, all can match up letters to their sounds, and identify the sounds at the beginning, end and middle of words. Almost all the children could manage to read simple board game instructions.
- 73 A strength of the teaching in both classes is the linking of writing to talk and discussion. At every turn, teachers and teaching assistants scribe the children's ideas and answers onto flip charts, notepads and clip board sheets, showing them to the children as a matter of course. This is very good practice as the children come to see writing as a worthwhile, important activity. By the end of reception, a good two thirds of the class have exceeded the Early Learning Goals in writing. Higher attaining children use a good clear script and are beginning to join the letters, and they can create a series of well-structured, logical sentences. The writing of average children in their little books about the gingerbread man shows that they understand how to compose sentences, and can write two or three related sentences independently.
- 74 Listening and speaking skills develop well, largely because the teachers model 'quality conversation' from the critical skills programme.

Mathematical development

- 75 By the age of five, most children have reached the targets for their age, and many have moved beyond them, because the teaching is good. They have a good grounding in number recognition in the nursery, through focused tasks such as 'putting the numbers back on the clock' and other fun activities developed from stories and rhymes. Reception children are very secure in recognising numbers, in counting reliably up to ten and going beyond, to doubling and counting backwards as well as forwards. Work in numeracy books shows a secure understanding of mathematical language such as 'heavier' and 'lighter'.
- 76 A key reason for the progress is that all the teachers assess children's progress well in mathematics. This means that they can plan to follow up the class introduction with activities that are at just the right level of difficulty for the children. For example, during the final part of the lesson on coins with the reception class, the teaching assistant assessed the understanding of a chosen group very well. She did this by talking with individual children about their shopping record, noting any misconceptions on her records.

Knowledge and understanding of the world

- 77 Children make sound progress and reach the level expected in most aspects because the teaching is sound. It is good in ICT and the nursery children are particularly ready to explore and investigate. This is because the teachers supply challenging play materials and ask questions that prompt new ways of using them. The teachers' questions are not always penetrating enough and so children's ideas are not always extended enough, but generally they are effective in helping children to find out for themselves. Children did this well when mixing paint by rubbing their paint-laden hands together to discover blue, pink and purple. Currently, there is insufficient regular and focused use of the sand, water and construction apparatus so that children can continue the good rate of progress in this area of learning.
- 78 The teaching of computer skills is good because ICT is available in most sessions, and children are directed towards this. Assessment is very good in this area. For example, the nursery classroom assistant had planned a good name-writing activity that had different expectations of children who were at different stages of letter recognition and typing competence. Her sharp observation and knowledge of the children meant that she could pitch the teaching at the right level, and then use the printed outcome to plan the next steps. As a result, by the end of reception, the children can use a publishing package to write a simple sentence about their picture. Their understanding of technical vocabulary is good because the teachers use it with the children as they work.

Physical development

- 79 Teaching is satisfactory in this area. Nursery children make the best progress in this area in using equipment, tools and materials and in travelling around, over and through large apparatus. This is because of the full use made of the newly developed outdoor area. The space is large and varied, so that children can run and ride tricycles for some distance. They have learned to control these well, and play safely without direct supervision. In their outdoor play, they show a good awareness of space and rarely bump or bang as they travel. Limited access to the outdoor play facilities for the reception children means that they do not improve their ability to climb and balance in an adventurous way. These children have more structured hall sessions for physical activity, but it was not possible to observe one of these during the inspection. However, all the indications are that the children make satisfactory progress overall.

Creative development

- 80 Teaching is satisfactory overall, but often good in the nursery. The children make good progress in the nursery, and maintain this well in music, and in being able to respond to what they experience in a variety of ways. Otherwise, they continue to make sound progress, so that the targets for their age are securely met. Reception children know how to mix colours, and experiment with different textures to create effects. They are less good at controlling the paint and water, because there is little chance for the children to hone their skills independently, after they have been shown by the teachers in more structured activities. They develop their imagination well through stories and poems. Whilst the analytical, problem-solving elements of the critical skills programme have been appropriately adopted to suit the needs of young learners, the creative and imaginative elements are given less prominence and so children lack skills in imaginative play.

ENGLISH

- 81 By age seven, attainment in English is above average, and by age eleven it is well above average, a good improvement since the last inspection. The school introduced a range of strategies to improve writing during this year and these have improved children's writing, a priority in the school improvement plan. The head teacher, who has recently taken on subject leadership for English, believes that increased support for boys' achievement in recent years may have affected girls' attainment adversely, although differences between girls and boys attainment are not so marked this year as in previous years. The work

focusing on reading and writing this year has produced good results. Those children with special educational needs generally make good progress towards the targets in their individual education plans. The few children learning English as an additional language are well supported, and make good progress in all aspects of the subject, which helps their learning across the curriculum.

- 82 Standards in speaking and listening are good throughout the school. For example, in a Year 3 assembly, pupils spoke with confidence and enthusiasm about the activities they had taken part in during their residential trip to Keppleway, while the rest of the school listened with interest. The critical skills programme has had an impact in this area, although sometimes pupils become over-excited and speak out of turn or do not listen carefully. In some classes, particularly Year 2 and Year 6, speaking and listening are very good, but there is an uneven picture across the school that is directly related to the quality of control and expectation in the teaching. Pupils' achievement in this area is satisfactory.
- 83 Standards in reading are good by age seven and very good by eleven. The school has worked hard and effectively to improve standards in this area, and most children enjoy reading. Children in Year 2 have a secure knowledge of letter sounds and can guess at words they do not know using phonic clues. Their understanding of what they read is generally good. Many pupils choose their own reading materials and show discrimination and thought when choosing new books. Children in Year 6 read fluently, enthusiastically and with expression. They have a firm grasp of strategies to support their reading, and many enjoy reading at school and at home. For example, one Year 6 pupil was very knowledgeable about the history of child labour after reading *The Water Babies*. Year 6 children have discussions with their teacher about books they may enjoy. Each class has a library and the school library is attractive and well resourced.
- 84 Standards in writing by age seven are good and by eleven they are very good. Writing has improved, and new strategies introduced have been effective. Children achieve well in Year 2, and the standard of poetry writing in Year 6 is very high. Pupils have written and presented poetry about the sea, and are beginning to evaluate poetry and develop their own opinions about what they like or dislike, which many find challenging. This work was reflected in the poetry club led by the head teacher where children from Key Stage 2 classes recited poems about the sea and offered each other critical comment, which was positive and insightful.
- 85 At the end of Year 6, the children have experienced a wide range of writing activities including reports, letters, instructions and stories, and have written in a range of styles. In Year 5, children considered the audience for their work about anti-smoking. In Year 6, work in pupils' books demonstrates a secure grasp of English language and comprehension. Handwriting is good and work is well presented, showing evidence of progress since September 2002 particularly in the content of the work, such as in the use of vocabulary, and sentence structure. 'Story sacks' have been introduced in the younger classes and other strategies have helped to raise standards in writing, including writing passports and writing journals. There are plans to look at teaching to improve the quality of creative writing because the school has identified the need to extend pupils' ability to use imaginative ideas more effectively.
- 86 The quality of teaching and learning across the school is satisfactory, although it is good and sometimes very good in some classes. Where teaching is good, teachers share the learning objective for the lesson with the children, they have good knowledge of the subject, and the pace of the lesson allows children to learn effectively. In Year 2, children enjoyed a lesson about humorous poetry and considered the nature of words which were inherently amusing. The teacher ensured the learning needs of all pupils were met and good progress was made. Children learn best when teachers explain the work clearly, or when they are provided with clear guidelines to support their skills. For example, Year 5 pupils working on persuasive writing were introduced to a range of devices including the use of emotive language and turning opinion into truth which supported their work and enhanced its quality. In some lessons, the use of short, sharp pair and group activities help children focus clearly on specific aspects of the learning objective. This was used effectively in a Year 6 poetry lesson when children were evaluating a poem and

finding the task quite challenging. This strategy helps children to retain their interest and concentrate for longer periods. The class summary session is more effective when the learning objective is discussed and extended, and the time is not used simply to share work.

- 87 Pupils with special needs are supported well by support assistants, who have been trained to use a range of effective strategies to extend learning. Learning assistants contribute to lesson planning and evaluation, and it is this active involvement that allows them to understand and appropriately address the needs of individual pupils. Those few pupils learning English as an additional language also receive good support and make good progress. Provision for gifted and talented pupils is very good. The standard of teaching and learning in withdrawal groups is very high, and this is reflected in the file of work produced by this group of pupils.
- 88 The critical skills programme and other programmes introduced within the EAZ initiative have impacted positively on aspects of English teaching and learning in some year groups. This is particularly the case with poetry writing and speaking and listening, although the direct effects of the programme now require more detailed evaluation in order to pinpoint areas where the strategies are less successful. Mind mapping is sometimes used to help children organise their thoughts and plan their work. For example, children planned a poem comparing an adult to an animal in this way in Year 6. Some children can discuss their ideas with confidence, and are beginning to work with greater independence. In Year 4, the 'check-in' session provided a good opportunity for all pupils to speak and listen to their classmates, which they did well. All the children participate in class councils and in some classes this provides good opportunities for discussion and the expression of a range of views about issues pertinent to the pupils, for example, in a discussion about a name-calling incident in Year 6. This contributes to the decision-making process in the school council, which is managed by the head teacher and conducted effectively by the children themselves. Some groups of children work well together on their critical skills 'challenges', and they can present the results to the class both visually and orally. In Year 4, one group shared their experiences of a recent residential trip in terms of new skills learned and old skills practised. Children in Year 2 said they liked the challenges and enjoy writing about them.
- 89 Where the standard of teaching and learning is not satisfactory, teachers' expectations are too low or they are inappropriate, for example, prolonged silent reading sessions for Year 1 children. Sometimes learning objectives are not clarified so that the pupils do not know clearly what they have to do. For example, Year 4 pupils working on a challenge designing a multi-sensory garden had produced some good work for their presentation but did not understand what 'multi-sensory' meant. The needs of different groups are not always met, particularly the more able in some classes; there is a lack of appropriately differentiated tasks and sometimes an over-reliance on worksheets. In some lessons where group work was taking place, boys did not participate as well as girls – the girls were often 'group scribes' and boys did not always take an active part in the discussion. Behaviour deteriorates if pupils do not understand the task. Poor management of behaviour in some lessons also has a direct impact on pupils' attitudes to their learning which means they do not progress. As co-ordinator, the head teacher recognises from her monitoring that some teachers require more support than others with the management of behaviour, and also with strategies to develop writing further.
- 90 Teachers' planning and assessment are generally satisfactory, although insufficient use is made of the wealth of performance data each teacher has in a class file. This information is not always used to focus more closely on the learning needs of individuals and groups who need further support in extending their reading and writing skills. When marking books, some teachers have provided further guidance for pupils to consider, but this is not consistent practice. Learning is well supported when teachers mark work according to the lesson objective or the individual literacy target, which pupils have at the front of their books. Pupil targets are used particularly effectively in Year 2 where a dialogue takes place between teacher and pupil in the pupil's book, but elsewhere not all pupils are aware of their targets and this slows their progress. The quality of support provided by learning assistants in English lessons, particularly for children with special needs, is good and is greatly valued by both teachers and children. They also

contribute to planning, feedback and lesson evaluation. Most teachers provide the pupils with good support and positive feedback.

- 91 The head teacher has monitored specific 'catch-up' programmes and there has been monitoring of English teaching in general, which has included observations and work scrutiny, resulting in targets for improvement for staff and pupils. The file of moderated literacy work provides support for teachers in this area. The critical skills programme is monitored externally, and feedback has been provided, although more rigorous monitoring by the school is needed of its impact on teaching and learning in some classes.
- 92 Across the curriculum, speaking and listening are used effectively in other subject areas. For example, pupils in Year 6 used a range of literacy skills in history and geography to support their research. A good range of resources was provided and pupils were able to skim and scan text for information. Such strategies are not so evident in other classes, where there is an over-reliance on worksheets that do not promote the use of these skills effectively. In some classes, computers are used to support learning during literacy lessons, but this is not always the case.

MATHEMATICS

- 93 Standards of attainment are currently broadly average by the end of Year 2, lower than at the last inspection, and well above average by the end of Year 6, improved since the last inspection. However, results fluctuate year on year. Progress this year has been good in Year 2 and very good in Year 6, and children achieve well in these classes. Evidence from work saved shows that the full curriculum is covered, interpreted through the National Numeracy Strategy, and 'challenge' activities as part of the critical skills work have been successfully attempted. The co-ordinator gives a very good lead in her teaching with Year 6, and has worked with other staff to develop their skills. However, children's progress and achievement across the school are only satisfactory. This reflects different teachers' expectations of progress and presentation, the pace of lessons, and the quality of their marking.
- 94 Year 6 children work at high levels for their age because the teacher has high expectations to which they respond very well. These high expectations are shared with the children, and they enjoy the challenging activities they have to tackle. It is clear that children of different levels of prior attainment have work which stretches them to attain the next level. For example, when the teacher marks the work, she often sets a new challenge for individual pupils that builds on the skill or technique they have demonstrated. Higher attaining pupils calculate to three places of decimals accurately, and convert fractions to decimals with ease. The whole class has compared the size ratio of different parts of the body, linked very well to work in art on facial proportions.
- 95 Children in Year 2 have a good understanding of the four number operations for their age, and competently subtract amounts of money from £1. They have begun to understand reflective symmetry, and solve word problems. For example, they correctly work out when a child will visit the park, knowing that this is five days after another child visiting on Sunday. They create graphical displays of information, labelling the axes accurately in most cases. Homework here supports the class work effectively, although in some other classes this is patchy. For example, Year 5 had more homework before Christmas than they have had since. The teacher in Year 2 marks the work thoroughly, and makes good comments, including assessment comments showing the levels reached. However, some of the teachers' writing in the children's books is difficult to read.
- 96 Progress varies across the school, and is best in Year 2 and Year 6. There is a strong concentration on number, and numeracy skills are taught effectively across the school. ICT is used in some cases, such as when children logged data from a light sensor in lumens for a science experiment in Year 5, and Year 6 children used calculators to check their work. Children in Year 1 cover a suitable range of work, and lower attaining and middle attaining children achieve as expected for their prior attainment. However, higher attaining children demonstrate clearly when they are set an open-ended task that they can work at

higher levels than are generally expected. For example, given the task of adding or subtracting numbers to achieve a result of 20, one child wrote such computations as 120-100. The work set by his teacher immediately following this was with much simpler numbers, and this was in almost every case easier than the work set by the child for himself. Similarly, in Year 3 the children spent some time at the start of the year completing work that Year 1 children are working beyond now. This indicates that teachers do not always use the information they have from marking and assessment to adjust their teaching to the children's attainment levels sufficiently. There is also no clear expectation across the subject of children's presentation of their work. In some classes it is clear and well set out, in others it is confused and poorly presented.

97 Children with special needs make good progress when they have support, as in a Year 6 lesson. However, this varies from class to class, and on the availability of extra support. In a Year 4 lesson, the teacher adapted her lesson to meet the needs of different groups of children, and this was effective for those with special needs. Those children who are bi-lingual or learning English as an additional language make similar progress to their peers.

98 The quality of teaching and learning is good, and varies from outstanding to being satisfactory. Occasionally, potentially good lessons are undermined by teachers' lack of appropriate behaviour management strategies. For example, a Year 5 lesson that moved through three strong elements in place value, probability and collecting data for further work in data-handling was marred by many outbursts of inappropriate behaviour. The teacher tried a number of strategies to deal with this, but the lesson was constantly interrupted because the children did not maintain their concentration, or called out unnecessarily. The challenge in the work was actually good, and the teacher used the children's homework results well to discuss levels of probability, but when the data collection took place, the lesson became loose and learning became confused. However, this is balanced by good, very good and occasionally outstanding work in other classes. For example, children in Year 2 made good progress in developing number sequences and patterns because the lesson was well planned and delivered. Similarly, Year 4 children worked successfully to develop their understanding of symmetry because the teacher had used their work from the day before to plan effective activities for them. Year 6 children worked with great enthusiasm and skill to create and solve number problems involving at least three operations because they understood what was expected, and the teacher's relationship with them was excellent.

99 The subject is well led, and has a strong place in the school timetable. A governor takes a keen interest, working closely with the co-ordinator, and reporting regularly to the governing body. Further work is required, however, to ensure that all staff use what they know from marking and assessment to plan their lessons, and to ensure that children's presentation of their work is acceptable.

SCIENCE

100 Standards in science are improving for both seven and eleven year olds, and are now above average, improved at the end of Key Stage 1 and maintained at the end of Key Stage 2 since the last inspection. The work of pupils currently in Year 6 shows that they have an understanding and knowledge that is slightly above that in most other schools because of good teaching during the year. Younger pupils have also made good progress by the end of Year 2, and although teacher assessment places them around the average mark, the quality of their recorded work and spoken understanding is better than this.

101 There are several reasons for this recent gradual improvement in standards.

- Teaching is good in Years 2 and 6 so that pupils are interested, enjoy science and learn well in these classes.
- The co-ordinator analyses the test results and makes areas of weaknesses known to all of the teachers, along with suggestions and training to improve the teaching.

- The critical skills programme lends itself well to science because the ‘challenge’ approach encourages scientific enquiry and a questioning attitude.
- Pupils use their skill in writing to explain what they know or have investigated clearly, neatly and in an organised way.

102 Practical, investigative science is an emerging strength. This is because the co-ordinator picked this aspect out as an area of weakness and set about improving it across the school. Insistence on a standard form for investigations means that even the youngest pupils begin to develop scientific methods. In Year 2, for instance, they test the speed of cars on a ramp, and by the end of the year, make a good attempt at writing up an investigation into the ‘stretchability’ of fabrics independently. Because teachers are clear about the difference between results and conclusion, most remind the pupils to interpret their findings and write this down – although this does not happen in every class. Higher attaining pupils in Year 2 can write simple conclusions and the lower attaining pupils try hard to do this too, although less ambitiously.

103 Pupils in Year 3 record too much of their work on worksheets selected from a commercial scheme. As a result, they do not often enough devise their own diagrams or choose their own words to explain what they know, and their progress slows. In Year 5, too, teaching does not expect enough of the pupils. However, good science teaching in Year 4 and Year 6 is sufficient to raise the overall standard. Year 4 pupils cover a lot of work and commercial worksheets are used with care. Pupils are expected to include a personalised commentary that shows prediction and extrapolation from results. This helps them in a later series of fair tests on ice cooling which they are able to write up carefully, drawing conclusions from a table of results. Effective teaching in Year 6 means that a significant proportion of pupils can work at the higher level of relating what they find to broader areas of scientific knowledge. They show this particularly well in explaining the links between bacteria and illness. In Years 4 and 6, they use and interpret graphs and charts to a satisfactory standard, but this is not a strong enough feature in other classes.

104 Because pupils are competent writers, they are able to demonstrate what they know in their science books and this raises the standards in science. Work in books shows they are confident in their knowledge and understanding of life processes and living things. School test data reveals that knowledge of materials and their properties, electricity and forces is less strong, but is now improving. Year 2 pupils were very well able to explain how a simple electrical circuit works.

105 The improvement in scientific method is linked to teaching that makes good use of the natural connection between investigations in science and the problem-solving, collaborative approaches of the critical skills programme. At times, this is over-used, but mostly it works to the advantage of science teaching. Based upon the lessons observed, the quality of teaching is sound, but stronger in Year 2 and Year 6. The effective teachers find a range of ways to make science interesting, so that pupils say they enjoy science. During the inspection, Year 2 pupils explored what happened when they pulled, twisted and stretched play dough and other malleable materials, and delighted in what they found. In Year 4, a parent scientist led a lesson involving a series of ‘hands on’ practical investigations that enticed pupils into asking questions such as “Why didn’t the ‘helicopter/spinner’ work with straight wings?” In Year 6, a highly motivating critical skills ‘challenge’ involved the pupils working in groups to test various items of forensic evidence in order to solve an imaginary crime.

106 In good lessons such as these, planning is exemplary, and in Year 6 especially, resources are beautifully produced and highly motivating. The organisation is smoothly effortless because of this. The teaching assistants give very good support, as for instance in sharing laboratory roles within the Year 6 criminal investigation lesson, and in supporting pupils with a special educational need in Year 2. Good questioning helps the pupils to explain what they have found out and make comparisons. These teachers mark the pupils’ work very carefully, encouraging them to make connections between one set of skills or body of knowledge to another.

107 The subject co-ordinator and most teachers share an accurate view of what makes effective science teaching. However, in some classrooms, the impact is diminished because the pace is too slow, or the tasks are not explained clearly enough. In these lessons, behaviour deteriorates because the pupils become bored or fractious. This happens especially in lessons where the teacher has over-estimated the level of challenge or does not intervene quickly enough as restless behaviour develops.

108 The subject co-ordinator has a good picture of standards and of teaching in the subject. She analyses national test results to establish strengths and weakness and ensures that staff know about these, through staff meetings, and through the science improvement plan. This analysis forms the focus for her observations of teaching. This is having a good impact on practical science. She plans to encourage teachers to use the pupils' own questions as a basis for some investigative work, but acknowledges that this is challenging for some teachers. The co-ordinator is also seeking to adopt a form of standardised testing in order to track attainment across the school, in order to improve on the current satisfactory arrangements.

ART AND DESIGN

109 By the end of Year 6, children have developed a good range of skills in observation and critical thinking that helps them to consider their own and others' work with care and sensitivity. They have also grown in confidence in their own abilities as artists in their own right because the teacher treats them as maturing young people with their own perspective on how to achieve their goals. The work on display, saved in portfolios, and attempted during the inspection is of high standard for their age, maintained since the last inspection. Boys and girls equally achieve good levels in composition, observation, drawing, and interpretation of another artist's style in their own work. No work was seen in the subject in Year 2, as the theme during the inspection was in design and technology. However, from work on display, and observing the children using skills of cutting and designing in design and technology that are also useful in art and design, they achieve at least in line with expectations, and in some cases achieve higher levels. This successfully reflects the quality of work seen at the last inspection.

110 The quality of teaching seen varied from satisfactory in Years 3 and 4, to being outstanding in Year 6. Years 3 and 4 children were beginning work on a challenge to use the style of sculptors such as Andy Goldsworthy and Richard Long to design and make their own, as part of a challenge to change a place or environment. This is a rich seam, and both teachers appear to be very interested in it. In Year 3, the teacher displayed good knowledge of the subject, but tended to engage individuals rather than the whole class, and missed opportunities for the children to study and discuss the photocopied images in pairs and groups, then bring their ideas back to the whole group. There were good opportunities for a few children to study photographs of some of the artists' work on the Internet, and good classroom displays of the artists' work provided a good introduction. In Year 4, the children warmed to the challenge, after a slow beginning, to apply their critical thinking skills to the design activity. This was difficult for many of them, but they had first-hand experience of some of these sculptures in Grizedale Forest, and some produced good preliminary sketches of work they might attempt later. The teacher's perseverance eventually encouraged most of the children to apply themselves effectively, and make satisfactory progress in planning a design using ideas from the sculptor's work.

111 Year 6 children have studied portraiture from the perspective of a number of artists, and practised working in various styles. Their challenge in an excellent lesson was to interpret a photograph of one of the teachers in whatever style they chose. They responded superbly to the idea, recognising the possibility of mirth, but also taking seriously the given task. They worked assiduously, each child choosing how to approach it, some with guidance from the teacher or support assistant. The process and outcomes were of a very high standard.

112 There are some fine examples on display of work from different classes within a chosen theme. The co-ordinator has only recently taken on the role, and has audited the resources and checked the scheme of

work with the staff. There is also a display co-ordinator, who ensures that children's work is valued, and co-ordinates a group of volunteer parents who help each teacher in mounting and displaying children's work.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

113 Only work in Year 2 to make a winding mechanism using a winch or a crane was observed closely, along with a short lesson in Year 5, and further discussion with these children about their models using a cam to alter the movement of a turning mechanism. Attainment has improved since the last inspection by the end of Year 2, but there is insufficient evidence to judge standards by age eleven, although standards were good in Year 5 in the work seen.

114 In both classes observed, the work achieved was at good levels for the children's age. In Year 2, the teacher, who co-ordinates the subject, is knowledgeable, and could readjust the lesson as it progressed. He is also skilled in the methods to teach critical skills, and encouraged the children to discuss the ideas generated to help Incey-Wincey spider climb up the spout, and choose one idea through group negotiation. This was further developed in a second lesson, when a crane and pulley system was introduced. The children found this work stretched them, but the teacher was able to ensure that health and safety rules were followed, and that a good proportion of the class developed skills in using a saw to cut wood, and use glue to fix it effectively. The children really enjoyed this work, and persevered with concentration and good effort.

115 In Year 5, children used a commercially produced kit to make working models where the action was affected by the strategic placement of cams to deflect the moving parts. Many children developed ingenious models in pairs and groups. One group achieved two lifting sections from one axle, like pistons in an engine, whilst others achieved both lifting and differential turns in their models. They were excited and interested, but their work was hampered by the cramped nature of the classroom. The children worked sensibly to overcome this, but it restricted their opportunities to be adventurous in spreading their growing models using greater space. Similarly, storage of the partially completed work is difficult in a room with little spare space, and there is very little space anywhere else in the school for this.

GEOGRAPHY and HISTORY

116 Standards in history and geography are average at the end of Year 2 and Year 6. Work in the pupils' books and talks with groups of pupils show that they have a sound knowledge in both subjects, with history stronger than geography. This is the same position as at the time of the last inspection. A satisfactory standard has been maintained because of the following.

- Teachers have good subject knowledge and are confident in teaching the subjects.
- Adoption of nationally approved guidance means that curricular planning ensures coverage of National Curriculum requirements.
- Visits to local places of historical and geographical interest such as Furness Abbey and Dalton church, and visitors to the school, motivate the pupils.
- The good standard of writing across the school allows the pupils to explain what they know and write about this coherently in their books.
- Good teaching in Years 2 and 6 ensures sound standards.
- Multi-cultural education is well promoted through the subjects, geography in particular; resources such as musical instruments and dressing-up items are well used, and multi-cultural art and dance happen within and outside of lessons.

117 In history, Year 2 pupils are able to talk with confidence about what they have learned and have an accurate recall of the historical facts. They can also attempt to explain reasons, such as those for the rapid spread of the Fire of London. Work in their books shows a real enthusiasm for learning about

famous people in the past, such as Florence Nightingale. Higher attaining pupils transcend the limitations of recording on a worksheet, adding their own explanations and snippets of key information. A visit to the local war memorial helped them to recognise the range of sources that historians must use, although they were uncertain about which war was commemorated.

- 118 By Year 6, the pupils have improved their skills of historical enquiry, largely because the Year 6 teacher makes strong links between information retrieval skills and history. The work about Britain since 1948 in books appears sketchy, but in fact, pupils have often worked well in small 'research groups' to produce leaflets, posters and oral presentations about life style changes. Initially, they relied heavily on the good quality fact sheets produced by the teacher, but they also selected from a range of information texts on the Ancient Greeks during a recent lesson. Pupils undertake projects at home, and often use the Internet for information, although they recognise that this is sometimes hard to use well because "We try to use our own words but do not always succeed." Nevertheless, the skills of enquiry and communication develop well. The pupils' grasp of historical fact is not as strong. They discussed changing fashions, but could not easily place these against a background of events in the 1950s and 1960s or explain the changes as part of a move from post-war austerity.
- 119 Geography skills develop satisfactorily. Mapping, atlas and general fieldwork skills are less sound than the knowledge of people and place. During a lesson in Year 1, pupils made satisfactory progress in learning about home and abroad, and in Year 2 gained a firm understanding of the family life, religious beliefs and festivals of, and environmental influences upon, a Mexican village. Although their teacher found this a challenging unit to teach, pupils recall the study with enthusiasm. Geographical enquiry and skill development is built up during Year 3 pupils' investigations into environmental change and improvement, and local studies, but progress is variable through the junior years. By the end of Year 6, pupils have a sound knowledge of the Indian village of Chembakoli, and through studies of themes such as water or mountainous regions in the world, learn to make comparisons and recognise physical and human processes. However, they have a more patchy knowledge of a range of places in different parts of the world. This is mostly because the teaching emphasises the process of using secondary information to find out about places and features, rather than focusing upon the geographical points of the lesson. This happened in a number of lessons. By Year 6, therefore, some members of a small group of more capable pupils were uncertain about locating and naming continents on an outline map. Examining a section of an OS in a full map, only one pupil could identify a major road and some were confused about scale.
- 120 There are a number of reasons why standards in history and geography have not risen since the last inspection.
- 121 These subjects do not have a high priority on the school's improvement plan. The time allocated to them is slightly less than that in most schools, and there is a feeling in the school that the subjects have been squeezed by the introduction of the literacy and numeracy strategies and other new initiatives. Short lessons at the end of the afternoon can mean that the sense of urgency to complete tasks takes precedence over real understanding. Year 5, for instance, created very acceptable clay seals in the style of the Indus Valley civilisation, but did not add to their understanding of the seals as sources of historical evidence.
- 122 The critical skills approach is not always well adapted to history and geography lessons. In some lessons, it meant too little teaching of subject-specific knowledge and skills. In both Year 4 and Year 5 geography lessons, geographical points were not given enough emphasis in teaching. Year 4 plotted a route from Barrow to Chembakoli satisfactorily, but did not learn enough about the location of the entry and exit ports and airports to fulfil the task satisfactorily. Year 5 pupils did not distinguish sufficiently between Africa as a continent and the regional differences and countries within it.
- 123 There is no overall framework or checklist to ensure that skills are steadily built up through the various units, to help individual teachers plan for progression and assess the learning.

124 The co-ordinator remains enthusiastic, and continues to do well in keeping up the profile of the subjects within the school. However, there has been no monitoring of history and geography teaching during this year. His role is largely one of maintenance, responding to requests and supporting generally rather than of monitoring standards in the subjects and seeking improvement. He is, however, right to be pleased with the part played by the subjects in increasing multi-cultural awareness and understanding.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY (ICT)

125 By age seven, attainment in ICT is in line with the national average, and it is above average by age eleven. Achievement is satisfactory, and good at the end of Key Stages 1 and 2.

126 This subject was a key issue at the last inspection, and good improvements have been made since then. An enthusiastic co-ordinator is aware of the areas requiring further development, and has worked hard to improve the provision of hardware and the quality of software. A scheme of work is in place based on a programme which overlaps at each stage – this is currently being reviewed and revised. Teaching and learning are now satisfactory overall, and in some classes they are good. Although some teachers still lack confidence in this area, staff training has been effective and most staff have a sound knowledge of skills and how to teach them. Learning assistants provide good support to pupils. Some of the best practice is found in Year 2 and Year 6.

127 There is now a computer suite located in one half of the reception classroom with laptops and an interactive whiteboard. A second interactive whiteboard and laptop is located in the Year 5 classroom. All classrooms have up to three computers which pupils can use to support work in other subjects. The ratio of pupils to computer is now 6:1, which is a great improvement. The school's business partner has provided a great deal of financial and practical support to the school and is due to conduct an audit later this year. This has been another key contribution to improvement. The school has an active intranet site, and a range of equipment including two toy robots, a digital camera, two projectors, a control box and tape recorders. The location of ICT facilities requires further thought in order to allow pupils access to laptops and computers as often as possible, as their current location causes disruption to the classes where they are housed.

128 Where teaching and learning are effective, teachers have good subject knowledge. They are able to demonstrate confidently, explaining the purpose of specific programs prior to pupils using them. In Year 2, pupils designed a 'yes/no' binary tree on a large sheet on the floor, which helped them to understand a new program. Some teachers use good questioning skills and provide clear explanations, building on work in previous lessons and using the opportunities provided in ICT lessons to practise other skills. In Year 2 again, pupils described how they had worked out a variety of calculations associated with the graphs they had produced. When access to the computer is unavailable, some teachers produce supportive prompt sheets, for example, for a lesson about pie charts in Year 5. Pupils' previous knowledge is also built on well. Year 6 pupils were able to write a simple program to switch on two lights, even after the laptop failed. Where learning is effective, pupils are enthusiastic and interested. They know their way around the keyboard and work confidently on their own and with others. Many pupils have computers at home, but almost all said they learned most about computers at school.

129 Where teaching and learning are ineffective, teachers have weak subject knowledge and sometimes lack confidence. There is an inappropriate use of worksheets, and some tasks become writing activities. More able pupils are not challenged, because teaching does not extend their learning sufficiently through the use of questioning. In a minority of lessons, poor behaviour management also results in ineffective learning.

130 There is an emphasis on skills teaching, which is more effective when it takes place in the computer suite where teachers can demonstrate new skills and pupils have immediate access to laptops. In Year 2, pupils can collect, order and classify information about their pets, and create graphs and formulate

questions about them, although the less able struggled with this. Pupils work well collaboratively. In Year 5, pupils can log data, record their findings and print out their work. However, the use of control and control devices requires further development.

131 It is difficult to teach skills work effectively in the Year 5 classroom because of the lack of access to computers. Even when explanations are clear and prompt sheets are provided, pupils can become bored and fidgety because the room is cramped, and the screen difficult for all of them to see. In Year 4, they were keen to create their own pie charts having observed the teacher's demonstration. In Year 3, pupils wanted to send their own e-mail when they had watched their teacher send one. The teacher has arranged to send e-mails to another school and pupils showed that they grasped the strengths and weaknesses of this form of communication in their discussion during the lesson. However, in both these cases, the children did not have the opportunity to practise the techniques for themselves, and this was a weakness. It is also disruptive for the classes involved to use the Year 5 classroom for these lessons.

132 ICT skills are often used effectively in other curriculum areas. In Year 2, pupils typed in and saved the humorous poems they had written. In Year 3, groups of children could scroll through the work of various sculptors and artists which had been loaded on to the three computers, and choose and print out the work they liked. A homework exercise in Year 5 involved children collecting information about water use at home, which was then put on to a spreadsheet in the lesson. Also in Year 5, a data logging exercise involved testing which cloths used for curtains in children's bedrooms let the most light through, using a light sensor. ICT equipment was used to good effect during the Year 3 assembly when photographs of the trip to Keppleway were presented.

133 Occasionally teachers miss opportunities to use ICT. Many children already have a good working knowledge of sending e-mails and this can be built upon and used more effectively. Although there are some good examples of the use of ICT in presentations made as a result of critical skills challenges, some teachers do not use ICT for this purpose extensively. Teachers have been encouraged to plan a specific ICT activity for literacy and numeracy lessons, but this does not always take place. Tape recorders are not used sufficiently for speaking and listening activities, including when learning French. The application and development of ICT across a range of subjects require further development, and it is planned to use a recent ICT update to achieve this.

134 The co-ordinator monitors teaching and learning through observing children's work and interviewing staff, and has a good overview of standards and curriculum coverage. He is beginning to build up a portfolio of children's work throughout the school to provide an assessment tool to track ICT attainment and progress across the curriculum. There are clear accounts in Year 6 books of how to use a search engine, how to use and create spreadsheets and so on, which provide useful reference points for the pupils when they are actually using the computers. There is active governor involvement. The chair of governors has observed lessons and meets with the co-ordinator every term for an update of progress.

FRENCH

135 Children in Year 6 learn early skills in speaking and listening in French, taught by the class teacher. They learn nouns and verbs for everyday occasions, such as saying who they are, or greeting people. They are also building up a vocabulary of written words and phrases. They have been learning the subject for two terms and have made satisfactory progress.

136 This work is to prepare them for secondary school, and to extend their cultural understanding. In a lesson seen, children played a game of bingo using numbers in French, then made a first attempt to write a simple sentence using what they had learned so far, such as how old they are or where they live .

137 Whilst their skills are not yet well developed, this is an encouraging start, and should be helpful when they transfer to secondary school. It is also helpful in extending their cultural understanding, supported by displays of materials in French about everyday life in France.

MUSIC

138 It was possible to observe only two lessons during the inspection. However, additional evidence from singing in hymn practice, and wall displays, especially in Year 6, leads to the judgement that attainment is at least satisfactory, with strength in the composing element and in the contribution of music to pupils' multi-cultural understanding. This is similar to the findings of the previous inspection. It is not possible to make a secure judgement about teaching.

139 The permanent co-ordinator for music has recently left the school, and the deputy head teacher has taken on the role temporarily. Wall displays in the classroom show that pupils have researched the work of various famous composers, and can name their works, and recognise the stimulus and theme. During a good composition lesson in which they worked in groups with a very good range of tuned and un-tuned instruments, they made suggestions about appropriate volume and tempo to represent descriptive phrases from the poem *My Sparrow Gran*. During the composition phase they worked well together. The teacher set high standards by her interventions to remind them about timed entries and exits and variations of beat. The class responded to this and the group outcomes were all of a satisfactory standard and some were good. Another lesson in Year 2 showed that composition is a firm element in the music curriculum, leading to effective progress in this element.

140 Because both lessons involved composition, it is not possible to gauge pupils' appraising skills in depth, other than in appraising their own work. However, at the end of the Year 6 lesson pupils made balanced judgements about each group's choice of instruments. Although they did not use musical vocabulary, there was some exploration of their feelings and they offered constructive feedback to their peers.

141 Singing in whole-school assemblies and hymn practice is confident. Pupils keep together and stay in tune as they did at the time of the last inspection. The school choir enter the annual South Cumbria Music Festival and also sing at festival times in local venues such as homes for the elderly. There is a drumming and dance club, and a good collection of musical instruments from a variety of cultures that are used regularly, through musical links with other subjects.

142 The improvement plan for the subject shows that the previous co-ordinator had clear-sighted plans for audit and development in the subject, including the use of guitars, keyboard, violin and recorders in assemblies.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

143 Standards of attainment in Year 6 in gymnastics are high because the teacher is trained in this aspect, and has high expectations of children's involvement, commitment and achievement. They rise to this, and the quality of their work is stylish, competent and controlled. Some of them achieve very high standards for their age, and all of them achieve well in evaluating their own and other children's work. The teaching and learning in this Year 6 lesson were outstanding. No other aspects were seen with Year 6, and a Year 5 lesson in athletics was curtailed, so that only standards in gymnastics can be securely judged. Children attend the swimming baths in Years 1 and 2, and the accompanying teacher reports that a high proportion of these children already swim competently. As no lesson was observed with Year 2, no judgement of standards by age seven is possible. The full subject range is taught, and the recently appointed co-ordinator is in the process of applying for Activemark status through the local authority. She has attended a workshop, and understands the steps to be followed to achieve this. However, the quality of teaching has fallen considerably since the last inspection.

- 144 From the five lessons or parts of lessons seen, it is clear that teachers' skills in teaching the subject vary considerably, as do the teachers' expectations of children's behaviour and their understanding of the potential levels of pupils' achievement. Teaching varied from outstanding to poor. Teachers' planning, monitored by the co-ordinator, shows that the full range of the subject is taught, and children take part in a range of adventurous and challenging activities, including outdoor pursuits in a residential setting. There are also extra-curricular clubs in gymnastics, multi-cultural dance, football, cricket with a coach from a local club, and rounders.
- 145 The quality of teaching overall is unsatisfactory. During the inspection, most of the lessons took place outside on the school field, or in the playground. Year 1 children did not behave well in attempting to learn aiming skills using a bean bag, and the teacher spent a great deal of time trying to achieve control, without ever quite succeeding. Some children showed reasonable skills, but there was little self-control from a significant minority of the children that affected all children's learning, and made progress in the lesson poor. This class did better in a lesson in the hall, when some of them showed good skills in balancing on a bench or the floor. However, this lesson was also curtailed because of unacceptable behaviour, related to ineffective management of the children by the teacher. Year 5 children also behaved unacceptably, and their athletics session was stopped. They had spent some time learning to crouch for a sprint start, and timing their efforts, to improve their performance.
- 146 Year 4 children attempted a challenge activity in the hall to play trust games such as lining up on a bench in birth date order without stepping off. This session was also marred by too much noise and occasional silliness. The children had been away on a residential visit at the end of the previous week, and were excitable. However, the teacher had too relaxed an attitude about noise and general behaviour. She was also unsure about the organisation of the lesson, which threatened to break down at times. In the end, the children made satisfactory progress in the main activity, and some groups actually improved to be quite swift by the close.
- 147 The co-ordinator has observed work in other classes, and intends to develop further risk assessments for the subject. This is timely, and could well be linked to a whole-school consideration of a standard form of control and management of lessons inside and outside, as currently this is a weakness. The school has good facilities, both in resources and in space to use. Indeed, the outside space is generous by primary school standards, and has the benefit of fixed climbing and sliding outdoor facilities. Children use this well at play and lunchtimes, and this aids their independent physical and skill development.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

- 148 Attainment and achievement are satisfactory, and there are some examples of good practice. Standards and the quality of teaching and learning are lower than those described at the last inspection. The scheme of work is based on the themes set out in the Cumbria Agreed Syllabus. These include studies of Judaism, Buddhism, Islam, Hinduism and Sikhism with some 'cross-faith' links. All areas are well resourced with teacher aids, artefacts and suggested ideas. The co-ordinator manages the subject soundly and ensures there is progression through the scheme of work. Recently, she has arranged further resources and input for the staff about Judaism and is now planning more input about Buddhism.
- 149 Teaching and learning are satisfactory. For older pupils some of this evidence was gained from displays around the school and in classrooms because fewer lessons were observed.
- 150 In most classes, pupils are encouraged to be reflective and thoughtful, and this is supported by the philosophy for children initiative which helps pupils to develop their thinking skills, empathise and question, and also begin to reflect and meditate. Although some examples of good practice were seen, it is too early to judge the impact of this initiative, as it is at an early stage of development. In Year 2, pupils sat around a lighted candle very quietly and were encouraged to think about what made them feel happy. The use of background music helped to enhance the calm atmosphere. The teacher talked about the nature of 'reflection' which enabled some children to focus more clearly. The jump from reflection to writing was too great, however, and resulted in confusion for some children. However, some pupils were able to talk about the religious significance of light. Assemblies provide opportunities for pupils to sing and pray on most days.
- 151 The content of the curriculum is varied. For example, in Year 4, pupils have a critical challenge which involves building a 'virtual synagogue' using an Internet site. In some classes, a supply teacher teaches the subject but she does not plan the lessons, and there is insufficient guidance in the lesson plans prepared by the class teachers for her to teach effectively. This is an issue that the school has not addressed sufficiently in its monitoring. In Year 3, pupils wrote about Rama and Sita as an introduction to Hinduism. They had completed a writing exercise in the previous lesson, but opportunities to use drama, discussion or art work to stimulate and interest the children were missed.
- 152 Local facilities are used well. In Year 1, pupils have visited Furness Abbey and dressed as monks, praying and listening to Gregorian chants. There is a very good display of photographs and writing about the visit in the classroom, and the children got a great deal out of this experience. Year 2 pupils have visited the Buddhist temple in Ulverston and learned about the practices of the faith. A volunteer from a multi-faith library also supports the school and supports pupils' understanding of the similarities and differences between the major faiths.
- 153 The school works hard to embed a multi-cultural perspective into the curriculum and displays around the school and in classrooms often include aspects of different faiths around the world. This is an important element of the school's work in helping children to learn about Britain as a diverse society, particularly because this is predominantly a school with children from Christian backgrounds and there are few other faiths represented in the school community. The Year 2 work about building communities, encompassing 'love your neighbour', supports this approach.