

# INSPECTION REPORT

## **ST. CUTHBERT'S CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL**

Windermere

LEA area: Cumbria

Unique reference number: 112344

Headteacher: Mrs J Whitaker

Reporting inspector: Mrs L J Traves  
24039

Dates of inspection: 20<sup>th</sup> – 23<sup>rd</sup> January 2003

Inspection number: 247214

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

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Infant and Junior
School category:	Voluntary Aided
Age range of pupils:	4 –11 years
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Princes Road Windermere Cumbria
Postcode:	LA23 2DD
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Appropriate authority:	The Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr M Baines
Date of previous inspection:	December 1997

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## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members			Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
24039	Mrs L Traves	Registered inspector	English Information and communication technology Geography History Physical education The Foundation Stage	The characteristics and effectiveness of the school The school's results and pupils' achievements Quality and range of opportunities for learning Leadership and management Key issues for action
13723	Mrs J Overend	Lay inspector		Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development Pupils' welfare, health and safety Partnership with parents and carers
18370	Mr K Johnson	Team inspector	Mathematics Science Art and design Design and technology Music Special educational needs Educational inclusion	Teaching and learning

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## **PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT**

### **INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL**

St. Cuthbert's is a small, voluntary aided Catholic school in the centre of Windermere. There are 76 pupils on roll, aged from 4 to 11 years. Pupils come from a fairly wide area and from differing social backgrounds. Most are white and all speak English as their first language. The percentage of pupils taking free school meals (11 per cent) is below the national average. A significant number live in villages further afield. The number in each year group varies and girls outnumber boys overall. Apart from the reception class, pupils are taught in three mixed age classes. On starting school, most pupils have had pre-school education. Their attainment varies widely, although most are attaining as expected for their age. The percentage of pupils identified as having special educational needs (33 per cent) is above the national average. These are related to learning difficulties. Two pupils have statements of special educational need. The headteacher is new since the last inspection and has been in post for one year. She currently teaches the Year 5/6 class for eight out of ten lessons per week.

### **HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS**

St. Cuthbert's is a good school. It is particularly effective at valuing all pupils, teaching them to respect others and including them in all aspects of school life. The majority of pupils attain the levels expected for their age. Improvements in the quality of teaching and a richer, more balanced curriculum are leading to pupils making better progress. Lively teaching ensures that pupils learn well and enjoy their work. The very good leadership and management of the headteacher and the strong commitment of all staff and governors are ensuring the school is improving at a very good rate. The school gives good value for money.

#### **What the school does well**

- The leadership and management of the headteacher are very strong and effective;
- The school enables children to develop as mature, well-rounded individuals who respect and care for others;
- Much of the teaching is good and as a result, children enjoy school, work hard and learn effectively;
- It provides very well for pupils with special educational needs;
- The strong commitment and teamwork of all staff and governors is enabling the school to improve at a very good rate.

#### **What could be improved**

- Progress in writing throughout the school;
- The subject co-ordinator's skills in checking on teaching and learning;
- The usefulness of teachers' marking in helping pupils to improve,

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

### **HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION**

The school has made very good progress in key areas since the last inspection in 1997. It has sustained and improved on its strengths and dealt effectively with its key issues. The new headteacher has taken a strong lead in this. She has ironed out many of the problems the school faced because of the instability brought about by several changes of school leadership. There are now very good systems for school management in place. Some of the areas identified as issues last time have been turned around significantly. For example, standards in many subjects, in particular information and communication technology (ICT) and design and technology (DT), which were judged to be unsatisfactory, are now satisfactory. Pupils are also making faster progress in reading and mathematics. Weaknesses identified in the planning and delivery of the curriculum have been eradicated and these are now good. The school now has effective systems in place for ensuring the health, safety and welfare of its pupils and for monitoring their progress.

## STANDARDS

The table of standards achieved by pupils at the end of Year 6, based on average point scores in National Curriculum tests, is omitted as there were less than 10 pupils in the year group.

In the 2002 tests, standards in English, mathematics and science at Key Stage 2 were similar to those in most schools, but lower than in similar schools. The Key Stage 1 results were well below average and placed the school in the bottom 5 per cent in the country in reading, writing and mathematics. However, these results must be treated with caution, as there were only 6 children in each of the classes that took the tests. At Key Stage 1, there was a very high number of pupils with special educational needs and a lack of high attainment. There was a similar picture at Key Stage 2, although not as severe. Inspection evidence shows a stronger picture in most of the current year groups, with the exception of the Year 3 class, which has a very high percentage of pupils with special educational needs.

Pupils in the reception class (The Foundation Stage) make good progress in their personal, social and emotional development and are on course to exceed the standards expected for their age. In all other areas of learning, these pupils make steady progress and are on course to meet expectations by the end of the reception year.

Standards are good in speaking and listening and average in reading and writing. Most pupils express themselves confidently. The school's own assessments show that standards in reading are improving. Good teaching of early reading skills is ensuring that most pupils are fluent readers by the end of Year 2. The majority reach the level expected for their age by the end of Year 6. Younger pupils are on course to reach higher standards in the future. Progress in writing is not as sharp. Infant pupils take time to develop independence and the most able in the junior classes could sometimes be challenged more effectively. Standards of handwriting are below average throughout the school. Mathematics standards show signs of rising, with some younger pupils being on course to achieve more in the future. This is because of an improved curriculum and good teaching. Most pupils are now achieving well in relation to their abilities. The emphasis placed on developing pupils' mental mathematics skills and their confidence with number in both key stages is proving effective in accelerating learning. Standards in science are set to rise with more of the current Year 2 and Year 6 pupils being on course to reach both the expected and the higher levels. Improvements have been brought about through a stronger emphasis on scientific investigations and a well-planned curriculum. In most other subjects at both key stages, standards are as expected for pupils' ages. It was not possible to judge overall standards in physical education (PE). Pupils with special educational needs achieve well. Individual education plans set clear, achievable targets for them. The school has set itself suitably challenging targets and is on course to meet these.

## PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Very good; pupils work very hard, concentrate well and take a full part in all aspects of school life.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Very good; the majority of pupils show a high level of self-discipline, both in lessons and around the school.
Personal development and relationships	Very good; pupils of all ages work and play together very well. Strong relationships and care for others ensure a happy family atmosphere.
Attendance	Very good.

The very good relationships between staff and pupils ensure that pupils feel valued. Good attention is paid to ensuring pupils in the reception class feel happy and secure. As a result, they develop good attitudes to school.

## TEACHING AND LEARNING

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

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

Teaching is good overall. It has improved since the last inspection, with more good lessons being seen. The unsatisfactory teaching in ICT and DT has been eliminated. Teaching is good or better in more than 7 out of 10 lessons seen. There is also some very good teaching, particularly in the Year 5/6 class taught by the headteacher. Better teaching in the infant and junior classes is leading to improved learning. Recent training has ensured that all teachers are more confident in teaching literacy and numeracy. Teacher's subject knowledge has improved in many areas and in particular, in ICT. Teaching in the reception class is satisfactory overall. There are strengths in the way personal and social development and some aspects of number and reading are taught. Good and often very good teaching of pupils with special educational needs enables them to learn well in relation to their abilities. Both teachers and teaching assistants provide high quality support to help these pupils reach their individual targets.

All the teachers are very committed and hardworking. They have very good relationships with their pupils and manage them very well. As a result, pupils do their best. Lessons are well planned and teachers' explanations are almost always clear, because they are confident about what they are teaching. This inspires confidence in the pupils. Teachers use questions very effectively to build on previous learning and challenge pupils of all abilities. Resources are also used imaginatively and effectively to make lessons interesting, which motivates pupils. Teachers place a strong emphasis on practical activities and this catches their interest. However, in writing, teachers do not always pinpoint the next learning steps for pupils as accurately as they could. This leads to work lacking challenge, sometimes, for the most able pupils. Also, teachers do not always give enough attention to how children present their work. Also, marking is not used as well as it could be to help pupils to improve.

## OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Good for Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2 pupils. It is enriched by a good range of visits and visitors. Satisfactory for reception pupils. Provision for outdoor play is not developed sufficiently well for these pupils.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Very good. They receive high quality support and take a full part in all aspects of school life. Their individual needs are very well catered for.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Very good. There is a strong emphasis on developing pupils as mature, thoughtful individuals, who show care and consideration for others. The Christian ethos supports their spiritual development very well. The school promotes local culture appropriately, but is less effective in developing pupils' multi-cultural awareness.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Good. The staff know the pupils and their families very well; effective arrangements are in place to ensure pupils health, safety and welfare. Procedures for checking on pupils' progress are effective in identifying their strengths and the support they need. An effective policy for promoting racial harmony is in place, but there is no policy for the identification of gifted and talented pupils.

Parents have a very high regard for the school. They have great confidence in the new headteacher and feel that the school has improved as a result of her leadership. They ensure their children attend regularly and give good support with homework. They raise substantial funds for resources. The currently limited outdoor play facilities restrict the provision and range of opportunities for reception pupils, in particular. Firm arrangements are in place to improve this in the immediate future.

### HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	The leadership and management of the headteacher are very good. She sets a very clear direction for the work of the school and leads by example. She creates a climate in which all are encouraged and supported in bringing about improvement. There is room for key staff to be more involved in checking on the quality of teaching, to share the workload.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Good. The governors are strongly supportive and actively involved in decision making. Governors work closely with the headteacher to bring about change and support her with her management responsibilities.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Very good. The school has very effective procedures in place for analysing how well it is doing. It is very clear about the priorities for development and the best way to bring about improvements.
The strategic use of resources	Good. The school uses its funds effectively to employ support staff and release the headteacher. It is effective in bidding for funds to support improvements. Effective use is made of ICT.

The school makes effective use of the limited space available. It makes good use of the facilities of other local schools and the parish hall to ensure effective provision for PE. The headteacher and governors have successfully raised substantial funds to improve the outdoor play facilities for all pupils and provide an ICT suite. Resources are currently satisfactory, but are being improved systematically in line with identified priorities. The school effectively seeks best value in its work through comparing itself with others, obtaining the best prices for goods and services and setting challenging yet achievable targets for improvement. School administration is carried out very efficiently.

### PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The leadership and management of the school;</li> <li>• The teaching is good;</li> <li>• Their children are expected to work hard;</li> <li>• Their children are becoming mature and responsible;</li> <li>• They find the school approachable.</li> </ul>	There were no particular areas identified by parents for improvement.

The inspection team agrees with the positive views expressed by the parents.



## **PART B: COMMENTARY**

### **HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?**

#### **The school's results and pupils' achievements**

1. Standards are average in English, mathematics and science at the end of both key stages. This is a similar picture to that of the last inspection. In ICT, DT, history and geography throughout the school, and in art and design at Key Stage 1, standards have improved and are now in line with expectations. Caution must be used in comparing standards in the national tests because of the small number of pupils in each year group. For example, there were only 6 pupils in each of last years Year 2 and Year 6 classes. It is, therefore, unrealistic to compare the performance of pupils at St. Cuthbert's with that of other schools, because one child may count for 15 per cent or more. The situation is made even more complex by the varying numbers of pupils with special educational needs in each year group.
2. In 2002, the school's results in the Key Stage 1 national tests dipped in relation to the previous two years, particularly in mathematics. The school fared better at Key Stage 2, with results in English, mathematics and science being average, which was an improvement on the previous year, in English, mathematics and science. Results fluctuate significantly, year on year, as a result of the varying numbers of pupils with special educational needs in each class. For example, in 2002, In the Year 2 class, 4 out of the 6 pupils were identified as having special educational needs. In Year 6, 2 out of the 6 were similarly identified. In both classes, there were a very small number of higher attaining pupils. More than half of the pupils in the Year 6 class had joined the school after taking the Key Stage 1 tests. The current Year 2 class has a stronger profile and there are more pupils of higher ability in the current Year 6 class, although still a higher than average number of pupils with special educational needs.
3. Pupils with special educational needs, including those with statements, achieve well in relation to their abilities and the targets set for them. Their needs are identified at the earliest stages and appropriate help is planned for them. High quality individual education plans guide their learning and help them to make good progress. Teachers and teaching assistants provide very good support.
4. The majority of Year 2 and Year 6 pupils attain the level expected for their age and make at least steady progress, overall. Last year, all the pupils in both classes did as well as the school expected them to, in relation to their abilities and some did better. The school is using the good quality information it now collects on pupils' attainment and progress to evaluate where there are implications for teaching and learning. As a result, the school has made improvements, which are having a positive effect on standards. For example, reading tests undertaken a year ago showed that a significant number of pupils were not achieving as well as they should be. Adjustments were made to teaching and the curriculum and extra support was given to those who needed it. These adjustments have led to a measurable rise in reading standards for a significant number of pupils throughout the school. A similar process was undertaken in mathematics and improvements are also evident, particularly lower down the school.
5. The attainment of pupils on entry to school varies greatly but is generally as expected for their age. Most have had some pre-school education. In personal, social and emotional development, most are likely to exceed expectations because

of the high emphasis placed on this area. In all other areas of learning, pupils make steady progress. The majority are on course to meet the expected standards for their age by the end of the reception year. Children make faster progress in reading than they do in writing. More opportunities could be provided for them to write independently.

6. Good teaching and a stronger curriculum are accelerating progress in English and mathematics in the infant and junior classes. Systematic teaching of letter sounds, spelling strategies and punctuation throughout the school is having a good impact on reading and writing. The school recognises that progress in reading is sharper than in writing and has identified this as an area for improvement. Pupils' progress in handwriting throughout the school is unsatisfactory. A scheme has recently been introduced, but this is not yet taught consistently in all classes and is not having a strong enough impact. Not enough attention is given to helping pupils to improve. In mathematics, pupils at both key stages are showing good progress in dealing with numbers and carrying out mental calculations. By the end of Year 6 most are adept at using strategies such as doubling and rounding in their calculations. They are making good use of their number competency and their data handling skills in other subjects such as science, geography and ICT. Pupils are not as secure in applying their knowledge to solve word problems related to 'real life' situations. In science standards are improving because teachers are giving more opportunities for pupils to carry out practical science investigations. This is developing their understanding as well as their knowledge.
7. At the last inspection, standards in ICT were unsatisfactory at both key stages. The school has turned the situation around. Standards now are in line with national expectations at both key stages and set to rise. All aspects of the subject are now covered in sufficient depth and this is enabling pupils to build progressively on their skills. The school is doing well in ensuring that ICT is used effectively as a tool in other subjects. This is helping pupils develop a real understanding of the purposes of ICT and its every-day applications. They are also proficient at using other ICT tools, such as digital cameras, tape-recorders and scanners. Keyboard skills are not well developed and this slows pupils down, particularly when word-processing.
8. The school makes good use of the evidence it now collects and analyses on pupils' progress to set appropriately challenging targets. It works hard to achieve these.

### **Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development**

9. Pupils' attitudes to school and to each other are very good. There is a happy atmosphere in the school and this has a very positive effect on pupils' attitudes to school life and to their learning. The personal development of pupils, their relationships with adults and with each other are also very good. This results in very good behaviour in lessons and around the school. Parents unanimously agreed that the school is helping their children become mature and responsible and this view is supported by the inspection findings.
10. Children in the reception class quickly develop very good attitudes to learning, helped by the encouraging and supportive atmosphere in the classroom. They are keen to copy the examples set by the older children. This was seen, for example, when they helped present an assembly with the other infant children. As a result, the assembly ran smoothly. Their excellent behaviour and joyful participation added greatly to the occasion. In lessons, they share the computers and other equipment

sensibly and take turns very well. The majority concentrate on tasks particularly well for children of this age.

11. Pupils in Key Stages 1 and 2 are very enthusiastic learners who concentrate very well on the task in hand. This significantly sharpens their progress, as seen in a Year 3/4 PE lesson where the children's very good concentration and application led to improved control of their movements. The same children in a literacy lesson, looking at the merits and limitations of instructions, really concentrated hard and wrote good quality directions for others, as a result. Outside lessons, the children take part in extra activities and clubs in good numbers and with equal enthusiasm. The children with special educational needs also usually show these very good attitudes, both in lessons and at play.
12. Pupils behaviour overall is very good. In lessons most children behave very well all the time. They know what is expected of them and rise to this. This was seen in both infant and junior PE lessons where the children, though working in a relatively small space, worked together very sensibly, considering safety and the needs of others. The movement of pupils around school particularly to and from the lunch hall and for assemblies is very orderly. All pupils show high levels of self-discipline, for example, when negotiating the steep outside steps to the dining hall. Behaviour at playtime and at lunch is very amicable, with all age groups chatting and playing amicably together. There have been no exclusions in the past 12 months.
13. Relationships throughout the school are very good. Pupils and staff work together in a very caring atmosphere, which contributes to the quality of life in school and to learning. Plenty of opportunities are provided for pupils to work together in pairs and groups and pupils respond very well to this. For example in a Year 5/6 science lesson, the children had to collaborate to act out the movements of the sun, moon and earth, which led to all having a better understanding of their solar system. There is a school council, which gives pupils a voice in the school and the responsibility to speak for others. They take this very seriously and are thoughtful about the issues they raise. They use their initiative well to decide which to bring to the attention to the headteacher and staff. Pupils have other responsibilities such as running a Christmas mail service and selling biscuits at break time. They take these opportunities very well and are very conscientious. They have good opportunities to work independently to research their own learning both in school and for homework through projects such as the 'earth and beyond' topic in Year 5/6. All pupils have been involved in the designing of the new playground. Their very good personal development is also shown by their very good awareness of the needs of others, both in the school and in their wider community through their enthusiastic and generous responses to charitable appeals.
14. Attendance levels are well above the national average and are very good. There is no unauthorised absence and the punctuality is very good so that the school day and all lessons start very promptly. This is a product of their very good attitudes to school and supports their learning well.

#### **HOW WELL ARE PUPILS OR STUDENTS TAUGHT?**

15. Teaching is good overall. It has improved since the last inspection, with more good lessons being observed. There was no unsatisfactory teaching seen. There have been particular improvements in the teaching of design technology and information technology, but also in history, geography and art and design, where there were shortcomings last time. Weaknesses in teachers' planning, subject knowledge and

the pace of lessons, which were previously identified as issues, have been successfully eliminated.

16. Teaching in the Foundation Stage is satisfactory, overall. There are strengths in teaching in the area of personal, social and emotional development, which enables children to make a positive start. Good pupil management results in good behaviour in lessons. Early reading and number skills are taught systematically and effectively. This helps children to develop confidence in these areas. An appropriate range of activities is planned for in almost all areas of learning. Many of these are practical and give opportunities for pupils to explore and investigate. In the majority of lessons, there is a sound balance between the activities chosen by the teacher and those children choose themselves. Not enough opportunities are currently provided for pupils to learn through outdoor play.
17. All staff are very hard working and strongly committed to their pupils. They work together very well as a team. These factors are having a significant impact in accelerating pupils' learning. The strength of teaching is underpinned by the quality of relationships between teachers and pupils. Teachers have high expectations that pupils will achieve well. They value the contribution pupils make to the lesson and praise them for their efforts. As a result pupils are motivated to learn and show respect for their teachers because they know they are treated fairly. In most lessons, pupils get down to work very promptly and no time is wasted.
18. Teachers usually plan their lessons effectively to ensure a good match of work to the different abilities of the pupils. Ongoing assessment of pupils' knowledge and skills during lessons is often used well to decide what pupils should learn next. In the best lessons, pupils are involved in this process. For example, a mathematics lesson concluded by the teacher and pupils deciding that more practice at subtraction was needed. As a result, pupils' own knowledge of their learning was deepened and the focus of the next lesson made clear. Teachers are very clear about what it is they want their pupils to learn. This is communicated well to the pupils in most lessons. Consequently, pupils know not only what they are doing, but also why they are doing it.
19. In the majority of lessons, teachers question pupils very effectively to probe and develop their understanding. For example in a Year 5/6 geography lesson, the teacher used questions such as, 'Can you expand on...?' or 'What have you missed out?' to challenge pupils to think more deeply about their work. As a result, they refined their ideas. ICT is taught confidently because teachers are confident and have a good knowledge of the programmes used. Clear demonstrations and explanations ensure effective learning. For example, in a Year 3/4 lesson the teacher's step-by-step instructions helped children to define the appropriate fields they needed to create their data files and to understand the key principles.
20. Learning resources are used effectively. In the whole class sections of most literacy and numeracy lessons, individual white boards are used for spellings and calculations. This ensures that all pupils are involved and the teacher can see at a glance who has understood and who needs more help. Resources are also used effectively to provide the right level of challenge for pupils. For example, simple apparatus was set out for pupils in Year 1 to help them add, whereas expectations were higher for the Year 2 pupils in the class who used mental calculations to solve their problems. Teachers work hard to provide learning experiences which will engage and motivate all pupils, but in particular, the boys. To this end, ICT is used effectively, for example, to add interest to and support the learning of number and

spelling skills. Drama is incorporated, where appropriate, as for example in a Year1/2 literacy lesson, when pupils acted out events from the story they had read together. Good use is also made of group discussion and practical tasks, where pupils are often expected to report their findings to the class. Such opportunities not only motivate pupils, but develop their skills of working with others and increase their self-confidence.

21. Literacy and numeracy skills are taught well. Pupils develop good knowledge of letter sounds, which helps their early reading and writing skills. Spelling, punctuation and grammar are taught consistently and these are often consolidated through effective use of homework and computer programmes. Knowledge and understanding of number is good. Pupils develop good mental agility and accuracy during oral and mental sessions. For example pupils in Years 5 and 6 easily converted Euro, shekels and dollars into sterling because of their secure knowledge of decimals.
22. Teaching assistants provide very effective support to teachers and pupils. They are well trained and use their skills effectively to help pupils focus on their work and make good progress. They work very well alongside teachers, know the individual pupils very well and are sensitive to their different needs. Their work is well planned and organised and helps pupils build up essential skills. Their contribution to pupils' overall achievement is significant.
23. There are some areas of teaching which are not as strong. Although pupils are undertaking a good range of writing tasks and are learning the key features of different text types, teachers are not always setting precise enough targets for individuals. As a result, the most able pupils, in particular do not always make the progress they could. Handwriting skills are not taught systematically enough and not enough attention is given to how pupils present their work. Although a scheme has been introduced, its application has not been monitored and inconsistencies have crept in. There are a small number of occasions when the most able are capable of tackling work at a higher level from the outset of a lesson, rather than as an extension. Occasionally, lower attaining pupils struggle a little, because the concept is too hard for them to tackle without support. Also, teachers' marking is not as effective as it could be. Too often, it fails to help pupils to evaluate what they have done and rarely points the way to further improvement by setting targets.

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

24. The overall quality of the curriculum is good and all statutory requirements are met. Pupils experience a broad and interesting range of learning opportunities. They benefit from a well-planned and structured curriculum, which meets their needs and enriches their experience. The school is working hard to ensure that the learning experiences it provides motivate and interest all pupils. This is a much stronger picture than when the school was last inspected.
25. At the last inspection, planning in many subjects was ineffective. It did not provide sufficiently well for pupils to build on their knowledge and skills progressively from year to year. Effective guidance was not in place to support teachers in planning what they should teach and when they should teach it. In ICT and DT, in particular, some aspects were given insufficient time and attention. This is no longer the case. The school has a coherent plan, which ensures that all aspects of the national curriculum are taught appropriately and sufficient time is allocated to each subject. The most recent national guidelines have been adopted for almost all subjects and

have been adapted to meet the needs of the school. These are successfully guiding teachers' curriculum planning and delivery.

26. A strength of the curriculum is the enrichment the school provides through visits to places of interest, visitors into school and opportunities to take part in local and parish events. This is an area that has been considerably strengthened recently. Pupils have good opportunities to visit places in the local area, such as Brockhole Centre, Skelwith Fold and Carlisle to develop their skills in geography, history and science. Good opportunities are provided for performance through assemblies for parents and visitors and taking part in masses, in both their own and neighbouring parishes. Such opportunities strengthen development of speaking and listening, drama and music. They also add much to pupils' personal development. Community visitors, for example for the Golden Jubilee celebrations and as part of the topic on Victorian life, share their expertise and so make the children's learning more interesting. A local potter has helped the children make wall tiles and a representative of the Swallows and Amazons Trust has visited to donate books.
27. The curriculum for pupils in the Foundation Stage is satisfactory and covers all six areas of learning. However, the area of physical development is not as rich as the others. A lack of suitable outdoor play space and resources such as wheeled toys limits opportunities for children to fully develop their physical skills. The school is aware of this and work to develop a suitably resourced play area is due to start at the end of January. In other areas, appropriate emphasis is placed on learning through play and a satisfactory balance is usually achieved between activities directed by the teacher and those children choose themselves. More opportunities could also be provided for pupils to have a go at writing for themselves rather than tracing over or copying under the teacher's work.
28. The school has successfully implemented the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies and adapted them to meet the needs of the school. For example, in literacy group guided reading sessions are taught, both in literacy sessions and outside these, to give extra practice. Teachers have recently received training in the latest national initiatives in literacy, designed to improve writing. National 'catch-up' programmes have also been implemented and are providing good support for those who need extra help with English and mathematics.
29. The school compensates well for not having suitable accommodation to provide for all aspects of the PE curriculum. The nearby church hall is used for gymnastics and dance and the facilities of other local schools are utilised at certain times of the year to ensure that athletics and sports days can be held. Outdoor and adventurous activities are covered through residential and day visits. The curriculum for the junior pupils is strengthened through the expertise of the specialist teacher who teaches PE in both classes.
30. Provision for pupils with special educational needs is very good. Teachers and teaching assistants understand the specific needs of these pupils very well and as a result, plan very effective programmes of support for them. Individual education plans set very precise targets and break learning down into small, achievable steps. These are regularly evaluated and new targets set, as a result. As yet, the school does not have a policy to identify and provide for those pupils with specific gifts or talents.
31. The good range of clubs which take place outside lessons provide many rich experiences which extend their personal development and add to their

achievements. These include football, netball and gymnastics clubs and also the drama and recorders clubs. They also provide the opportunity to take part in tournaments and performances, extending the range of social experiences provided for pupils. While members of school staff lead most of these, outside experts and volunteers give generously of their time, providing specialist coaching of high quality.

32. The school's provision for pupils' personal, social, health and citizenship education is good overall. Pupils are helped to gain an increasing awareness of themselves and of their relationships with other people as they progress through school. The children learn about aspects of health at appropriate times in the science curriculum. Children are taught sensitively on issues relating to sex education and the dangers of drug abuse. The ethos of the school, the work covered in religious education and 'circle time' (a discussion time), the after school activities and the good links forged with the local community all contribute positively to their education for citizenship. As yet, however, there is no scheme to ensure that children can build on their skills progressively and cover all areas of citizenship appropriately.
33. A number of charitable organisations give money for the work of the school. The opportunities to give back to the local and wider community are also taken so the children see the links as valuable to all. There are good supportive links with partner institutions. St. Cuthbert's benefits from the use of the playing field at a local school and is working with them to provide a dance club funded by the 'small schools' collaborative fund.' This directly enriches the PE curriculum.
34. There is very good provision for pupils' spiritual, moral and social development and the provision for cultural development is satisfactory. Well-planned assemblies and acts of worship are provided which reinforce the children's understanding of their Catholic faith and help them relate their beliefs to the events of their day. The close links with the parish also help them receive support for their spiritual needs. Respect for each other underpins the life of the school. Pupils are encouraged to reflect upon their own and other peoples' beliefs in religious education. Other subjects such as music and literacy are used to help them consider their feelings and values. For example, in a Year 5/6 music lesson the children considered the feelings that were evoked in them by listening to the work of very different composers. Staff value pupils' opinions and they are involved in understanding their own learning through regular input into their own 'pupil profiles'.
35. The provision for moral development is very good with pupils showing by their behaviour they are very clear about right and wrong. They have the chance to debate moral issues, such as when looking at the topic 'The Victorians', the issue of child labour was discussed. Assemblies are also used to reinforce moral teaching and right and wrong are consistently reinforced throughout the day. Ideas of fairness are supported through their involvement in teams in PE and after school clubs. Pupils are reminded regularly of the school code of conduct and the need for rules. The children have the chance to consider the needs of the less fortunate and charities are regularly supported including Barnardo's and the 'shoe box' appeal.
36. There is very good provision for pupils' social development. Many opportunities are given for the children to work together cooperatively and collaboratively throughout the school day. There are very good relationships throughout the school and the children demonstrate this in their very sensitive interaction with children of different ages and abilities. For example, at playtimes, older children look after younger. They are pleased with others' successes, applauding their achievements with real sincerity. The children are involved in sports tournaments with other schools and

performances for and with others to introduce them to a range of social settings. These opportunities develop teamwork and team spirit effectively. Visits, visitors and residential holidays give further opportunities to relate to others and develop their independence. Parish and community links help the children have a better understanding of their part in the wider society.

37. Good provision is made for pupils to develop their understanding of their own culture. Visits into the local area and the chance to take part in local events helps them become aware of their own local heritage. A range of opportunities is provided for pupils to appreciate art, music and literature from Western culture. In RE, the children study Islam as well as Christianity and in geography Barnaby Bear's travels widen their knowledge of other places and customs. However, opportunities are missed to ensure that pupils learn about the rich cultural diversity of life in Britain today and the customs, beliefs and values of the different groups represented in the country.

### **HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?**

38. The school takes good care of its pupils. Staff provide an extremely supportive atmosphere within which all pupils are valued and shown that they are special. This enhances their confidence as learners. Many improvements have taken place in this area since the last inspection, particularly in the procedures to ensure children's health and safety and in the provision for child protection, both of which had been reported as key issues for action.
39. Staff are effective in ensuring children settle quickly into the reception class and that there are helpful channels of communication with the parents to support the under fives. The school provides very good support for children with special educational needs. The good-quality individual education plans are followed closely and the learning support assistants are very skillful at supporting the children in the classroom. There are good links in place to secondary schools to ensure a smooth transition to the children's next stage of education.
40. A high emphasis is placed on promoting pupils' welfare, health and safety with which parents are very satisfied. Staff have better awareness now, than at the last inspection, about child protection issues and these are taken very seriously by the co-ordinator and governors. The school is making good use of governor expertise to ensure the school's procedures and buildings are safe for the children. At the time of this inspection, with the building of the new playground imminent, the school and governors were drawing up a new set of site-specific risk assessments. Healthy lifestyles and safety considerations are taught to the children at appropriate times in the curriculum.
41. The procedures for monitoring and promoting regular attendance and punctuality are very good. The very high rate of attendance has not made the school complacent. Every absence is followed up and staff are watchful for the affect on children's progress of irregular attendance. The school is aware of the unusual pattern of some children being taken out of school in January for a family holiday, due to family employment in the tourism trade. The effects of this are being monitored.
42. All staff very actively promote good behaviour. There is consistent application of the behaviour policy, good behaviour is rewarded using the 'Golden Book' and inappropriate behaviour is challenged. Staff act as very good role models for pupils and they have very high expectations of them. The pupils rise to this and as a result,



behave very well in lessons and around the school. Anti-social behaviour, such as harassment and bullying, has been effectively reduced. This has been achieved by the firm but fair approach to discipline and careful monitoring of pupil behaviour. There is a policy in place to promote racial harmony and no incidents have been recorded. Pupils are aware of the 'Code of Conduct', which is prominently displayed around the school. However, there are few occasions when they need to be reminded of it. Discussion time is timetabled so that children can talk about the things which concern them. This enables problems that arise to be dealt with promptly. Parents are very pleased with the way the school promotes good behaviour and encourages the older ones to look after the little ones, so that they are confident in the playground or around the school.

43. The systems for monitoring pupils' progress were judged to be weak at the last inspection. These have considerably improved and are now good. There are efficient and effective systems now in place to track pupils' progress during the year and over time. This is providing very valuable information for the school in evaluating whether pupils make sufficient progress, identifying those who need support and identifying areas for improvement. In addition to the national tests, the school makes good use of other tests and teacher assessments to monitor how well pupils in each class are doing. These include reading and spelling tests and nationally devised optional tests for junior pupils in mathematics and English. As a result, the school is building a strong bank of evidence with which it can evaluate teaching and learning. In the main, teachers use the results of their assessments effectively to plan the next steps for groups and individuals. However, in writing, although a positive start has been made, more could be done to identify the next learning steps with greater precision. In the non-core subjects, teachers assess progress at the end of a module of work. These are not recorded systematically to an agreed format. However, the school has identified this as a medium term priority, to be addressed as each subject is evaluated. Pupil profiles are kept which include records of personal development in assessed examples of their academic work. These help both to monitor children's progress and help the children develop an understanding of how they have improved over time.

#### **HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?**

44. At the time of the last inspection the partnership with parents was judged to be good. This high standard has been maintained and there have been some improvements. The school is very happy with these links and parental responses show them to be in agreement with this. Parents are overwhelmingly supportive of the school and appreciative of the efforts made on their behalf and of their children. They are aware of many improvements since the last inspection, for example to the premises, computer facilities and provision of homework. They are particularly pleased with the way the school helps their children become mature, responsible well-rounded individuals.
45. The quality of information provided for parents by the school has improved and now meets statutory requirements. Parents of children with special needs are kept well informed of their child's progress and involved in their review process. General information about day-to-day events is good with parents speaking well of the Friday newsletters. They feel they get good information at the twice-yearly parents' consultation evenings. The end of year reports to parents are detailed and give a good indication of the progress made and the areas the child needs to improve on. They show how well the child is achieving and include targets, though the targets

could be better worded. Curriculum information is provided so that parents know the topics their child is studying and how they can help them

46. There is a very successful parents and teachers' association, which helps to resource the school, and so raise standards. Parents do help out in school particularly with the many visits. Parents also feel welcome to join in the special assemblies and they attend these in good numbers. They are supportive of the homework policy and practice, which helps improve children's achievement. They are also extremely supportive of their children's good attendance, which also helps raise standards. The parent governors are aware of their roles in helping the school including communicating with parents and both seeking and representing their views.

#### **HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?**

47. The very good leadership and management of the headteacher have been instrumental in bringing about significant improvements in the school. She sets very high standards for herself and others and has created a strong and committed team of staff and governors. Her very clear vision for the school has been communicated very effectively to staff, governors, parents and pupils and they all support her wholeheartedly. At the time of her appointment, the school had suffered a period of instability. It had been identified by the local education authority as 'causing concern' and there was dissatisfaction among some parents, a group of which removed their children. This situation has been completely reversed and in July, the school was removed from the 'causing concern' category.
48. The headteacher leads first and foremost by example. This is very evident in her teaching, in her relationships and in her support for others. Despite her heavy administrative workload and teaching commitment, she has ensured that very effective monitoring and evaluation of the school's work has been carried out. She has also ensured that areas for development have been clearly identified and prioritised and that action is taken to secure improvement. A good quality development plan guides this work, places strong emphasis on improving teaching and learning and identifies clearly the criteria for judging success. This is a significant improvement since the last inspection, when these areas were identified as key issues for action.
49. Given the headteacher's weighty commitments, aspects of school management need to be shared with others. To this end she has ensured that governors and staff have received appropriate training and support to enable responsibilities to be shared and monitoring to be carried out more efficiently and effectively. A good example of this is the lead the governing body are now taking in developing appropriate health and safety procedures and monitoring their effectiveness. She has worked alongside subject co-ordinators in developing systems for monitoring teacher's planning and scrutinising pupils' work to identify strengths and areas for improvement. Staff have benefited from her support and her expertise. As a result, English, mathematics, science and ICT are well led and managed and are developing well. However, key staff need training in observing lessons if the workload is to be shared and standards are to be maintained and further improved. They are not yet sufficiently skilled in observation techniques and the identification of key areas that require attention. In carrying out her monitoring and development role, the headteacher has wisely sought and effectively utilised the support of the local education authority and outside consultants.

50. The leadership and management of special educational needs are good, Effective systems and procedures are in place, with documentation being reviewed regularly and kept up to date. The special needs co-ordinator (SENCO) has very good knowledge of all pupils. Consultation with teachers, teaching assistants and parents, ensures that individual plans are clearly written and relevant to individual needs. Governors are very supportive and have a good knowledge of the school's work in this area, but have yet to update the policy to include provision for gifted and talented pupils. As yet, the SENCO's role does not extend to the monitoring of work done by teaching assistants, who have a significant supporting role in the classroom.
51. The headteacher has also placed strong emphasis on staff development at all levels and this has been instrumental in bringing about the improvements in standards not only in the core subjects of English, mathematics and science, but in the other subjects also. A good example of this is in ICT, where staff confidence and competence has been significantly increased through the training undertaken. As a result, pupils are learning at a good rate and standards are now in line with expectations. Teaching support staff have received training to enable them to implement the full range of national 'catch up' programmes in English and mathematics. Pupils who need a 'boost' to their learning are receiving high quality support as a result of this. Performance management is also being used effectively to bring about improvements, with appropriate whole school and individual performance targets being identified and support and training provided to help staff achieve these. New staff are provided with very good support from the headteacher and other staff. Support is also sought, where appropriate, from outside the school.
52. The headteacher has quickly gained the confidence and respect of parents. They strongly value the way in which she listens to their opinions and takes their views into account. They feel very comfortable about approaching the school because they know that their concerns will be acknowledged and swift action taken, where necessary. They have also been impressed by the many improvements she has made in her short time in the school. Parents who attended the meeting spoke about the higher expectations of their children, the improved behaviour and attitudes and the increased level of challenge since the current head's appointment. However, they also admire the way she 'stands her ground' and sees through contentious issues, such as changing the school uniform.
53. The governing body is effective in carrying out its roles and responsibilities. Governors give strong support to the school and are very committed to providing the best for the pupils. There is a good mix between long serving and newly appointed governors and they are using their individual expertise well to assist with the management of key areas. Governors who work in construction and engineering, for example, have used their expertise to very good effect in helping to manage the playground improvements which are to take place shortly. They are able to give good advice on design, tendering and health and safety. Governors are keen to develop their expertise and become more effective in their roles. As a result, they have carried out a 'self-review' audit and produced an action plan to guide their future developments. Training is accessed, where appropriate. The governing body uses the good quality information they receive from the headteacher and staff to guide their decision making and to monitor improvements. However, they take their role as 'critical friend' seriously and ask searching questions and expect answers, for example about the recent dips in standards at Key Stage 1. The various sub-committees are clear about their roles and have a clear role in formulating policies and evaluating developments. The chair of governors and the vice-chair, in

particular give very good support to the headteacher and know exactly what is going on in the school through their regular meetings.

54. Financial planning and monitoring are good. The governors use outside consultants, effectively to ensure they have the best advice on which to base their strategic planning. A close eye is kept on spending, particularly as funds are tight. The school's main financial priorities are to maintain staffing levels and provide adequate resources to support teaching and learning. All extra grant funding is used effectively, for example to improve ICT and employ teaching assistants to provide extra support for pupils with special educational needs. The improved standards in ICT and high quality support for pupils indicate that money is well spent. The school has been very successful recently in bidding for funds, for example to improve the playground and to provide a new computer suite.
55. As at the last inspection, learning resources are adequate in all areas, with the exception of outdoor play in the reception class. The accommodation is adequate because the school has use of the nearby church hall for assemblies, lunchtimes, PE and music.
56. The office administrator is very efficient and carries out her role very well. She provides a welcoming and helpful first point of contact with the school. She gives very good support to the headteacher and staff to enable them to carry out their work with the minimum of interruption.
57. All pupils make at least satisfactory progress during their time at the school. Very strong leadership and management and good teaching are leading to improvements in standards. The school adds significant value in the way it develops its pupils as individuals. Parents place a high value on its work. The school is therefore judged to give good value for money.

#### **WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?**

58. In order to bring about further improvements, the headteacher, staff and governors should:
  - (a) **Improve progress in writing throughout the school by:**
    - providing more opportunities for independent writing in the reception class;
    - identifying more precisely the next learning steps for pupils;
    - developing teachers' skills in assessing pupils' writing;
    - ensuring that handwriting is taught systematically throughout the school.

(paragraphs: 5, 23, 27, 43, 67, 83, 84)

(b) **Develop the skills of subject co-ordinators in checking on teaching and learning by:**

- establishing clear, agreed criteria for monitoring teaching and learning;
- providing training for them in observing lessons, identifying clear areas for improvement and giving feedback;
- providing opportunities for them to practice their skills.

(paragraphs: 49, 87, 94, 114)

(c) **Improve the effectiveness of teachers' marking in helping pupils to improve by:**

- devising and implementing a marking policy;
- providing training for teachers on how marking can be used to evaluate pupils' progress and set future targets for learning;

(paragraphs: 23, 86, 92, 101)

The headteacher, staff and governors may also consider the following more minor issues for inclusion in their action plan:

- i) Produce and implement a policy for identifying and supporting gifted and talented pupils (paragraphs 30, 50)
- ii) Provide more planned opportunities for pupils to study the beliefs and customs of people of other cultures (paragraphs: 37, 113)

## PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

### Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	25
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	20

### Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Number	0	4	14	7	0	0	0
Percentage	0	16	56	28	0	0	0

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

### Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll	Nursery	YR – Y6
	0	76
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	0	8

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs	Nursery	YR - Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	0	2
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	0	17

English as an additional language	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	0

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	4
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	7

### Attendance

#### Authorised absence

	%
School data	3.1

#### Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.0

National comparative data	5.4
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National comparative data	0.5
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*Both tables give the percentage of half days (sessions) missed through absence for the latest complete reporting year.*

The table of standards achieved by pupils at the end of Years 2 and 6, based on National Curriculum tests and teacher assessments, is omitted as there were less than 10 pupils in the year group.

### ***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	61	0	0
White – Irish	4	0	0
White – any other White background	4	0	0
Mixed – White and Black Caribbean	2	0	0
Mixed – White and Black African	0	0	0
Mixed – White and Asian	2	0	0
Mixed – any other mixed background	0	0	0
Asian or Asian British - Indian	0	0	0
Asian or Asian British - Pakistani	0	0	0
Asian or Asian British – Bangladeshi	0	0	0
Asian or Asian British – any other Asian background	0	0	0
Black or Black British – Caribbean	0	0	0
Black or Black British – African	0	0	0
Black or Black British – any other Black background	0	0	0
Chinese	0	0	0
Any other ethnic group	0	0	0
No ethnic group recorded	2	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)	4.8
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	18.6:1
Average class size	19

#### **Education support staff: YR– Y6**

Total number of education support staff	3
Total aggregate hours worked per week	58

#### **Qualified teachers and support staff: nursery**

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	0
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	0
Total number of education support staff	0
Total aggregate hours worked per week	0
Number of pupils per FTE adult	0

*FTE means full-time equivalent.*

### ***Financial information***

Financial year	2001-2002
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	£
Total income	166489
Total expenditure	169077
Expenditure per pupil	2348
Balance brought forward from previous year	13975
Balance carried forward to next year	11387





### **Recruitment of teachers**

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	2.23
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	3
Total number of vacant teaching posts (FTE)	0
Number of vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of a term or more (FTE)	0
Number of unfilled vacancies or vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of less than one term (FTE)	0

*FTE means full-time equivalent.*

### **Results of the survey of parents and carers**

#### **Questionnaire return rate**

Number of questionnaires sent out	76
Number of questionnaires returned	22

#### **Percentage of responses in each category**

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	91	9	0	0	0
My child is making good progress in school.	77	23	0	0	0
Behaviour in the school is good.	64	27	0	0	0
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	77	23	0	0	0
The teaching is good.	95	5	0	0	0
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	59	41	0	0	0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	91	9	0	0	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	95	5	0	0	0
The school works closely with parents.	59	41	0	0	0
The school is well led and managed.	95	0	0	0	5
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	100	0	0	0	0

The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.

59	36	0	0	5
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*Percentages are rounded to the nearest integer and may not total 100.*

## **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**

59. The quality of teaching and the curriculum for the youngest children is satisfactory, overall. This is not quite as strong a picture as found last time the school was inspected. There are reasons for this. Until a year ago, when the new headteacher was appointed, the school had not implemented the new curriculum arrangements prescribed for children of this age. As a result, the school is not as far down the line as many in organising and resourcing all the six areas of learning. However, a good start has now been made and much ground has been covered in a relatively short space of time. Also, from September, the combined numbers of pupils in the reception and infant year groups has resulted in the nine reception pupils being taught as a separate group for the majority of lessons. To facilitate this, a new teacher was appointed, who as a returnee to the profession, has required training. The school has ensured that ongoing training, support and advice from the local education authority has been sought and utilised. This is proving effective and as a result, both the quality of teaching and the learning experiences provided are rapidly improving. The further development of the Foundation Stage is rightly identified as a priority area in the School Improvement Plan and well-thought out plans are in place to ensure that developments are built on a firm foundation. The school recognises that provision in some areas of learning is stronger than others. For example, the provision for outdoor play is very limited at present.
60. Planning for the six areas of learning is appropriate and adjusted to meet the needs of the nine children who are all at different stages of their development. The teacher uses her assessment of how well the children are doing to decide what they should do next. Regular opportunities are given for children to learn through practical, 'hands-on' experiences and there is a sensible balance between those activities directed by the teacher and those children choose themselves.
61. When children start school, their attainment varies greatly but is generally as expected for their age. Most, but not all, have attended pre-school groups. Whilst some are very confident, others are more immature and reticent. All the children are on course to meet the expected standard for their age in all six areas of learning, by the end of the reception year. In personal, social and emotional development, most are likely to exceed expectations because of the high emphasis placed on this area. One or two more able pupils are likely to be working towards or at Level 1 of the national curriculum in reading and number.

### **Personal, social and emotional development**

62. Children make good progress in almost all aspects of this area. Most have already met the early learning goals in aspects such as self-care, behaviour, making relationships with others and attitudes to learning. This is due to the teacher's high expectations of them and to the secure and happy atmosphere she creates. The children settle quickly because they know they are valued as individuals. The teacher's warm and friendly manner is reassuring and welcoming. This is evident particularly during registration and worship time, when each child is greeted by name and encouraged to share their experiences and feelings. The children have quickly learned the class routines. For example, they know where things are kept and can get them out and tidy them away independently. They show a growing ability

to sit still and listen to others, although one or two still find it hard to wait until others have finished speaking before they speak themselves.

63. The children settle to their tasks quickly and almost always without fuss, whether they are supervised directly by the teacher or working independently. Boys and girls get on well together. They work well co-operatively. For example, three children decided sensibly who should take on the various roles in the 'vet's surgery' without disagreement.

### **Communication, language and literacy**

64. Progress in this area is satisfactory overall. Children make better progress in speaking and in reading than they do in writing. Most children are confident in talking to others about their work and play. They love to share their news. One or two are articulate speakers who find it easy to explain what they are doing and converse easily with adults. Others are more reticent about answering questions or talking to unfamiliar adults. The teacher effectively draws them into discussion and uses questioning and resources well to stimulate their responses.
65. All the children enjoy looking at books and listening to stories. Occasionally, they 'read' to each other, making up the text from the pictures, using good expression. They love stories and listen well, although on occasions, the teacher could give them more opportunities to respond to these. Most have a good grasp of letter names and sounds as a result of good, structured teaching in this area. The majority recognise a growing range of familiar words. They know that they can find information from books. For example, they used a range of non-fiction books about pets to find pictorial examples of how pets are groomed. The teacher made good use of their findings at the end of the lesson. This increased their awareness of the purpose of books, and also their self-esteem and their view of themselves as readers.
66. The majority of children recognise their names. Some write them independently, others know some of the letters and others are not confident unless they have a name card to copy from. The more able children are trying to spell common words for themselves; others are still at the stage where they write random letters. Writing skills do not develop as quickly as reading skills largely because children are not given enough opportunities to have a go at writing for themselves. Too often, the writing tasks they are given involve copying or tracing over words or the teacher over-directs the task. Although some opportunities for writing are provided in the role play area, children are often reluctant to take these because they lack confidence in their own ability. Best use is not yet being made of the 'stepping stones' of the early learning goals to decide on the next learning steps in writing for each child.

### **Mathematical development**

67. Children make steady progress in this area. Good use is made of practical, problem-solving activities to reinforce children's understanding. For example, the children thoroughly enjoyed matching shapes in a tray and finding the best way to fit shapes together in a box. The majority of children are able to name an appropriate range of two and three-dimensional shapes. They have a growing understanding of their properties. For example, the more able recognise that a circle has one continuous edge. Others in the group can describe a triangle as having 'three sides, three points and three corners.' The children worked hard on open-ended investigations of how shapes can fit together. All of them benefited from the

teacher's encouragement to talk through their strategies as they worked and to try alternative solutions.

68. More able children are getting off to a good start. They solve simple addition and subtraction problems through counting on and counting back. They tackle word problems such as 'Three clowns on the bus. How many more to make 7?' when working on the computer. The majority of pupils have good number recognition up to 10 and some beyond. Most can also count out, for example, 7 objects to match the numeral 7. Occasionally, learning objectives could be shared more clearly with the children so that they have a better understand the purpose of what they are doing.

### **Knowledge and understanding of the world**

69. Children make steady progress because the teacher encourages them to build on the skills they bring from home through a range of interesting topics. During the inspection period, the children were studying the theme of 'Pets'. Almost all of the pupils had had a pet at some time, or knew friends and relatives who did. As a result, they had a wealth of experiences to share with each other. Some of these were poignant, relating to the death of much loved animals. These memories were handled sensitively by the teacher, who took the opportunity to help children reflect on and explore their feelings.
70. Tasks related to the topics are sometimes exciting and motivate the children really well. For example, a teaching assistant worked with a group using the tape recorder to play a range of animal noises. They thoroughly enjoyed identifying the animals and finding pictures of them on a poster. Occasionally, however, the tasks undertaken are more mundane and do not hold the children's attention as readily. Sand and water are always available for children. They choose to play in these areas readily, exploring through digging, filling and pouring.
71. The children are making good progress in meeting the early learning goals for ICT. They are all confident at using the mouse to choose objects on the screen. They click on icons to open programmes and know how to move objects. They use paint and draw tools to create their own pictures and save and print their work with help.

### **Physical development**

72. The range of provision is limited in some areas and particularly outdoors. The school has recognised that this is affecting the rate of children's progress and has bid for funds to improve the situation. The week after the inspection period, building work is to start in order to improve play facilities for the whole school and provide secure storage. Funds have also been provided by a local company to provide outdoor play resources for the reception children. Currently, the children have daily outdoor play sessions with the other children. Space is limited and the surface is uneven, therefore there are no opportunities for them to use wheeled toys or climbing equipment, for example, to fully develop their awareness of space and control of their bodies.
73. The children have regular PE sessions with the infant children. Good teaching is enabling them to make good progress in developing their gymnastic skills. They are beginning to show good co-ordination and growing confidence as they run, jump, and balance, both on the floor and on suitable apparatus. In these sessions, they benefit from the good examples set by the older children, often copying their more refined movements. Tasks are challenging, but the less able and less confident

children are given very good support from a teaching assistant to enable them to undertake tasks at their own level.

74. Good activities are provided for children to develop the children's manipulative skills. They learn to use a range of tools and show developing skills, for example at cutting out shapes and gluing them down. Most of the children hold a pencil and a paintbrush correctly.

### **Creative development**

75. Pupils are on course to meet the expected standards and make steady progress. Regular opportunities are provided for music making and singing with the infant children and during many activities in the classroom, songs and rhymes are used to reinforce learning. Children learn skills of performance through taking part in class assemblies.
76. Pupils have regular access to paint, construction sets, and 'small world' toys and play dough. They enjoy painting pictures of their pets and making 'cakes'. They are able to create their own pictures on the computer screen.
77. Children also take part in role-play related to their topics. During the inspection, this was based around the 'vet's surgery'. In one session children took on the roles of vets, assistants and sick animals. They enjoyed bandaging wounds, giving injections and telephoning pet owners to report on progress. These sessions would be further enhanced through more modelling of role-play situations by adults.

### **ENGLISH**

78. Standards in speaking and listening are above average at the end of both key stages. They are broadly average in reading and writing. This is a similar picture to that at the time of the last inspection. Inspection evidence indicates that standards are higher at Key Stage 1 than in the 2002 national tests, when results were in the bottom 5 per cent of the country. This was because, of the 6 children in the year group, 4 were identified as having special educational needs. All pupils, however, achieved at least the standards the school expected of them, in relation to their abilities and some did better. At Key Stage 2, the majority of pupils are on course to reach at least the level expected for their age. Standards are affected year on year by the small cohort numbers and the differing percentage of pupils with special needs in each year group. There is good evidence lower down the school that standards are starting to improve in both reading and writing. The current Year 5 class, for example, is on course to reach above average standards.
79. Throughout the school, pupils build well on their speaking skills. The majority converse easily with adults and other pupils. Good opportunities are provided for pupils to discuss their thoughts and ideas, for example in the shared sessions of the literacy hour and in worship time. By the end of Year 6, pupils use language well to negotiate, persuade and to present their findings. For example, in a geography lesson, pupils worked in teams discussing the similarities and differences between Carlisle and Windermere. Most were able to put their point of view logically to the others and back up their statements. Pupils reasoned, 'Both towns have got lots of cafes and restaurants because of tourism. Windermere has more for its size.' As they presented their findings, the teacher constantly challenged them to refine and extend their explanations through questions such as, 'Why do you think that? What reasons can you give?' Pupils with special educational needs and those who are

less confident are very well supported and encouraged by the teaching assistants. For example, in a Year 3/4 lesson, one child was enabled to give instructions to the class confidently and clearly because the teaching assistant gave him the confidence to 'have a go'. Other pupils in the class responded very positively to his efforts and he beamed with pride.

80. Progress in reading has started to accelerate throughout the school. This is due to the good leadership and management of the subject by the co-ordinator, who is very well supported by the headteacher in undertaking the role. An analysis of standards undertaken last year revealed that a significant number of pupils were not making sufficient progress. In response to these findings, a range of strategies was put into place. Structured spelling and phonic programmes were introduced, ensuring systematic teaching throughout the school. Staff received extra training and support from the local education authority was utilised effectively in monitoring and improving teaching. Greater emphasis was given to group guided reading and new systems were introduced for monitoring pupils' progress and identifying those who need extra support. National 'catch-up' programmes have been introduced and are proving beneficial to those who need more help. Regular reading and spelling homework has also backed up the measures taken in school. As a result, there are clear indications from assessments that standards are starting to improve, with some pupils showing a 14-month leap in their reading ages. A scrutiny of pupils' work shows that, particularly lower down the school, these measures are also having a positive impact on spelling standards.
81. Throughout the school, pupils enjoy reading. By the end of Key Stage 1, the majority read with good expression and developing fluency. The teacher ensures that reading strategies are made explicit and teaches letter sounds and blends effectively. As a result, pupils are confident at working out unfamiliar words. The more able pupils, in particular, can accurately predict what might happen next in the stories they read, based on what has gone before. They are just starting to be able to work out what characters are like from the text. Most pupils understand what context and index pages in information books are for and are able to use them to find out facts for themselves. By the end of Key Stage 2, pupils' research skills are well developed. Pupils are adept at using books and the computer to find out, for example, information on the planets for their science work. They utilise this information well in the computer presentations they are working on. Pupils are encouraged by their teachers to read widely. For instance, Year 5 and 6 pupils could discuss Shakespeare's 'A Midsummer Night's Dream', as well as J.K. Rowling's 'Harry Potter', demonstrating obvious enjoyment of both. Literature is used effectively in the Year 5/6 class as a starting point for writing. For example, pupils wrote about events in 'A Midsummer Night's Dream' from the point of view of a chosen character. However, pupils are less adept at inferring characters' motives as they read, particularly independently, when faced with unfamiliar texts.
82. The school has recognised, through analysis of test results, that pupils' writing skills do not develop as quickly as their reading skills. The subject co-ordinator and headteacher believe that more can be achieved by a significant number of pupils. As a result, writing has been identified as a priority area for the current year. Staff have received training and new assessment systems have been put into place. There is evidence of improvement in all classes. Writing is taught well in shared and guided group sessions. Year 2 pupils are writing independently and many punctuate their sentences with growing accuracy. The most able are starting to use speech marks in appropriate places. Teachers carefully model the writing process and teach pupils the different features of the various text types. For example, Year 3/4 pupils' were



able to point out that instructions need to be clear and unambiguous and be written in step-by-step order, as a direct result of a game their teacher had devised for them. They could then apply this learning with reasonable success when writing their own instructions of how to get from school to home. More able Year 6 pupils are able to use appropriate joining phrases and devices such as rhetorical questions when writing persuasive pieces. Pupils in both key stages are given good opportunities to write in other subject areas such as history and religious education. Year 1/2 pupils, for example, have written sensible questions to guide their research on Florence Nightingale. However, as yet, assessments do not go far enough in identifying the next steps in learning for individual pupils. As a result, progress is not always as sharp as it could be, particularly on some occasions for a small number of more able pupils. On a few occasions, also, teachers' assessments of what children have achieved are over generous.

83. Standards in handwriting are a weaker area throughout the school and are below average at the end of Key Stage 2. Until recently, there has not been a structured approach to the teaching of handwriting. Teachers in the various classes place different emphasis on the importance of neatly presented work and there are not enough models of good handwriting on display around the school to motivate and encourage pupils to do better. Consequently, letters are poorly formed and inconsistently joined and work is often untidy.
84. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress. This is because their individual work programmes set very clear targets for them, broken down into small, achievable steps. These enable teachers to plan work for them with a high level of precision. Teaching assistants give very good support to these children, both in small groups and individually. They are very well briefed as to what the pupils are expected to achieve and understand their needs very well. They reinforce the main learning points of the lesson and encourage them to attempt tasks independently. As a result, these pupils often complete similar work to that of others in the class and take a full part in lessons. This raises their self-esteem and ensures very good attitudes to learning in almost all cases. National 'catch up' programmes are being used effectively to accelerate the progress of those pupils at both key stages who find reading and writing more difficult. Boys and girl achieve equally well in lessons. The school has recognised the need to engage boys more actively in learning. Teachers ensure that tasks are often practical and that games and drama are incorporated into literacy lessons in an effort to motivate them. This is working well.
85. Teaching and learning were consistently good in the lessons seen. Teachers manage their pupils really well and have very good relationships with them. As a result, they get down to work very quickly and concentrate hard throughout the lesson. Pupils also learn effectively in English because teachers explain clearly what they are to learn and why they are undertaking their various tasks. No time is wasted because children know exactly what to do and the standards expected of them. Effective use is made of resources, such as individual white boards, to engage children and ensure all are involved. In all lessons seen, these were used to ensure full involvement in the spelling and phonic sessions. Teachers use questions well to draw out what pupils already know. Most sessions begin with questions such as, 'What were we learning about yesterday?' Teachers are good at tailoring their questions to match the varied ability levels within the class. Tasks are usually matched appropriately to the abilities of the pupils. Teachers have two year groups and a very wide range of ability within their classes. They work very hard to ensure that all their needs are met. However, occasionally, tasks could provide more challenge for a small number of pupils. A weaker aspect of teaching is the quality of

marking. In most classes it consists of corrected spellings and a tick at the bottom. Marking is rarely used effectively to help pupils understand where they need to improve or set targets for future learning.

86. Systems are now in place for monitoring teaching and learning. In recent months, the school has used the expertise of the local education authority adviser to assist with observing lessons, drawing out some of the strengths and weaknesses in teaching. However, there is still more to be done to iron out some of the inconsistencies. The co-ordinator has little experience in observing teaching to bring about improvements and achieve consistency. The school recognises that her skills need to be developed in this area if the workload is to be shared and the rate of progress in English is to be maintained.

## **MATHEMATICS**

87. Standards seen in mathematics in Year 2 and Year 6 are broadly average. Overall, pupils are now making good progress in lessons and are achieving at least as well as expected for their ages and their ability. This results from the positive leadership, which is leading to clear evaluation of strengths and weaknesses and effective action for improvement. There is a better structure to the curriculum than previously and teachers' planning and assessment arrangements enable careful tracking of progress and realistic target setting. These recent improvements are leading to a rise in standards.
88. Standards seen currently in Year 6 broadly reflect the results of the most recent National Tests (2002). Standards are likely to show improvement in Year 2 this year, over the previous national tests for seven-year-olds. Because of the small number of pupils in Year 2 and Year 6 and the proportion of those who were on the school's register for special educational needs, pupils did not perform as well as those in similar schools in 2002. There is no significant difference between girls' and boys' performance.
89. Most pupils in Year 6 have a secure understanding of whole numbers to 1000. They know the value of decimal fractions and add and subtract decimals to two places. They have good mental agility, using their knowledge of number to multiply and divide by 10 and solve problems involving money and units of measure. Pupils investigate negative numbers and number patterns such as squared numbers and square roots. They use a range of pencil and paper methods to calculate word problems. Pupils understand fractions and some equivalent percentages such as  $\frac{1}{2} = .5 = 50$  per cent. They measure accurately when finding perimeters of shapes for example and understand the relationship between faces, edges and corners of three-dimensional shapes. Pupils collect data, such as the length of time given to different advertisements and represent this in graphs. They are less skilled at applying their knowledge to solve word problems related to 'real life' situations.
90. Pupils in Year 2 are competent in addition and subtraction of numbers to 20. They count reliably beyond that. They have secure knowledge of 2,5, and 10 times tables and understand for example that 24 is equal to 2 tens and 4 units. They use standard units of measure such as centimetres and recognise some features of two-dimensional and three-dimensional shapes. Pupils carry out investigations, for example to find out how many beads they can thread in the space of one minute.
91. The quality of teaching and learning is good. This is an improvement since the time of the last inspection. All lessons are planned well and learning targets are shared

effectively with pupils so they know what is expected of them. Teachers' have good subject knowledge, which enables them to question and challenge pupils well. In one lesson for example, pupils in Year 3 were tested by questions such as 'who can give me a multiple of ...?' or 'how many tens must be added to 40 to make ...?' All teachers maintain high expectations of pupils. Consequently pace and challenge are particular features of oral and mental work. As a result pupils develop good mental agility and are quick and accurate when calculating. Teachers improve pupils' literacy skills by using specific mathematical language and expecting pupils to do the same. As a consequence pupils express their mathematical thinking clearly using terms such as 'partitioning' and 'doubling' to explain the processes they use. Resources such as multilink cubes and digit cards are used effectively in Years 1 and 2 to help pupils' understanding. In the junior classes pupils make good use of individual white boards to make quick calculations. Both homework and computer programmes are used effectively to reinforce and extend pupils' learning. Although the pace of teaching is good, on some occasions time could be used more effectively for some groups. An example is when the whole class is kept sitting on the carpet even though the teacher focuses on one particular group. Those not being taught directly might well spend time on some purposeful mathematics activity. Work is usually well matched to the pupils' different abilities often with several groups working at various levels. Inconsistencies do occur on a few occasions, however. For example, in one lesson lower attaining pupils struggled to complete their work because they had not had sufficient time to think about simpler examples to develop their understanding. When this happens, these pupils make less progress than expected in the lesson. There are also inconsistencies in the quality of teachers' marking. Although accurate and up to date, it does not help pupils to assess how well they have achieved or set immediate targets for improvements.

92. Pupils who are on the school's register for special educational needs are taught well and make good progress. Teaching assistants manage groups and individual pupils skilfully. During lessons, they help pupils keep up with what is being taught, giving extra guidance about how to answer questions. Individuals' teaching is very well focused on specific manageable targets so pupils make noticeable progress during those sessions. Teaching assistants also work effectively with 'booster' groups using a national 'catch up' programme to help reinforce basic numeracy skills. This makes a valuable contribution to pupils' learning.
93. The subject is led and managed well. A recent whole school evaluation of the subject area has successfully identified clear priorities for development. Positive, effective action is driving up standards in the quality of teaching and learning and subsequently, attainment. Systems for monitoring the quality of teaching and pupils' work are established, but more training is required for the co-ordinator to 'sharpen up' her skills in identifying strengths and weaknesses in teaching, in order to continue the current pace of improvement. Recent observations have concentrated on identifying the strengths and have not identified areas that might be improved.

## SCIENCE

94. Standards are in line with expectations at the end of both key stages. This is a similar picture to the time of the last inspection. Current standards indicate a likely improvement in relation to the 2002 National Curriculum tests for eleven-year-olds, and in teachers' assessments at the end of Year 2. The performance of girls and boys is not significantly different. Despite the small numbers in the year group and the relatively high proportion of pupils with special educational needs, the school did as well as schools nationally in the 2002 tests and was close to the average of similar schools for pupils in Year 6.
95. National subject guidance has been adapted thoughtfully to improve the quality of the curriculum and ensure planning enables pupils to build progressively on their skills. Systems for assessing pupils' knowledge and skills have also recently been put in place, which enables teachers to monitor pupils' progress carefully and set appropriate targets. The quality of teaching has improved so there is now more challenge than previously, in work pupils are expected to do. There is now a very strong focus of independent investigative work in science, which is a current target for improvement.
96. There are good opportunities for pupils to link science with other subjects, particularly mathematics when handling various data, for example and in ICT when researching information about 'night and day' and the solar system. Good links are also made with geography, as pupils study the natural environment.
97. By the end of Year 6 most pupils have a sound knowledge of life processes. They understand plant growth and the process of photosynthesis, that plants thrive in different habitats and about food chains and the interdependence of living creatures. Pupils learn the reversible and irreversible changes which can be caused in materials and understand the causes and effects of condensation and evaporation. They know that a force must be applied to move an object and understand causes of night and day and the changing seasons. Pupils develop good investigative skills. Activities such as testing the effectiveness of parachutes or partially filled glass bottles to create a musical instrument challenges well pupils' ability to predict, carry out a fair test and draw reasonable conclusions.
98. Pupils in Year 2 learn about their own growth and development. They know the names of their body parts and know that exercise and a healthy diet are important to good growth. They recognise that animals and humans have similar requirements in food, warmth and shelter, and understand the difference between living and non-living things. Pupils learn that 'pushing' and 'pulling' are forces, and test their knowledge and understanding by carrying out simple investigations such as why a particular toy vehicle should go further than others when rolled down a ramp.
99. Lower attaining pupils are well supported in lessons by teaching assistants. This enables them to take part fully in the activities and receive the help they need with their recording skills.
100. The quality of teaching and learning is consistently good overall although some very good teaching was seen in the class for Year 5 and 6 pupils. Planning for all lessons shows precisely what pupils are to learn, and the way learning will be achieved. This ensures that teaching is well focused and there is good pace to the lesson. Teachers use good methods to add interest for the pupils and help their understanding. Pupils in Years 5 and 6 for example, became the sun, earth and

moon and acted out the various movements and orbits. This was very effective in helping pupils understand the reasons for night and day and the seasons. Good use is made of resources for practical investigations. In a lesson about magnetism all pupils were effectively engaged in learning because of the range and variety of objects for testing. The teacher also ensured that there were enough magnets for the whole class. As a result pupils were able to assimilate more evidence and arrive at more definite conclusions. Learning for pupils in Years 1 and 2 was similarly effective because of the way the teacher matched the investigation to the level of pupils' understanding. Pupils in Year 1 explored the different effects of 'hard pushes' and 'gentle pushes' when learning about forces. Pupils in Year 2 rose to a higher challenge, which involved mathematical skills and fair testing, when they measured and recorded the distances travelled by vehicles rolled down a ramp. Because of the well planned activities pupils develop a lively interest in science and work hard in lessons. There was some good collaborative work both in the discussion about magnetism and the drama of the solar system. Pupils behave very well in lessons and respect each other's views. This reflects the very good relationships established by the teacher and the expectation that all pupils will achieve well. An area for development is teachers' marking which does not always sufficiently evaluate pupils' work, nor inform them about how they can improve.

101. Incisive subject leadership and management by the headteacher are effectively raising standards. Monitoring and evaluation of teaching and the curriculum has resulted in more direction and clearer targets for pupils' learning. Resources for science are adequate and used effectively, particularly ICT, which features well in scientific research and recording.

## **INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY**

102. At the time of the last inspection, ICT was identified as a key area for improvement and standards were judged to be below average at the end of both key stages. There has been good improvement since then. The quality of the curriculum and teaching have significantly improved and standards are now satisfactory throughout the school. Much of this improvement has been brought about since the appointment of the current headteacher, who leads and manages the subject well.
103. Teachers are now using national guidance effectively to structure their lessons and to ensure all requirements of the national curriculum are met. Training has been undertaken and now all teachers are confident and competent at using a wide range of computer programmes and applications. Funds have been used well to improve the ratio of computers to pupils, to group them together in classrooms and connect them to each other and to the Internet. A system for assessing pupils' progress has recently been implemented and this is enabling teachers to have a more accurate grasp of pupils' abilities and plan accordingly.
104. A strength of provision is the way that ICT is used as an integral part of learning in many different subjects, particularly at Key Stage 2. Computers are regularly used to support work in literacy and numeracy lessons to practice spelling, punctuation, number bonds and tables. They are also used effectively to research and present information in history and geography and to monitor events in science, such as the growth of seeds. In the Year 3/4 class, pupils use the computer to compose music and throughout the school it is used for art and design. Throughout the school pupils learn how to use other ICT tools, such as tape-recorders, programmable toys, scanners and the digital camera. By the time they reach Year 6, pupils have a good understanding of how computers are used in many areas of life.

105. Pupils in the infant classes are now getting off to a good start and making good progress particularly in the area of word processing. They learn to use a word processing programme to write sentences, using the various keyboard functions, such as the 'shift' key and the 'caps lock.' They know how to control the mouse to point to icons and objects and click, for example, to choose a different font size, style or colour. They know how to move objects around the screen by 'dragging and dropping' and how to save and print their work with appropriate support. In the Year 1/2 lesson seen, the teacher's clear explanations led to pupils quickly understanding how to 'wake the computer up' by clicking on the mouse. Good questioning helped them to draw on their knowledge of punctuation from their literacy lessons and apply this to their ICT task of typing some sentences. A moment of awe and wonder was experienced as the pupils were shown how if they clicked on a particular icon, the computer would repeat what they had written. Giggles and gasps could be heard around the room! This increased pupils' motivation and they tried really hard. In this lesson, less confident pupils and those with special educational needs were sensitively supported by the teaching assistant. This enabled them to achieve the same results as others in the class. As yet, however, infant pupils have had little opportunity to use the Internet either for research or communication.
106. These skills are built on well in the junior classes. In particular, the pupils in Years 5 and 6 are making rapid progress because the headteacher, who is skilled in ICT, teaches them. More able pupils in this class are very well challenged because they are encouraged to work independently and take their learning as far as they can. In both junior classes, pupils are competent at saving, loading and retrieving their work. They have good knowledge of the various keyboard and mouse functions and a good understanding of how to search the Internet. They have learned to use word processing facilities effectively, for example, to write stories, letters and poems. In the Year 5/6 class pupils have combined a variety of applications to create good quality 'PowerPoint' presentations and slide shows related to their work on the planets. They have researched the topic using CD-ROMs and the Internet. Their written work has been presented in interesting formats, using different background colours and pictures. Different font sizes and colours have been used to add interest and some pupils have even animated their text. Pictures, photographs and drawings have been added to the text and some have recorded their own speech to provide 'voice overs'. These pupils have also learned how to use spreadsheets to monitor events and graphic modelling programmes to design their own bedrooms. In the Year 3/4 class, pupils were learning how to construct their own data files as a first step to creating a database. Good teaching, with clear explanations enabled children to learn quickly and avoid the pitfalls of not defining their chosen fields accurately.
107. In both key stages, the understanding of how to control and monitor external events through ICT is less well developed. However, planning shows that this gap will be filled later in the year, when Key Stage 1 pupils will have the opportunity to use a programmable floor robot and Key Stage 2 pupils will use sensors as part of their science work. Typing skills at both key stages are underdeveloped. Most pupils type slowly with one or two fingers and this slows them down, particularly when inputting text.
108. Throughout the school, pupils have very good attitudes to learning in ICT. They show good levels of independence and collaborate and co-operate with others particularly well.

109. The school has recently successfully bid for funds to build an ICT suite to further improve opportunities in ICT. Staff and governors are currently embarking on the process of drawing up careful plans to ensure best possible use of the funds to maximise learning for all.

## **THE NON-CORE SUBJECTS**

### **ART AND DESIGN, DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY, GEOGRAPHY, HISTORY, MUSIC AND PHYSICAL EDUCATION.**

110. It was possible to see only a few lessons in some of these subjects because of the small number of inspection days. Only one history and one geography lesson were seen. However, pupils' work for the current school year was analysed, teachers' planning was examined and discussions were held with teaching and support staff and pupils. In PE, all pupils were undertaking a gymnastics module and therefore it is not possible to judge standards overall in the subject. No design and technology lessons were seen because pupils were undertaking an art and design module during the inspection period.
111. In all subjects and in the gymnastics element of PE, pupils at both key stages reach standards that are broadly in line with those of pupils in other schools. All pupils make at least satisfactory progress in all areas because teaching is at least satisfactory and often better than this. There are signs that standards are starting to rise in some subjects. For example, the Year 5 and 6 pupils are achieving well in geography and the Year 2 pupils are making good progress in history. This is a significant improvement from the time of the last inspection in design and technology, history and geography throughout the school and art at Key Stage 2. Standards in these subjects were judged to be unsatisfactory last time. Improvements have been brought about largely through better curriculum planning. All these subjects are now planned in accordance with the latest national guidelines. These give good guidance to teachers and ensure that children can build progressively on their previous learning from year to year. Clear planning is also ensuring that all the requirements of the national curriculum are covered in sufficient depth. Resources have also been improved. As a result, pupils' are learning at a better rate.

### **Art and design and design technology**

112. In art, pupils gain satisfactory experiences in observational drawing and painting, collage and three-dimensional work. ICT is used effectively throughout the school to generate art and design. Pupils in Year 1 and 2, for example, created some impressive pictures in the style of Mondrian, showing a good understanding of the artist's use of line, shape and colour. Pupils in Years 3 and 4 used pastel colours and imaginative shapes well to illustrate the abstract theme, 'Shape of Dreams'. Some accurate still life compositions in Year 6 clearly demonstrate pupils' understanding of line and perspective. Art is linked well to other subjects. For example, pupils in the Year 3/4 class have produced leaf rubbings and careful observational drawings to record their findings during their visit to Skelwyth Fold as part of National Tree Week. Portraits of Charles Dickens and Grace Darling reflect pupils learning in history. Some commendable work with clay was stimulated by a visiting potter who helped the pupils create a tile mosaic. This is now displayed in the school entrance. However, pupils' use of sketchbooks to build up ideas as a resource for their work, is not well enough developed. More consideration could also be given to developing pupils' awareness of art in other cultures.

113. Teachers' subject knowledge of art and design and design and technology is generally secure. In the two lessons seen in the junior classes, one lesson was good and one satisfactory. In the Year 3/4 lesson, the pupils were working in different media to create pictures of chairs. The teacher used resources particularly well to exemplify the key teaching points. Different types of chairs were produced for the children to examine the different shapes. They then went on to study the way different artists had represented chairs in their work. The teacher demonstrated the various techniques well. As a result, children were clear about what they were trying to achieve and made good progress. In the Year 5/6 lesson, children built more steadily on their skills as they worked on still life compositions. Lesson objectives and explanations were not as clear as they could have been. As a result, pupils were less secure about what they were trying to achieve. The priority for the subject co-ordinator has been the development of an appropriate curriculum throughout the school and to provide guidance for colleagues on what should be taught. As yet, she has not had the opportunity to check on teaching to iron out inconsistencies.
114. Pupils develop satisfactory designing and making skills as they move through the school. For example, younger pupils make animal models with simple lever mechanism to move the head and limbs. In Years 3 and 4, they use the more sophisticated system of pneumatics to open and close their monsters' mouths. Pupils work with fabrics to design and make items such as money containers and slippers after evaluating some original products in order to formulate ideas of their own. Opportunities are also provided for pupils to evaluate their own work and suggest ways in which they could improve their designs. This is helping them to understand their own learning needs. Good use is made of the digital camera to photograph finished products to keep as an ongoing record. ICT is also used effectively for the design process. For example, in the Year 5/6 class, pupils have designed their own calendars and used a computer design program to plan their own bedrooms. This suggests a satisfactory teaching picture, overall.

## **Music**

115. There are good opportunities for pupils to develop their skills in music. The majority sing tunefully, with a good sense of rhythm. Most follow an accompaniment well, and mostly recall words of songs from memory. Younger pupils use percussion instruments with growing skill to explore how sounds are made and learn to distinguish between long and short or loud and soft. Year 3 and 4 pupils undertake work using the computer to compose their own tunes. In Years 5 and 6 pupils listen appreciatively to music and can discuss with confidence how it conveys different moods and feelings. They are able to combine rhythmic patterns and the sounds of carefully chosen instruments to convey their own ideas, for example when composing 'space' music. Learning in music is enhanced through the regular opportunities pupils have to perform for others in class assemblies and parish masses. The skills of those pupils who have music tuition outside school and those who take part in the school's recorder club are also further developed through these events.
116. Two lessons were seen in music, one in Key Stage 1 which was satisfactory, and one in the Year 5/6 class, which was good. Both lessons were well planned, with clear explanations to the pupils of what they were to learn. Resources were also well chosen and used effectively in both lessons. However, the infant lesson came at the end of a long, wet day. As a result, the teacher found it difficult to motivate the children and the pace slowed. In the Year 5/6 lesson, the pace was sharp and



children were challenged particularly well by the task they were given. Pupils worked very well together in groups to compose and graphically score a piece of music for percussion instruments to show 'fear' and 'elation'.

117. The co-ordinator recognises that teachers have different levels of skill and confidence in teaching music and that this needs to be addressed. The co-ordinator has identified this as an area for development on her action plan. The recent priority has been to put a good quality curriculum in place and to ensure all elements are covered appropriately. She has not yet had the opportunity to observe teaching and use her expertise to identify the areas where improvements could be made.

## **History and Geography**

118. Recent changes in the curriculum and teaching are starting to accelerate the rate of pupils' learning in both history and geography. In Year 1, pupils build steadily on the skills they have developed in reception. In Year 2, progress is more rapid because pupils' literacy skills enable them to find out for themselves and record their work with growing confidence. The current Year 5 class are making sharp progress in geography, and are on course to exceed expectations of pupils of this age, by the end of Year 6.
119. In geography, a good balance is achieved between teaching skills and subject knowledge. Strong features of the curriculum are the opportunities for pupils to study their own locality and to take part in fieldwork. Good use is made of the rich and varied landscape and environment of the Lake District to interest and motivate the pupils. This begins well in the Year 1 and 2 classes, where pupils have good opportunities to learn mapping skills. Pupils are able to recognise the Lake District and Windermere on a map of the British Isles. They also make street plans of the town, identifying key features such as the lake and the various tourist attractions. They are able to plot their journey to school. They learn about life in other countries through following the travels of 'Barnaby Bear'. The junior pupils learn about their local environment through well-planned opportunities for fieldwork. For example, they deepen their understanding about water through the practical, investigative work they undertake at Brockhole Visitors' Centre. They not only learn about the importance of water in their own environment, but also look at the effects of water shortage and pollution in other parts of the world. Good links were made with science as they investigated how difficult it is to clean water. Year 3 and 4 pupils visited nearby 'Skelwith Fold Caravan Park' to carry out a study of trees during National Tree Week. This also linked well with science work on the environment and provided good opportunities for observational drawing and the use of the digital camera to record their findings.
120. Teaching was very good in the geography lesson seen in the Year 5/6 class. The children were highly motivated and interested because the work followed on from their very recent visit to Carlisle to compare its features with their own town. The teacher's very good questioning skills ensured they remembered all the key details of the visit. Excellent use was made of resources, such as 'listening maps', that the children had produced during this visit and on a visit to St. Catherine's Wood in Windermere. These enabled pupils to compare the quality of the environment in each locality, in relation to noise pollution. The teacher's very high expectations and the pupils' very good attitudes to learning ensured that the group task to produce a chart to show the key differences between the two towns was carried out efficiently. The subsequent group presentations to the rest of the class were interesting and informative. These made effective use of writing skills and also developed speaking

and listening well. The teaching assistant supported pupils with special educational needs very well. She reinforced the key learning points and made sure they were clear about the task. As a result, they were able to produce a good quality chart to present to the class.

121. Pupils in the infant classes are developing a sound understanding of the passage of time through comparing life 'then and now'. For example, they are able to identify the similarities and differences between toys and games 30 years ago and now. The more able recognise that children today have more electronic toys and games. They are developing a secure knowledge of events in history, such as 'The Great Fire of London', and of the lives and works of famous people, such as Florence Nightingale. Pupils make good use of their developing literacy skills, for example, to write simple accounts and make comparison charts. They are beginning to pose sensible questions, for example, about Florence Nightingale's life, to research using information books. Pupils are now building well on this firm foundation in the Year 3/4 class, as they investigate the various people who invaded Britain and settled here. Their work shows a good understanding of life in Viking times and is presented in a range of interesting ways, such as in charts, picture strips and narrative accounts. These use the pupils' literacy skills to good effect. Pupils make steady progress in Years 5 and 6. Particularly effective use is made of the computer in this class to carry out research into the Victorian period using CD-ROMs and the Internet and to present their findings. Good use is also made of the pupils' literacy skills, for example as they write biographies of the lives of famous Victorians, such as Grace Darling.
122. The quality of teaching and learning for Year 1 and 2 pupils in the one lesson seen was good. The teacher used two different nurses' uniforms effectively to spark the pupils' interest and stimulate their curiosity. She used probing questions such as, 'What might nurses carry in their pockets?' and 'Why is the watch upside down?' to encourage them to think things through for themselves. The children decide that Florence Nightingale would probably not have worn a similar uniform and are encouraged by the teacher to test out their theory using the information books provided. They come up with sensible observations, such as 'Old uniforms had aprons to protect the nurses clothes but they didn't have a watch.'
123. The headteacher gives good leadership and management in both areas. She is committed to developing a practical, investigative approach to both subjects and is clear about how to achieve this. However, she is aware of the need to evaluate the current arrangements at the end of the year, to identify what is working well and what might be further improved.

## **Physical Education**

124. Although only gymnastics lessons were seen during the inspection period, planning documents indicate that, through the year, all aspects of PE are taught. The school works hard to ensure that all aspects are covered through making use of the facilities of other local schools, field trips and residential visits. Gymnastics is taught in the church hall, a short walk from the school. Pupils in Years 3 and 4 have swimming lessons at a local pool. Records show that the majority reach the national curriculum standard. Pupils' skills are enhanced and their experiences enriched at Key Stage 2 by the opportunities they are given to take part in netball, football and gymnastics clubs, outside of lessons. These are taken by school staff and by a priest from a local parish. There is a good take-up rate and pupils show great enjoyment of them. Every opportunity is sought for pupils to meet children from other

schools and compete against them, for example in football and netball matches and gymnastics tournaments. The school recently won a local gymnastics event.

125. Infant pupils are developing good control over their bodies. Year 2 pupils in particular have a good awareness of space and how this can be used to good effect. They know that they can move and travel at different levels, both on and off the apparatus. The majority can carry out a range of different jumps, landing safely and the more able can demonstrate a good range of balances. The majority of Year 4 pupils are developing good levels of co-ordination and control, for example, when demonstrating symmetrical and asymmetrical shapes and building these into sequences. Pupils in Years 5 and 6 are able to build a range of movements into fluent sequences, working with a partner. The pupils in this class who attend gym club provided particularly good models for others to follow.
126. The quality of teaching seen was good in all three lessons seen. Lessons were well planned and organised, with good attention being given to safety. In all the lessons seen, pupils were challenged appropriately to develop their skills and refine their movements. Good opportunities were also given for them to perform actions for their classmates. In the infant lesson, the teaching assistant skilfully supported the younger and less confident pupils, to ensure they achieved appropriately in relation to their abilities. The use of a specialist teacher in the junior classes is having a good impact on pupils' gymnastics skills, particularly in Years 3 and 4. In Years 5 and 6, although the majority of pupils made good progress in the lesson seen, their skills suggested that progress over time had been steady rather than sharp. The few less confident and less able children struggled at times because they were self-conscious, despite sensitive encouragement from the teacher.
127. Opportunities to assess pupils' progress in the above subjects are identified in teachers' planning. However, as yet, these are not standardised and vary from teacher to teacher. This makes it harder for staff to identify exactly what pupils need to do next. The school has recognised that this is an area for development. However, it is a priority for the medium term, as the recent curriculum arrangements are reviewed and evaluated.