

INSPECTION REPORT

**GILSLAND CHURCH OF ENGLAND PRIMARY
SCHOOL**

Brampton, Cumbria

LEA area: Cumbria

Unique reference number: 112418

Headteacher: Mr A Wilkinson

Reporting inspector: Mrs Joan Boden
12301

Dates of inspection: 30th June – 1st July 2003

Inspection number: 247222

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

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Primary
School category:	Foundation
Age range of pupils:	4 – 11 years
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
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Appropriate authority:	The Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr David Murray
Date of previous inspection:	June 2001

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members			Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
12301	Mrs Joan Boden	Registered inspector	Mathematics Art and design Physical education The Foundation Stage Educational inclusion	The characteristics and effectiveness of the school The school's results and pupils' achievements Teaching and learning Leadership and management Key issues for action
9843	Mrs Sarah Drake	Lay inspector		Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development Pupils' welfare, health and safety Partnership with parents and carers
4295	Mr David Dodds	Team inspector	Science Information and communication technology Design and technology Religious education	The quality and range of opportunities for learning
27337	Mrs Sylvia Oultram	Team inspector	English Geography History Music Special educational needs	

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Gilsland Church of England Primary School is much smaller than most schools, with just 27 pupils on roll. There are more boys than girls in all year groups, except Year 3. There is only one child in the Foundation Stage, and he is taught in the infant class. The attainment of children starting in reception fluctuates from year-to-year because of the very small numbers involved. However, over time it is average. The school is situated in a rural area and most of the children arrive by taxi or minibus. Because the county boundary splits the village, pupils from Northumbria have the option of leaving at the end of Year 4 to continue their education at the local middle school. Pupil numbers have fallen steadily since 1999 as fewer families have moved into the village. All the pupils are of white UK origin, and their mother tongue is English. No pupils are known to be eligible for free school meals. The number of pupils with special educational needs is broadly average. Most of these have moderate learning difficulties. However, an above average proportion of pupils have more complex learning difficulties and need outside specialist help. When the school was inspected in 1999 it was judged to be in need of special measures. By 2001 it had improved sufficiently to no longer require this support. The school recently received an achievement award in recognition of the improvement in standards.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

Gilsland is an improving school with a warm family atmosphere. It gives satisfactory value for money. The headteacher provides very good leadership and the overall management is good. Most pupils enjoy a wealth of enjoyable experiences that not only enable them to learn effectively, but also to mix with pupils and adults from more diverse backgrounds. The quality of teaching is satisfactory in Key Stage 1 and good in Key Stage 2. Standards are improving and they are now broadly average. Pupils in Key Stage 2 achieve well, but higher attaining pupils in Key Stage 1 could do better.

What the school does well

- High quality leadership and management by the headteacher have brought about good improvements;
- The teaching in Key Stage 2 is consistently good and this is boosting pupils' learning;
- Pupils' personal development is nurtured well and this fosters good behaviour and positive attitudes to learning;
- Provision for pupils with special educational needs is good, so these pupils achieve well;
- The curriculum in Key Stage 2 is enriched through a good variety of activities;
- The school has good systems for checking how well pupils are doing.

What could be improved

- Standards in information and communication technology (ICT), and science in Key Stage 1;
- The achievement of higher attaining pupils in Key Stage 1;
- Provision for pupils in the Foundation Stage;
- Risk assessments, to cover a wider spectrum of the school's work.

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 improved at a good rate since it was inspected in June 2001, largely as a result of the very strong leadership and the effective management of the headteacher. The positive signs of improvement noted at the last inspection, when he had recently joined the school, have been built upon well. Standards have continued to improve and the key issues have been tackled successfully. Standards in handwriting and spelling have improved significantly and pupils now take a pride in their work. Standards in ICT have improved in Key Stage 2, although there is still some way to go in Key Stage 1. The curriculum has been enriched by extra activities and visitors to the school. It is now much

more relevant to pupils' learning needs because of the wide variety of experiences that put learning into context. The improvement in provision for pupils' personal development has led to pupils acting more maturely.

STANDARDS

No table of standards comparing the school with other schools is included, as the number of boys and girls in Years 2 and 6 has been fewer than 10 in the last three years. This makes statistical comparisons unrealistic. For example, in 2002, there was only one pupil in Year 6.

Standards in English, mathematics and science are well below average at the age of 7 years because of the very high proportion of pupils with special educational needs. However, most pupils are generally achieving as well as they can, bearing in mind the low attainment of the majority when they started school. The standards reached in English, mathematics and science by the pupils currently in Year 6 are mostly as expected for their age. A very small minority exceeds the expected level and a slightly larger minority does not quite reach it. All the pupils have achieved well since they started in the junior class. The school has set challenging targets for 2003. Inspection evidence indicates that the target in English will be met, but the target in mathematics is too ambitious.

From the early stages, pupils develop a love of books. Even the youngest and least able have a go at reading, often using the pictures to tell the story. Most soon learn the sounds of letters and begin to sound out unfamiliar words. By the age of 11 years, most pupils read fluently and with understanding. They use their reading skills well to seek out information, for example, in history and geography lessons.

Pupils' mental recall of number facts is not good enough. While, given time, they can usually work out the answers to problems, this is often a slow process because they have to think for far too long. As a result, they do not always complete enough work.

In science, pupils enjoy a good range of practical work. However, in Key Stage 1 the limited coverage of the curriculum means that pupils do not always have the opportunity to achieve as well as they could. In Key Stage 2, pupils achieve well. They remember scientific facts because they develop their understanding through practical work.

In Key Stage 1, pupils do not have enough opportunities to develop and practise their ICT skills. Standards are rising in Key Stage 2 and are now average overall. Pupils use computers competently.

Standards in most other subjects, including religious education, are as would be expected for pupils of the same age. The exceptions are history and geography at age 7, where standards are below those expected, and history and music at age 11, where pupils achieve well and exceed the standards expected.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Good. Pupils work hard in lessons and concentrate well. Older pupils, particularly enjoy a challenge.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Good. Pupils behave well in class and in the playground. They get on well together and older ones, in particular, look after the younger ones well.
Personal development and relationships	Good. Adults treat the pupils with respect and kindness, and this rubs off on the pupils.
Attendance	Satisfactory. Attendance levels are broadly in line with the national average. Pupils arrive at school on time.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils in:	Reception	Years 1 – 2	Years 3 – 6
Quality of teaching	Unsatisfactory	Satisfactory	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 in the Foundation Stage is unsatisfactory because the planning is weak and it does not meet the needs of the children. In Key Stage 1, it is satisfactory and pupils achieve at a steady rate. In the junior class, it is good overall and enables the pupils to achieve well. The teaching of English and mathematics to older pupils is very good. The teachers in this class prepare their lessons very well, with well matched tasks to suit pupils of differing abilities. They adopt a lively approach that keeps the pupils interested. Lessons move at a brisk pace, so pupils do not have any opportunity or the desire to wander off task. The teachers constantly encourage pupils to go that one step further, giving them just the right amount of support to get them over any hurdles they meet. The pupils enjoy the challenge and work hard to reach their goals. This was very evident in a mathematics lesson where pupils worked with great concentration and determination to solve a problem that would challenge most adults.

While the teaching in the lower age class is satisfactory, it does not have the same sparkle and challenge. Lessons are not always planned well enough and teaching time is lost because the adults are not clear about what they are going to do. While most children achieve at a satisfactory rate, higher attaining pupils could do more if they were challenged appropriately.

In both classes, the warm relationships between adults and pupils make the pupils feel secure and ready to learn. Pupils with special educational needs are supported sensitively and they make good progress.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	The curriculum for children in the Foundation Stage is unsatisfactory. It does not meet the learning needs of very young children. In the rest of the school it is good overall. Pupils enjoy a wide range of additional activities that enrich the curriculum and enhance their learning.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Good. Pupils' learning needs are identified early. The school keeps a careful check on their learning through regular reviews of their work and good tracking of their progress towards the targets in their individual learning plans. The pupils achieve well because of this good support.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural, development	Good. The school nurtures pupils' personal development well. The school is good at encouraging respect and tolerance and generally developing pupils' understanding of right and wrong. As a result, the pupils develop mature attitudes and are socially confident. The school is doing as much as it can to prepare children for life in a multicultural society.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Good overall. The staff know their pupils very well and show care and concern for their safety. Tracking information is used effectively to check how well pupils are learning. However, in the infant class the information is not always used well to match work to learning needs.

The curriculum in the Foundation Stage lacks variety. Children are taught the same content as the older pupils in the class. They do not have enough opportunities to choose activities for themselves and learn through their own investigation and exploration.

Parents think very highly of the school and what it does for their children. They make a satisfactory contribution to the work of the school and to their children's learning.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	The headteacher provides a very clear direction for the work of the school. He is determined to drive up standards and gives good support to the staff to enable this to happen.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Good. The governors are very supportive and committed to making the school better. They are closely involved in making decisions for bringing about improvements.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Good. The school is constantly analysing how well it is doing and looking for ways to improve.
The strategic use of resources	Good. The school makes effective use of specific funding to provide specialist support for pupils in class. Staff are deployed efficiently to enable pupils to be taught in smaller groups.

The headteacher has a very heavy workload because he does not get enough help with managing the school. It means that he has not had time, for example, to pick up that the children in the Foundation Stage are not receiving an appropriate curriculum. The accommodation has improved and is now good. The school effectively seeks best value in goods and services, constantly comparing its performance with other small rural schools. The headteacher and governors keep a good check on the impact of their spending decisions.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Their children are making good progress; • The school works closely with parents; • The teaching is good; • The school is helping their children to become mature and responsible; • The staff are approachable. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A very small minority feel that their children do not get the right amount of homework.

Inspectors agree with the positive views of parents in relation to the junior class. However, the teaching in the infant class is not good enough to enable children to make good progress. Pupils get an appropriate amount of homework.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and pupils' achievements

1. Children's abilities on entry to the reception class fluctuate widely from year-to-year because of the very small numbers involved. However, over time they are average. Standards of attainment at the end of the Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1 again vary widely because of the composition of the cohorts, but most children achieve at a satisfactory rate in relation to their abilities.
2. National Curriculum test results have to be treated with caution for the same reason. In 2001, for example, the test results for 7-year-olds in reading, writing and mathematics were in the top 5 per cent of schools nationally but there was only one pupil involved. In contrast, the attainment of pupils currently in Year 2 is well below average because two of the three pupils have special educational needs and one has only recently joined the school. Despite the low standards, all the pupils are making satisfactory progress.
3. In Key Stage 2, pupil numbers are again very small and the composition of the year groups changes, as pupils leave and join the school part way through their primary education. For this reason, it is unrealistic to look for trends. In 2002, for example, overall standards were very high in mathematics and science because the one pupil involved achieved the higher Level 5.
4. Most of the pupils currently in Year 6 have reached the standards expected for their age in English, mathematics and science, with only a very small minority exceeding this level. This indicates good progress and achievement from the low standards these pupils achieved at the end of Year 2.
5. The school sets challenging targets for English and mathematics. These again fluctuate because they are based securely on the teachers' knowledge of the pupils. Inspection evidence indicates that, while the latest target for English will be achieved, the target for mathematics will not be met.
6. The pupils speak clearly and confidently because of the good opportunities teachers provide in lessons for them to share their ideas and explain what they have learned. Pupils throughout the school show a keen interest in books. By the age of 11 years, most pupils read fluently and with good expression. They use their reading skills well to research information in other subjects. The school has put good emphasis on improving pupils' handwriting and spelling and this has paid off. Pupils write for a wide range of purposes and their work is neat.
7. Pupils work hard to solve mathematical problems and usually manage to find solutions. However, their recall of number facts is not fast and accurate enough and this slows them down. They know that there is usually more than one way to arrive at an answer and that all methods are valid.
8. In science in Key Stage 2, pupils achieve well because of the rich curriculum. Learning is rooted firmly in practical work, so the pupils develop a good understanding of scientific facts. Standards in ICT are below average in Key Stage 1, mainly because the pupils do not have enough time and opportunities to learn and develop their skills. By the end of Key Stage 2, standards are in line with those

expected of pupils of the same age. Pupils particularly enjoy the creative aspects when they can use their skills of combining text and graphics to produce eye-catching publications.

9. In most other subjects, including religious education, standards are average. However, the poor language skills of the pupils with special educational needs limit their progress in geography and history and overall standards are below those expected. In music and history, pupils in Key Stage 2 achieve well and standards at age 11 are above average.
10. Most of the children with special educational needs attain standards that are well below average for English and mathematics because they are slower to acquire literacy and numeracy skills. However, they all make good progress because of the good support they receive. Work is matched carefully to their needs and is based on regular and accurate assessments of their previous learning.
11. Higher attaining pupils in the infant class do not always achieve as well as they could because they are not challenged enough. Most of the work is presented at the same level. In Key Stage 2, higher attainers achieve well in all subjects because the work is matched more accurately to their needs and teachers expect more of them. The school has started recently to identify particularly gifted and talented pupils. However, this has not yet had an impact on their progress because their work is not planned specifically to enable them to achieve as well as they might.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

12. Pupils have maintained the good standards of behaviour and attitudes towards work that were noted at the last inspection as a big improvement on what had gone before. The school is an orderly, friendly community in which older pupils in particular are good at helping younger ones and making allowances for those who find it difficult to behave well all the time.
13. Pupils show interest in activities and are happy to become involved and volunteer ideas, because they know that their suggestions are valued by staff. They particularly enjoy history and music, with a good take up by older pupils for guitar lessons. They generally rise well to challenges posed by teachers as, for instance, in a mathematics lesson for junior pupils where timed activities and demanding tasks ensured that all pupils enjoyed themselves and worked hard. Older pupils listen well to instructions but occasionally the attention of younger pupils wanders, which means that the pace of their learning slows.
14. The school has not excluded any pupil in recent years and, overall, pupils behave well. The good quality of relationships means that pupils want to please their teachers and they respond well to being reminded, when necessary, about the school's expectations of behaviour. They work well in pairs and small groups, which often include pupils of different ages and abilities. There is no evidence of bullying or other forms of harassment. In a physical education lesson for pupils from reception to Year 3, it was a pleasure to see how well they all coped with the difficulties posed by the cramped hall and how the older pupils adapted their throwing of the ball to help younger pupils catch it. Pupils are patient with each other and most have a good understanding of the need to respect others' beliefs and feelings. They are prepared to be surprised by life, breathing an audible 'Wow!' in assembly at a highly detailed pre-Raphaelite painting of the pharaoh's daughter with Moses in his basket. Through their discussions about class rules and through the recently established school

council, pupils are beginning to use their initiative and contribute responsibly to the running of their school.

15. In the most recent reporting year, pupils' levels of attendance were very high. However, this year they have dropped back to being broadly in line with the national average, mainly due to the unavoidable absence of a few pupils for medical reasons. In a small school, one pupil's absence affects the overall figures greatly. Pupils' punctuality is also satisfactory.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS OR STUDENTS TAUGHT?

16. The overall impact of teaching on pupils' learning as they move through the school is good. The best teaching is in Key Stage 2, where the consistently good teaching of English and mathematics is enabling pupils of all abilities to make good progress and achieve well.
17. Teaching in the Foundation Stage is unsatisfactory. In Key Stage 1, it is satisfactory overall and enables children to achieve at a steady rate. However, work is not always matched accurately enough to the children's needs. In particular, it is not always challenging enough for higher attaining children. This means that they do not always learn as well as they could. The over reliance on prescriptive worksheets diminishes the opportunity for pupils to express their own ideas. The classroom assistant makes a good contribution to children's learning because she knows them well and gives sensitive support when necessary. However, the class teacher does not always make the best use of her in lessons.
18. Reading is taught well throughout the school. In the early stages, children are taught effectively the names and sounds of letters and letter combinations. This helps them to sound out unfamiliar words for themselves, which builds their confidence and encourages them to read more. Older pupils achieve well in reading because teachers introduce them to a good range of texts. The lively approach to lessons makes the pupils want to learn and find further information for themselves either from books or the Internet. This gives purpose to their reading and spurs them on.
19. Teachers are good at linking reading with writing, to show pupils how to organise their writing and inspire them to write creatively. The pupils are encouraged successfully to use expressive language to engage the attention of the reader. As a result, they see themselves as authors when they write. The success of this was acknowledged recently when one of the girls won a competition and had her poem read out on the radio.
20. The teaching of mathematics is very ordinary in Key Stage 1, but it is very good in Key Stage 2. Here, lessons are lively and provide a good level of challenge to pupils of all abilities. Time is used well at the beginnings of lessons to sharpen pupils' mental skills before challenging them to use their knowledge to solve problems. As with English, pupils make good progress and achieve well. By contrast, much of the work in the very small Key Stage 1 class is pitched at the same level and usually aimed at the lower attaining pupils. This means that higher attaining pupils waste a lot of time while the teacher gives lengthy explanations to those who do not grasp ideas as quickly.
21. Pupils with special educational needs are taught well. All the staff are strongly committed to moving the children's learning forward in a steady and systematic way. The experienced classroom assistant working with small groups of younger children

and with individuals makes a very valuable contribution. The children make good progress because of the support they receive. This was seen in a mathematics lesson in Key Stage 2. The teacher's tailoring of questions specifically so that the pupils with special needs could answer them raised their self-esteem. The fact that they could join in well with the lesson spurred them on to try even harder.

22. Although a good science lesson was seen in Key Stage 1 during the inspection, the overall impact of teaching on pupils' learning over time is just satisfactory. Despite the rich environment and the practical approach in some aspects, there is an over reliance on prescriptive worksheets that do not encourage the children to think for themselves. The teaching of science is good in Key Stage 2. The work is challenging and the pupils have good opportunities to plan and carry out their own investigations.
23. The teaching of ICT is unsatisfactory in Key Stage 1. Pupils make unsatisfactory progress because the teacher does not pay enough attention to teaching the basic skills of using the computer and does not plan effectively to take learning forward. It is satisfactory in Key Stage 2. Consequently pupils achieve at a satisfactory rate.
24. There are no significant strengths in the teaching in Key Stage 1. The main strengths in Key Stage 2 lie in the detailed planning and the high quality marking of pupils' work. Teachers match work accurately to pupils' needs and give helpful written comments, pointing out how their work could be improved. The very good relationships between teachers and pupils create a good atmosphere for learning. Pupils feel secure and work hard to please their teachers.
25. The quality of teaching in most other subjects is satisfactory. The exceptions are music in Key Stage 1 and history and religious education in Key Stage 2 where the quality of teaching is good. The main strength in these subjects is the teachers' good subject knowledge that gives them the confidence to give pupils reliable information. They adopt a lively and varied approach. This keeps the pupils interested and keen to learn.

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

26. The curriculum in the Foundation Stage is unsatisfactory. It is not planned well enough to take account of the learning needs of very young children. Children do not have the range of experiences that they need in all the areas of learning.
27. The curriculum for children in Key Stage 1 is satisfactory and for those in Key Stage 2 it is good. This is an improvement since the last inspection. The curriculum includes all the required subjects, including personal, health, social and citizenship education (PSHCE), and the school uses the nationally recommended schemes of work effectively to make sure the content is covered. The strategies for teaching literacy and numeracy are good because the pupils have plenty of opportunities in other subjects to practise what they learn in English and mathematics lessons. Whilst in Key Stage 2 the curriculum is planned well to build on pupils' prior learning, this is not always the case in Key Stage 1. Higher attaining pupils, in particular, are not always challenged sufficiently. This means that they do not always achieve as well as they could. The locally agreed religious education syllabus is used effectively.

28. Many additional features enrich the curriculum. The headteacher is mindful that children in a small rural school, where there are some very small year groups, often have limited opportunities to see the wider world. He has devoted much time and energy to ensuring that the children have a wide range of opportunities to broaden their contacts. There are productive links with other local schools, including the secondary school, for curriculum, social and sporting purposes and the children have benefited accordingly.
29. There is a very wide range of after school activities. This provision is greatly appreciated by the parents and is heavily subscribed. Subjects are enriched by extension activities, such as an art and music day that was developed from a visit by an Indian dancer and an ICT day when the Key Stage 2 pupils worked with a visiting 'expert' to create a school website. Physical education provision is enriched by tuition and coaching for many sports, and sporting events and competitions with neighbouring schools. For example, these include the current introduction of short tennis to the Key Stage 1 pupils and links with other local schools for seasonal sports, which include tag-rugby and cross-country running. The school has forged effective links with local industries. The water board and the power providers both make valuable contributions to the science curriculum. The latter recently provided a 'Bright Sparks!' day when the older children could investigate electric circuits.
30. The curriculum is further enhanced by the many connections that are made across the subjects to make the learning relevant within purposeful contexts. Visitors to school are immediately greeted by a beautifully made 'Roman' mosaic in the entrance hall, that was made by the older pupils as part of a combined religious education, art and design and history project that used the school's superb location on Hadrian's Wall to very good effect. The provision for pupils to learn ICT skills is unsatisfactory at Key Stage 1 because they do not have enough opportunities to use computers and other devices.
31. The provision for pupils' PSHCE is appropriate, with planned opportunities linked to the science curriculum and 'Circle Time' classroom discussions. There is an additional health and sex education programme for the oldest pupils.
32. The school gives good support to pupils with special educational needs. This is an improvement since the time of the last inspection. There is a helpful policy that includes advice on identifying those children who have special educational needs. The school keeps a list of children who are very able or gifted and talented, but does not yet have a policy which fully addresses the needs of this small group. Consequently, there is no formal system to give advice on how planning and teaching needs to be adapted to ensure these children make the most progress possible.
33. The school promotes pupils' personal development well, an improvement since the previous inspection when its provision was judged to be sound. All its policies and daily practice are based on promoting respect and tolerance. Staff set good examples to pupils through the way that they work well together and take time to listen to pupils' ideas and concerns.
34. The provision for pupils' spiritual development is good. Displays throughout the building encourage pupils to look closely at life and to broaden their horizons. The detailed posters and photographs of, for instance, ladybirds and caterpillars in Key Stage 1 and the world from outer space in Key Stage 2, entice the viewer to marvel at the wonders of the world. Pupils respond well to this so that, for instance, an infant pupil was thrilled, and immediately wanted to share his observations with his

classmates, when he noticed that a bean had sprouted. Staff encourage pupils to think about their own and others' feelings, both in specific timetabled discussions and in everyday lessons, such as history and English. Through discussion, they help pupils to grow in their understanding of their own and others' behaviour, and to develop strategies to cope with feelings such as anger or sadness. Prayers before lunch and at the end of the day in assembly acknowledge the presence of a greater being. Following a suggestion of the school council, there is now a choice of grace before meals, which helps to keep this prayer meaningful.

35. Pupils' moral and social development is nurtured well. At the start of each academic year, pupils discuss the school's six 'Golden Rules' and may create their own classroom rules. Younger pupils often want to make their mark in this way but, by the time they reach the junior class, pupils are quite discerning in their understanding that the 'Golden Rules' work well in all situations. They are quick to question those who, for instance, laugh at others and they have a keen interest in environmental issues. The school encourages pupils to support those less fortunate than themselves through, for instance, fundraising or donating toys for presents through Operation Christmas Child. Whenever possible, staff organise joint activities, such as the recent residential visit to Edinburgh, with other local schools so that pupils can mix with a wider group of children of similar age to their own. Within school, the house teams and school council help to strengthen pupils' sense of contributing to a community. Friday's 'Bee Book' assembly is much looked forward to as a time of celebration, with the unusual added touch that pupils may nominate each other or staff for commendations, as well as staff, including midday assistants, nominating pupils.
36. The school also promotes pupils' cultural development well. Staff are very aware of the urgent need to broaden pupils' horizons and deepen their understanding of life beyond the immediate locality and provide them with good opportunities to do so. Throughout the year, pupils enjoy visits from a wide variety of different individuals and groups and also extend their knowledge through visiting places of interest. History, art and music are used particularly well as vehicles for extending pupils' cultural development and also for welcoming members of the community into school to share their knowledge of local heritage. The current 'Passage to India' topic has introduced pupils to aspects of the Hindu religion, gamelan music and shadow puppets, batik work and Indian dance. They are also introduced 'incidentally' to the concept that it is quite normal for people of Indian ethnicity to be born, brought up, live and work in Britain. An earlier topic on local history held much interest for the school's neighbours as well as its pupils. It unearthed fascinating information about different generations of villagers and the top secret testing of rocket launchers a few miles away in the 1960s.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

37. One of the big advantages of a small school is that staff know the pupils very well as individuals, and this means that they are alert to their changing needs and can be swift to offer them support. Parents particularly appreciate the good quality care that staff provide for their children which helps to create the happy, relaxed atmosphere that pervades the school. There are no formal methods for monitoring pupils' personal development but the good relationships between staff and pupils ensure that they receive consistent, good quality support.

38. The procedures to ensure child protection are good with up-to-date training, clear guidance, confidential record keeping and, most important, staff members' action that is guided by their sensitivity to changes in pupils' attitudes or behaviour. Day-to-day arrangements relating to health and safety are also good, both in lessons and, for example, in taking measures to ensure that pupils are kept away from the dangers of neighbouring land. Much has improved in this area since the arrival of the current headteacher but the school has not yet managed to conduct risk assessments to cover a sufficiently wide range of activities.
39. There are very good arrangements to promote good attendance and punctuality with careful registration and monitoring of pupils' absence, good liaison with the education welfare officer and prompt questioning of parents should there be any concerns. The procedures to promote good behaviour are also very good and have been highly effective in bringing about the good improvement in pupils' attitudes and achievement, especially among older pupils. Staff's expectations of behaviour are high and they are calm yet determined in persuading those who find it hard to maintain the expected standard. When necessary, staff monitor pupils whose behaviour is causing concern but, more generally, taking the time to talk with pupils is enough to bring them back into line.
40. The school's systems for checking pupils' progress are good. The improvements identified during the last inspection have been built upon and now there are appropriate procedures in place for all subjects except music. In some subjects, where the school uses the national guidance, such as design and technology and ICT, assessment is linked to the scheme. As this is not linked to National Curriculum levels, teachers are not sufficiently aware of whether the pupils have reached the standards expected for their age. The information is not always precise enough to guide planning for the next steps in learning. The assessment co-ordinator has identified this as an area for improvement in his latest action plan.
41. The procedures for assessment in English, mathematics and science are good. The school makes satisfactory use of assessment information to group pupils by ability and to identify those who will benefit most from additional support, particularly in English. The school carries out a range of tests to closely monitor the progress of pupils, particularly in Key Stage 2. Good tracking procedures are in place to check on the progress of individual pupils. The school uses the tracking well to pick up pupils who are not making the progress expected. The results of the Year 2 statutory assessments in English and mathematics are analysed effectively to identify what pupils are good at and what needs to be improved. Teachers' assessments of pupils' attainments are accurate because they work closely with a neighbouring school to get a broader overview.
42. Day-to-day assessment is often used well, guided by particularly helpful policies on assessment and marking. The teachers use questioning well to probe what pupils understand during lessons. Intervention by teachers during pupils' work is often used effectively to help pupils' progress. The marking system is used to great effect, especially in Key Stage 2, to give pupils 'tips' and indications of how to make further progress in the subject. Teachers are beginning to evaluate their lessons in order to modify the future teaching programme in the light of the gains pupils have made in knowledge and understanding.
43. Assessment procedures for children in the Foundation Stage are satisfactory, but the information gained is not always used effectively to plan the next steps in learning.

However, because the class is very small the teacher knows the children well and they get good support when they need it.

44. Assessment is used well by teachers in preparing appropriately matched learning activities for pupils with special educational needs and they make good progress. The targets set in their individual learning plans are closely monitored and reviewed to ensure they match what the children need next.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

45. Parents and carers hold the school in a very positive light and appreciate the opportunities that staff provide for their children. The responses to the questionnaire, at the meeting held prior to the inspection and when speaking to parents individually were exceptionally positive. It is clear that they feel well informed, find staff very approachable and consider that their children make good all round progress during their time at the school.
46. The school is very welcoming of parental participation in all aspects of its life but, although they willingly provide a rota to run the breakfast club, many parents are reluctant to become actively involved in events. Although invited, only one attended the 'Bright Sparks' electricity day for junior pupils and none arrived for the most recent meeting of the Friends of Gilsland School. However, attendance at information evenings to discuss pupils' work is good and, to a varying extent, parents listen to their children read at home and encourage them to complete their homework.
47. The overall quality of information for parents is satisfactory. The prospectus and governors' annual report provide a clear picture of school life while regular newsletters keep parents informed of topical events and give good notice of important dates. Currently, the school provides very basic information for parents about what their children will be learning in the coming half term, but there are firm plans to improve this in the next academic year. Pupils' progress reports are unsatisfactory in that they do not provide sufficient information about the standards they achieve in different subjects, or whether they are working at, above or below, the levels expected for their age group. Comments such as: 'Understands different kinds of writing (eg. factual, fiction, poetry)' are not detailed enough to help parents understand how much progress their child has made over the preceding year and targets such as: 'Continue to work hard at handwriting' are, again, not specific enough to help parents understand what their child needs to concentrate on particularly in order to improve.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

48. The headteacher gives a very good steer to the work of the school. He is committed to raising standards and providing the best possible education for pupils of all abilities. He has kept up the momentum that was such a crucial factor in the decision at the last inspection to remove the school from the category requiring special measures.
49. The headteacher provides very good leadership. He is a very good class teacher and this enables him to give advice and support to staff confidently. He is well aware of what the school needs to do to improve further and has clear and realistic plans to bring about those improvements.
50. The headteacher has a very heavy workload, including a large teaching commitment. He also has the added burden of coordinating most subjects. This affects his

capacity to check on work in other areas. For example, management of the curriculum needs more attention because the provision for children in the Foundation Stage is unsatisfactory and this undermines their progress.

51. The monitoring of teaching and learning is good overall. This has resulted in improved standards in English and mathematics. The school analyses the results of tests effectively to track pupils' progress and identify areas of weakness. The recently introduced good tracking systems enable the school to keep a 'close eye' on how well pupils are doing and whether individual pupils are achieving well enough. A weakness in the monitoring is that not enough attention is paid to monitoring the curriculum. For example, he has not picked up that there are gaps in science and ICT in Key Stage 1.
52. The continuing professional development of staff is given a high priority. Performance management is in place, with objectives linked to the targets in the school improvement plan and to teachers' individual needs. Teachers get good quality written and oral feedback from lesson observations. Areas for improvement are identified clearly, and teachers are supported very effectively to meet their targets. The infant teacher, for example, has had good opportunities to observe good practice in other schools and to work alongside other teachers.
53. The management of provision for pupils with special educational needs has improved since the last inspection and is now good. The co-ordinator is well qualified and she has produced very good systems with which to monitor the progress of pupils. Targets are precise and regular reviews take place to measure pupils' learning.
54. The school is constantly seeking ways to improve and works effectively with other local schools in seeking improvements. The key issues in the last report have been tackled well. The school improvement plan is a well thought out working document. It is very detailed and well focused on improvement in key areas.
55. The governors' are involved effectively in running the school. The headteacher keeps them well informed, so they understand how well the school is doing and what it needs to do to improve. They are aware of the need to increase the numbers on roll in order to keep the school viable. A good initiative is the 'Under Fives Club' held in the school hall on two afternoons a week for children from four-months-old. Several parents mentioned to inspectors that this had been a deciding factor in opting for Gilsland rather than their local school.
56. The school's budget is managed well. The governors keep a careful check on spending. Prudent management by the headteacher in the last financial year saved the school from a deficit budget. He was able to transfer funds to avoid this. Specific grants are used appropriately and there is a good supply of resources to teach all subjects. The administrative assistant gives satisfactory support overall, in the day-to-day running of the school. However, she often needs extra guidance and support in carrying out her duties and this adds further to the headteacher's workload.
57. Strategic management of the school's resources is good. There is a good match of teaching and support staff to meet the needs of the curriculum and they are deployed efficiently. For example, with guidance from the teacher, the classroom assistant in Key Stage 1 teaches the Foundation and Key Stage 1 class, thus freeing the teacher to take the pupils in Year 3 for literacy and numeracy. This benefits all the pupils in Key Stage 2 because they are taught in smaller groups and the teachers do not have to plan for such a wide age range.

58. The school applies the principles of best value well. It consults regularly with parents and, while it is not appropriate to compare its performance in tests with other schools, it keeps a careful check on individual pupils' progress. It makes the best use of all its funding by comparing prices before spending decisions are made.
59. The accommodation is good now that the alterations have been carried out. This is an improvement since the last inspection.
60. As is often the case with small schools, the school receives a much higher sum of money per pupil than in most schools because of the high overheads. Nevertheless, this is spent wisely. Given the high quality leadership and management and the overall good impact of teaching that enables pupils in Key Stage 2 to achieve well, the school gives satisfactory value for money.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

61. In order to improve the quality of education for all pupils, the headteacher, staff and governors should:

a) Raise standards in science and ICT in Key Stage 1 by:

- making sure that the full programmes of study for these subjects are taught effectively;
- developing pupils' scientific understanding by giving them more opportunities to plan and carry out their own investigations and test their own ideas;
- making sure that suitable opportunities are planned across the curriculum for pupils to develop their ICT skills.

(paragraphs: 8, 22, 23, 30, 82, 86, 106)

b) Heighten the achievement of higher attaining pupils in Key Stage 1 by:

- raising teachers' expectations of what they can achieve and making sure that the work planned for them builds on what they already know, understand and can do.

(paragraphs: 11, 20, 27)

c) Improve the provision for children in the Foundation Stage by:

- improving the quality of teaching;
- planning work more appropriate to their levels of maturity and giving them more opportunities to learn through play.

(paragraphs: 17, 26, 50, 64 - 68, 70, 71, 73)

d) Ensure that risk assessments cover the wider spectrum of the school's work.

(paragraph: 38)

While the school should concentrate on the issues above, the following should also be considered for inclusion in the post inspection plan:

- improve the quality of pupils' annual reports to parents.

(paragraph: 47)

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	10
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	14

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Number	0	3	3	3	1	0	0
Percentage	0	30	30	30	10	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 ten percentage points.

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll

	YR – Y6
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	27
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	0

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs

	YR – Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	1
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	7

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

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	3.7
National comparative data	5.4

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0
National comparative data	0.5

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

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	27	0	0
White – Irish	0	0	0
White – any other White background	0	0	0
Mixed – White and Black Caribbean	0	0	0
Mixed – White and Black African	0	0	0
Mixed – White and Asian	0	0	0
Mixed – any other mixed background	0	0	0
Asian or Asian British - Indian	0	0	0
Asian or Asian British - Pakistani	0	0	0
Asian or Asian British – Bangladeshi	0	0	0
Asian or Asian British – any other Asian background	0	0	0
Black or Black British – Caribbean	0	0	0
Black or Black British – African	0	0	0
Black or Black British – any other Black background	0	0	0
Chinese	0	0	0
Any other ethnic group	0	0	0
No ethnic group recorded	0	0	0

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

Teachers and classes

Financial information

Qualified teachers and classes: YR – Y6

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	2.6
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	10.4
Average class size	14

Education support staff: YR – Y7

Total number of education support staff	1
Total aggregate hours worked per week	21

FTE means full-time equivalent

Financial year	2001/2002
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	£
Total income	121,654
Total expenditure	133,024
Expenditure per pupil	4,927
Balance brought forward from previous year	11,370
Balance carried forward to next year	12,087

Recruitment of teachers

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	1.5
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	1.6
Total number of vacant teaching posts (FTE)	0
Number of vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of a term or more (FTE)	0.6
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	27
Number of questionnaires returned	11

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	55	45	0	0	0
My child is making good progress in school.	82	18	0	0	0
Behaviour in the school is good.	45	55	0	0	0
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	45	45	0	9	0
The teaching is good.	73	18	0	0	9
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	55	45	0	0	0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	73	27	0	0	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	64	18	0	0	18
The school works closely with parents.	82	18	0	0	0
The school is well led and managed.	73	18	0	0	9
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	73	27	0	0	0
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	18	64	18	0	0

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

62. As there was only one child in the Foundation Stage at the time of the inspection, no commentary is given on standards and progress in the areas of learning.
63. Children start in reception in the September following their fourth birthday and they are taught with the infant class. Because of the very small numbers involved, children's attainment when they start school can vary widely from year-to-year. Overall, however, their attainment is average when compared to that of other children their age.
64. Provision for children in the Foundation Stage is unsatisfactory and does not meet statutory requirements. It does not meet the needs of the children adequately. The teacher does not plan activities specifically for children in reception, so they miss out on the wide range of activities that are expected for their age group. The formal teaching of subjects is not appropriate for this age group. It hinders the children's progress in all the areas of learning.
65. Children settle into school readily and make satisfactory progress in their personal and social development because they benefit from being with older children. The older children are good at helping them to look after their own needs. However, they do not have enough opportunities to make choices for themselves, or to develop their knowledge and skills through experimentation and exploration.
66. Provision for language development is unsatisfactory because being taught formally with older pupils, the children in reception do not have enough opportunities to develop their language in a wide enough variety of situations, such a role play. There is not enough purposeful discussion between adults and children as they work, thereby encouraging the children to develop their ideas and extend their vocabulary.
67. Provision for mathematical development is unsatisfactory because, again, the children have a very restricted curriculum. Most of the work they do is completing worksheets. They have very limited opportunities for purposeful play, such as, developing their mathematical language and their ideas about measures and capacity through sand and water activities.
68. Children's knowledge and understanding of the world is not developed effectively. They do not have opportunities to experiment and investigate for themselves. There is no opportunity for them to experiment with recycled materials, for example, to find the best ways of joining them together. They do not have ready access to equipment such as hole punches, magnifiers and magnets so that they can find out for themselves how things work. Although there are collections of artefacts, such as seashells, stones etc, they are not used well enough to stimulate the children's curiosity and encourage them to ask questions.
69. Provision for physical development is satisfactory overall because the children join in physical education lessons appropriately with the older pupils.

70. Children's creative development is hampered by the unsatisfactory provision. Too much of the work is directed because they follow the National Curriculum. There are not enough opportunities, for example, to explore paints or to make models.
71. The quality of teaching is unsatisfactory. It does not meet the learning needs of the children. because the planning is weak. This means that children do not achieve as well as they might.
72. The school has good systems in place for settling children into school. The teacher visits them at home before they start school, and they are then invited into school for afternoon sessions towards the end of the summer term. This prepares them well for starting full-time school in September and fosters good relationships with parents.
73. There are weaknesses in the leadership and management of the Foundation Stage. More attention needs to be given to planning the curriculum more effectively to ensure that the children receive their entitlement to the full range of learning experiences.

ENGLISH

74. Pupils throughout the school make satisfactory progress. Nevertheless, standards at the age of 7 years are well below average because of the very high proportion of pupils in Year 2 with special educational needs. Standards at the age of 11 years are average. These pupils have made good progress since they started in Key Stage 2. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress towards their individual targets throughout the school. They achieve well in relation to their abilities because of the effective individual learning plans and the good quality support they receive. Higher attaining pupils in Key Stage 2 make good progress because the work is matched well to their needs and provides suitable challenge. The headteacher who co-ordinates the subject well has a very clear view of how to raise standards. The school uses reading diaries well. These contain individual targets for children and, because these also act effectively as a home-school link, the parents and children know exactly which target is currently being worked towards. Through regular observations of lessons as well as looking at the written work of all children, the headteacher keeps a good check on how well pupils are learning. This has led to improved teaching, particularly in the marking of children's work. The best marking is in Key Stage 2. It tells children precisely what is good about their work and what they need to do next to improve. The newly introduced marking key in the front of each child's current work folder tells children which sections are most praiseworthy and offers 'tips', which the children respond to in future work. Teaching is satisfactory in Key Stage 1 but it is good and sometimes very good in Key Stage 2. The school has paid good attention to spelling and handwriting since the last inspection and these have improved significantly.
75. The curriculum is very rich and interesting. The teachers provide good opportunities for the children to apply their literacy skills in other subjects. This enables pupils to see the purpose of reading and writing in relevant contexts. For example, they recently designed questionnaires to seek information from relatives about life in the past. They sharpened their interviewing techniques through talking with local residents at their history exhibition. They use the Internet regularly to find information, such as about different climates as part of their geography work. They have good opportunities to write at length, for example, when describing their favourite places as part of their religious education lesson.

76. Teachers create many good opportunities for pupils to develop their speaking and listening skills. In a geography lesson in Key Stage 1, for example, the pupils listened attentively as the classroom assistant introduced them to the notion of leisure activities. Using a pair of hiking boots as a stimulus, she developed their limited responses well. They are becoming more confident speakers, although because of the very high proportion of children with special educational needs, much of their speech is very immature. Older pupils listen attentively to their teachers and to each other. They are confident when answering questions because they know that their ideas are valued. The warm relationships create a good atmosphere for learning. Pupils are not afraid of being wrong because their responses are handled very sensitively. This allows them to explore their ideas out loud knowing that they may change their opinion or not in the light of adult or other children's responses. This is a positive factor in the children's achievement. Teachers demonstrate reading well, so that the children are developing an expressive tone in their own reading.
77. Pupils throughout the school are enthusiastic readers. Less able and younger children enjoy books and retell the stories using the pictures and 'giggle' when they point to the funny events. Although their reading skills are weaker, they are supported well by carefully structured programmes. A love of reading is being developed well and there is a good range of attractive books in classrooms. The lack of a local library is an obstacle, but most pupils use the school's resources well. Pupils of all abilities make steady progress. Pupils in Key Stage 1 are developing their understanding of letter sounds. More able children know how letters combine to make sounds such as, 'sh' and 'ing'. This helps them when reading new words. Standards at 11 are average overall, with a small minority of pupils reaching above average standards. Pupils appreciate a good range of books and are able to talk about different styles and authors. Older pupils use the contents, index and glossary in non-fiction books effectively. In a very good literacy lesson, pupils in Years 4, 5 and 6 showed that they were able to extract key information quickly from the text. The work focused on 'The Stone of Scone.' This was a very good context for learning because the children have recently visited Edinburgh and have seen the Stone at the castle. They quickly identified the important facts. This then allowed them to write their own versions accurately.
78. Progress in developing writing skills is steady in Key Stage 1 and good in Key Stage 2. Sometimes in Year 3 the teaching is insufficiently focused and lessons are not prepared well enough. This results in children not completing their work and not being fully involved in their tasks. The school provides good opportunities for children to write for a variety of purposes. For example, pupils become familiar with annotated diagrams, report writing, story retells, writing letters and sets of instructions. The teachers make work interesting and this is a good motivator for the children as they write. Children in Years 1 and 2 write regularly in their journals. They are developing a small set of words that they write independently such as 'I', 'my' and 'mum'. More able children make good attempts to spell words for themselves and they try hard with their handwriting. In Year 3 pupils write poetry in particular forms such as 'Haiku' and 'Rap.' Their work shows they have a good understanding of how these different forms are constructed. In Year 4 the pupils show that they understand that some words sound the same but are spelt differently. This results in sentences like, 'The man heard the herd of cows as they charged'. Older pupils in Years 5 and 6 re-write stories from different perspectives, for example, through the eyes of the father of the three pigs. Pupils know how to engage the readers' interest, for example by constructing interesting lines like 'Born of a chicken egg laid under a toad, eyes that kill with a single glance!' The older pupils produce a lot of work which is consistently well presented. This shows their good attitudes to their work, which are a response

to their teacher's good quality marking. To further improve standards in writing the school should introduce individual writing targets so that pupils will know what they have to do to improve their work.

MATHEMATICS

79. Overall, standards are similar to those at the time of the last inspection. In Key Stage 1, pupils achieve at a satisfactory rate overall. However, standards at the age of 7 years are well below average because more than half of the pupils in this very small cohort have special educational needs. It is, therefore, not appropriate to compare standards from year-to-year. In the current Year 6 group, which again is very small, most pupils have reached the standard expected for pupils aged 11 years, although those with special educational needs have not quite reached this level. One higher attaining pupil has exceeded the expected standard. This represents good progress since these pupils started in the juniors.
80. Pupils make better progress in the older class because the teaching is much sharper and the work is matched more accurately to their needs. The teaching in Key Stage 1 is satisfactory, overall and the classroom assistant makes a good contribution to pupils' learning. However, the delivery of lessons does not stimulate the pupils' interest and much of the work is pitched at the same level despite the very wide ability range of the pupils. As a result, the potentially higher attaining pupils do not always achieve as well as they could because they are not challenged. Lessons are not planned well enough, and sometimes pupils lose concentration because they are kept waiting while the class teacher and her assistant discuss what they are going to do. Lower attaining pupils and those with special educational needs make good progress in lessons because they are supported sensitively by the classroom assistant to understand what they have to do. In Key Stage 2, the teaching is good overall with very good features. The headteacher and the part-time teacher plan carefully to build on what the pupils already know, understand and can do. They are good at explaining to pupils what they are going to learn and keep them focused on this, checking at suitable intervals that they are still on course. They ask probing questions to check pupils' understanding and reinforce learning well by asking pupils to explain how they have arrived at an answer. Pupils work hard in lessons because they are interested and the lively pace does not give any opportunity to wander off task.
81. A significant strength of the curriculum in the older class is the wide range of contexts that pupils have to apply their skills in solving problems and investigations. In a very good lesson during the inspection, for example, higher attaining pupils were challenged to divide 15 pennies into 4 purses, so that they could pay any sum of money from 1p to 15p without opening any purse. The pupils rose well to the challenge, concentrating really hard and discussing and trying out their ideas sensibly. Although they did not complete the task during the lesson, several pupils, including one in Year 5 completed it at home with the help of their parents. This sums up the older pupils' enthusiasm for the subject.
82. There are good opportunities for pupils to use their mathematical skills in other subjects, such as, design and technology, when they develop their measuring skills to produce models, or in science, when they present their findings in tables and graphs. Older pupils can usually work out answers, but they do not have instant recall of number facts. The school needs to put greater emphasis on this because it is slowing pupils' learning in other areas of the subject. There is good emphasis on developing pupils' knowledge and understanding of shape, space and measures. For

example, pupils in Year 6 know that the sum of the angles at a point is 360 degrees, and they can work out the area of a rectangle using the accepted formula. They know how to present information in graphs and charts, and explain what these graphs mean. Pupils in the older class make good use of ICT for this purpose. ICT is not used sufficiently to support pupils' learning in Key Stage 1. From the early stages in school, pupils are taught good habits in setting out their work, and they present it neatly.

83. It is clear from the improving standards that leadership and management of the subject have been good for the past two years. The school has good systems for checking on pupils' learning. However, although the information is used effectively to plan the next steps in the older class, this is not always the case in the younger class. More rigorous monitoring of teaching and learning in the younger class is needed to ensure that the work builds on pupils' prior learning. In addition, the school should put more emphasis on developing pupils' mental skills so that they can solve problems more quickly.

SCIENCE

84. Standards in science are well below average at the age of 7 years and average at the age of 11 years. There is a very small group of pupils in Key Stage 1 and a very high proportion of them have special educational needs. The pupils in Key Stage 2 make good progress because of their very positive response to the good teaching they receive. Progress is less marked in Key Stage 1 because the organisation of teaching and learning is less systematic. Generally the improvements noted in the teaching of science at the previous inspection have been sustained, and the key issue of raising attainment at Key Stage 2 has been met well.
85. The school follows the national guidance for science that has been modified to suit the school's circumstances. It has also been significantly enriched by contributions from visitors, links with local industry and opportunities for fieldwork, including a residential visit to Edinburgh. There, the Year 4 to 6 pupils found a visit to the camera obscura 'brilliant' and in a record of the visit a Year 6 pupil showed how well the pupils are mastering the use of scientific terms, such as image, lens, rotation and focus. The school gives a high priority to practical tasks and investigations, which help to consolidate the pupils' knowledge and understanding because they are learning within everyday contexts.
86. The current work for Key Stage 1 is based on 'living things' and the teacher has created a rich and stimulating environment for the pupils. There is an aquarium of tadpoles and there are bean plants in various stages of growth, some of which have been deprived of life sustaining essentials. A collection of various seeds has been arranged with a variety of hand lenses to encourage close observation. The children have made a 'garden' from various plants. The pupils have recorded their findings about plant growth, such as, 'We found that plants need water and light to be healthy.' The impact of this effective practical approach is lessened by an over-reliance on prescriptive worksheets that limit the opportunities for pupils to show what they know and understand. The pupils' previous work is not organised well to present a picture of what the children have done or what progress they are making. The work retained from earlier in the year would indicate that coverage of the science programme is limited. Marking is insufficiently directed towards developing the pupils' scientific understanding.
87. The pupils in Key Stage 2 get a rich and imaginative curriculum. They respond to this well and rise to the teacher's high expectations. Much of the work is open-ended and

the pupils enjoy responding to the challenge. A Year 6 pupil's work on weather and climate has been brought to life by little cartoon characters making pertinent comments such as, 'Can we move to the equator? The sun and rainfall make growing plants so easy.' This approach is linked to work that is matched well to pupils' abilities, so all pupils make good progress. The pupils thrive on challenging practical tasks, such as making a hot air balloon, even though it escaped its tether and landed in the vicinity of a neighbouring school. The opportunities afforded by the local power company who brought in circuit boards for the children to construct a range of circuits using a variety of electrical components added considerably to their learning and their enjoyment. Pupils use ICT appropriately to present their findings, such as a graph of differing shadow lengths during the day. They use the Internet and CD ROM to retrieve information, for example facts about the solar system. Again, the pupils rise to the opportunity to present their work imaginatively. This engagement in the process means that pupils acquire scientific terminology well. They plan and carry out investigations independently and they use simple measuring equipment well, recording their findings in their own ways. Their understanding of the areas of knowledge is secure. The way teachers respond to their work adds to their understanding. When a child wrote about 'rotational' effects on a satellite he was asked to consider if he meant 'gravitational.'

88. The subject is led soundly. The co-ordinator's good subject knowledge allied to a clear view on teaching and learning contributes significantly to the raising of standards. There is helpful documentation to guide teachers' planning and practice. The resources are adequate and used well. The procedures for assessment are good and the pupils' progress is monitored carefully, especially in Key Stage 2. To move the subject forward and to ensure that younger pupils receive their full entitlement, more careful monitoring of teaching and learning in Key Stage 1 is needed.

ART AND DESIGN

89. Pupils achieve at a satisfactory rate, and overall standards at the ages of 7 and 11 years, are similar to those found in most schools. There was no reference to standards or achievement in the last report. The school has developed a rich curriculum since the last inspection. The pupils develop their skills, knowledge and understanding in a good variety of interesting contexts. No lessons were seen, but the evidence from pupils' past work suggests that the quality of teaching is satisfactory with good features.
90. In Key Stage 1, pupils use a good range of media and techniques. They learn, for example, to mix paints suitable for colour washes in different shades to form a background for their work. This adds considerably to the overall quality of the finished work, and the pupils are pleased with their efforts. Visiting specialists contribute very well to pupils' learning. Working with a visitor, pupils have recently produced batik work of a good standard. Pupils with special educational needs were supported well in this. The work they produced was of the same standard as that of the rest of the class.
91. From the early stages, pupils are taught to observe carefully and record what they see, for example, when they draw and paint portraits in Key Stage 1. This is built on successfully throughout Key Stage 2. This is shown in the very careful drawings done by pupils in Year 6, and the careful attention to detail in their salt dough models of themselves. Pupils learn to copy the techniques of established artists and designers. For example, having studied the work of Andy Goldsworthy, they used

natural materials found in the school grounds to create their own works. The evidence from photographs indicates that the pupils work well together on joint projects to produce work of a good standard.

92. The subject is well led and managed and, as a result, standards are improving. The co-ordinator has put in place a much better curriculum than previously, and has a clear idea of how he wants to move the subject on. Art and design is used well to develop pupils' ICT skills. They use CD-ROM regularly to find information and record their work with a digital camera.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

93. Standards at the ages of 7 and 11 years, are as expected of pupils the same age. Pupils make sound progress in both key stages, and standards have improved since the last inspection when they were below those expected. The school's response to this was to adopt the national subject guidance and to monitor the subject more closely through using the scheme's assessment procedures. The subject is now taught systematically throughout the school, and the teachers' sound expertise leads to heightened expectations and improved achievement.
94. The youngest pupils are given an effective introduction to the subject through the use of construction kits and practical tasks, such as, using fastening techniques to make fabric puppets. They are taught to evaluate their work, so that by the end of Year 1 they can record if they are pleased with what they have made. By the end of Key Stage 1 they use a wide range of media to work with, including food, textiles and construction materials. For example, they made an illustrated booklet to show how to make vegetable soup. Each page has a helpful digital photograph to guide the process. Instructions are simple:
- First you peel the vegetables.
 - You cut up a turnip.
 - You cut up a carrot.
 - You cut up a parsnip.
 - You make the soup.
95. The pupils are given an early introduction to the design process, and this is built on well as they move through the school. In Year 1, for example, pupils drew the base of their 'rolling toy' showing axles and wheels before they made their model. The teacher uses links with other subjects successfully so that the children can develop their knowledge and understanding in different contexts. For example, a good link to science was made when they designed and made a clown's face with a nose that lit up. Some pupils made the pointer used for reading in the Jewish synagogue, together with a box to keep the precious item in, linked to their work in religious education.
96. By the end of Key Stage 2, the pupils know and understand all the processes involved in designing and making. At the time of the inspection they were designing and making an electric light. By way of introduction they had examined some commercially produced lamps and explored the solutions that the manufacturers had employed. They created their own design briefs by recording who the lamp would be for, and for what purpose. From this they drew their diagrams, with measurements, and annotated details when necessary. Pupils enjoy their work and their perseverance is illustrated in the way some pupils went through several drafts before

they were satisfied. They listed the materials, tools and techniques that would be required. During the making phase, they recognised that they would need to change their initial design from time to time, and modified their plans accordingly. Those who had finished could explain how their lamp could be improved. Reference to previous work showed that through the key stage the children encounter a good range of design and make activities, such as, designing and preparing sandwiches, making money holders from fabrics, and designing and advertising their idea of an attractive drink. The national guidance is modified appropriately to meet the needs of the school. Last summer, for example, the pupils made sun hats as this was more appropriate to the time of year than the recommended slippers. Pupils with special educational needs are well supported and make good progress in both key stages.

97. The pupils are always keen to accept a challenge of problem solving and produce some charmingly individualistic solutions. The range of purses produced was eye-catching. The digital camera was used effectively to record the artefacts that had been made. They work carefully with due regard to safety, and know the health and safety rules. 'We don't use the glue gun without the teacher's help. The nozzle is far too hot, and the glue can burn.' They enjoy working in groups to produce their designs and articles, and they work carefully. They take pride in their work, and enjoy discussing their achievements and the problems encountered.
98. The subject is led soundly. The headteacher has used the guidance well to bring about a systematic approach to the subject. The school has developed a very useful 'design and make' recording sheet, the use of which underpins the sound standards now being achieved throughout the school. Pupils' progress is now being assessed, although the school recognises that this needs to be developed further. The resources for the subject are sufficient to cover all the strands of the subject, and the school makes good use of the accommodation. Although increasingly effective use is being made of the digital camera, ICT is not yet used sufficiently to support learning in the subject. On several occasions, Key Stage 2 pupils referred to their disappointment through not completing assignments. The time allocated to the subject needs to be re-examined in the light of their comments.

GEOGRAPHY

99. Pupils in Year 6, attain standards that are typical for their age, but because a high proportion of Year 2 pupils have special educational needs their standards are below average. The gaps described in children's geographical knowledge at the time of the last inspection are no longer an issue. Since that time, the headteacher who co-ordinates the subject, has written a helpful policy, as well as introducing the national guidance. This means that work planned each year now builds on the children's previous knowledge and that there is the right amount of challenge for children whatever their attainment. As a result, all pupils including those with special educational needs, make steady progress.
100. In a lesson in Key Stage 1, the children collected information about the leisure activities which are available locally. They tried hard to identify what leisure activities are and began to think of suitable questions to ask in their survey. Although progress is slow at times because of the overall low ability of the group, written work shows that some are able to draw a simple map showing their route to school. On their map they draw buildings such as their house, the school, the church and the post box. Sometimes geography work links with mathematics, for example, some children colour in eight squares, turn right, colour four forward squares, turn left etc.,
101. Older pupils regularly visit other places such as Carlisle and more recently Edinburgh. This allows good opportunities to contrast urban locations with that of

their own rural village community. For example, they used public transport in Edinburgh and know that this type of service is more frequent and useful to city commuters. This is very different in their own village. The children apply their literacy learning skills well to their work in geography. They wrote letters to the environmental agency asking for advice in planning improvements to their outside environment. They compiled lists of questions to ask when the invited visitors came to school. As part of their recent study of water supply the children went to see the mouth of the River Tyne and the local River Irthing. This helped them to understand the importance of water in the lives of communities. The oldest and most able children mark the points of entry of the water supply to the school. On their plan they find and mark where water is stored, drains, taps, waste pipes, septic tank and sinks. They know the importance of a detailed key in interpreting plans. They know that the school's water comes from the Keilder Reservoir and why it is important to filter water for human consumption. Their work is thoughtful and shows a developing understanding of environmental issues. Through their studies of other countries they realise that water is a very scarce commodity in countries like India. Extended work on climates has helped them to understand how climates affect the lives of people every day. On a world map the most able children can mark in the different regions showing those with a temperate climate such as Europe and contrast with a tropical climate such as Indonesia. They can locate the great mountain regions such as The Rockies and The Andes. They are able to express preferences about places they would like to visit and give the reasons why.

HISTORY

102. Attainment at the end of Key Stage 2 is above average. It is below average at the end of Key Stage 1 because of the very high proportion of pupils with special educational needs. The curriculum is exciting for the children and consequently many of the older pupils are attaining high standards and have made good progress. The headteacher leads the subject well and has ensured that work appeals to the children. Each year's programme of work builds well on the skills that children have gained in previous years. Work is matched well to the children's needs, which helps to improve their achievement in the subject. Children with special educational needs are supported well and, where necessary, work is adapted for them. There are good opportunities for children to visit historical sites. For example, younger children visited Tulley House Museum and learned about changes in toys in the last 100 years. Older children visit Hadrian's Wall as part of their work on Romans. Visitors to the school bring history alive. Very recently the school's exhibition on Gilsland's past brought many people into school. Their wealth of experiences, supply of old photographs, newspaper articles and guidebooks have all added to the children's knowledge as well as becoming valuable resources for the school. The school has good resources, which are supplemented when necessary by using sets of artefacts from the museum service.
103. Younger children know about famous people such as Sir Edmund Hillary. They know he was one of the first two people to climb Mount Everest. Their very simple accounts and drawings show that they know there was a big fire in London a long time ago. They know why it spread so fast and why people escaped by boat. They look at the uniforms worn by police officers now and 100 years ago and realise that the uniform has changed, as has some equipment. For example, they know that policemen used to summon help by blowing a whistle, whereas nowadays they use radios.
104. Older children in Key Stage 2 know the significance of wearing a poppy. Their writing showed sensitivity and maturity as they grappled with an understanding of the

devastation caused to families by war. Further evidence of this was seen in accounts of 'The Terrible Telegram' dreaded so much by people in the First World War. The school is particularly skilful in developing literacy skills through history. The children use evidence carefully. For example, after studying the painting of 'The Schoolroom' by William Bromley, they listed characteristics of the Victorian schoolroom, such as, the use of the cane, writing on slates, the teacher's chair placed on a raised platform and candlelight. As part of their work on Britain since 1948 the children decided to find out more about different aspects of life. One group discovered that although many toys have changed substantially and that nowadays computer games are very popular, many children still play with dolls.

105. The children are very enthusiastic and keen to learn. They have a good grasp of the different ways to find out about the subject. As well as using books and watching television programmes such as Time Team, many use the Internet regularly, downloading information to share with classmates. They know the value of living history guides and have vivid memories of the day 'The Centurion' visited the school. Their recent work introduced them to the importance of eyewitness accounts. They talked extensively about how they prepared for the visit and what questions they asked. They are very involved in their own learning which is a good indicator as to why they are achieving so well. The gaps in pupils' knowledge of history described at the time of the last inspection are no longer an issue.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

106. Standards are below those expected for 7-year-olds and at the expected level for 11-year-olds. The pupils in Key Stage 1 make insufficient progress because the subject is not taught systematically enough. Pupils in Key Stage 2 make good progress in most aspects of the subject. This is a very similar picture to that presented at the time of the previous inspection, when it was highlighted as an area that required further improvement.
107. In Key Stage 1, pupils are given insufficient time to learn and apply the skills knowledge and understanding of ICT. The school uses the national guidance, but there is very little evidence that the pupils have undertaken or completed any units, and opportunities are missed for pupils to practise their skills. The very limited coverage of the subject results in low standards.
108. Older pupils, including those with special educational needs, make good progress in most aspects of the subject, because of the good teaching, good subject knowledge of the teachers and interesting and worthwhile activities drawn from other areas of the curriculum. After pupils in Years 4, 5 and 6 visited Edinburgh, for example, they constructed a range of graphs and charts to illustrate aspects of the visit that they enjoyed. Their recent science topic on 'Earth and space' included obtaining data and images of the planets from various websites. As they learn to create publications they combine text and images to create eye-catching posters advertising the school's out of school clubs. From a study in English, a very effective and poignant poster was created by a pupil in Year 6, combining an image of a poppy with a poem about the war dead:

'In the war people died. People died and mothers cried.'

109. The curriculum is enhanced by 'ICT days', when visiting 'experts' support the pupils learning. The school has organised a 'newspaper day' linked to the local paper, a 'school website day', and a 'control technology day' when a teacher from another primary school taught pupils in Key Stage 2 how to write instructions to control traffic

lights. The pupils can still recall the instruction procedures clearly, and talk knowingly about using control boxes. Through their occasional exchanges of email with neighbouring and more distant schools, pupils in Key Stage 2 are learning the effectiveness of ICT for communication.

110. The pupils enjoy using ICT. The older pupils thrive on enquiry, and use the Internet well to find out more about specific topics, such as, the celebrations in a Hindu temple as part of their religious education work. They like the creative possibilities that the technology provides and are learning to combine text and digital photographs well. They work well together and rise to the challenges provided by the open-ended approach to the subject that the school has adopted.
111. The subject is managed soundly. There are procedures for assessing the pupils' progress, but the school recognises that they need to be linked more closely to the National Curriculum levels in order to be able to check pupils' attainment. There are very clear and appropriate priorities in the subject action plan. Resources have been improved to ensure that pupils' learning builds systematically, and class teaching has been facilitated by the purchase of a projector. The subject needs to be monitored more effectively in Key Stage 1 to ensure that the younger pupils receive their full entitlement and make more progress in the subject.

MUSIC

112. The school's provision for music is good and consequently the children enjoy their music lessons. The subject is well led and managed. The co-ordinator is experienced and very enthusiastic. He ensures that there are regular opportunities for the children to listen to live performances. Recently the older children visited another primary school and took part in a 'Travelling by Tuba' experience. Here they had the opportunity to find out about a range of instruments. They learned how the musicians play them. When talking about the day, the children's excitement was obvious. Another memorable experience provided a very good opportunity to develop the children's understanding of music from other cultures. The focus was on Indian music. They have learned about the huge instrument called the Gamelan which is made up of many smaller percussion instruments. They were amazed to find that it takes 20 people to play it.
113. Another strength of the curriculum is that the children have regular opportunities to perform, for example, in the local church as well as in school. A video of the Christmas celebration showed that the standards in Key Stage 2 are high. All the children played an instrument; almost all of these were tuned and included glockenspiels, guitars and recorders. Together they played 'Silent Night' with no support or intervention by an adult. They kept in time and in tune throughout. Attainment on this occasion was above average. The six guitar players in Year 5 and Year 6 are also working at a high level. They take their lessons very seriously and work hard. Their tutor is a very good instrumentalist. He is very supportive of the children and his good rapport and sense of humour, which the children like, helps them to achieve well.
114. Standards in Key Stage 1 are as expected for pupils the same age. In the lesson seen, the children showed that they enjoy singing. They were able to vary the speed and volume accurately as they sang 'Boom Chicka, Boom.' They tried hard to follow the conductor's lead and remained very focused when the younger Year 1 children took the lead. More able children can identify high and low notes. The teacher ensured that there was a good level of challenge for all the pupils.

115. The children's singing in assembly is not as strong. Although they can keep an accurate rhythm and start and end together, many children do not sing in tune. The children listen to music during assembly and older children know the names of famous composers such as Mozart, John Lennon and Simon and Garfunkel. More could be done to develop the children's skills when appraising music so that they are able to give personal responses. When questioned, the older children showed that these skills are not developed well enough.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

116. Standards at age 7 and 11 are average. All the pupils in Year 6 can swim at least the national standard of 25 metres.
117. The lesson seen in Key Stage 1 was taught by a visiting specialist and was good. The quality of teaching seen in Key Stage 2 was satisfactory, and the pupils made satisfactory progress during the lesson. They were well behaved and they worked well in pairs to improve their jumping techniques. The element of friendly competition spurred them on. The teacher's timely and appropriate intervention enabled them to learn, for example, that swinging their arms would give them the impetus to travel further.
118. Management of the subject is satisfactory. The school benefits from its involvement with other local schools, which includes a significant input into teaching by a specialist from the local secondary school. Apart from the very useful staff development that this provides, the pupils have more opportunities than they would have normally to engage in competitive sports such as football, netball and cross country events. This makes a good contribution to their social development.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

119. Standards at the end of both key stages are in line with the expectations set out in the locally agreed syllabus. Children make satisfactory progress overall. They make good progress in some aspects of the subject, for instance finding out about other major world faiths. There is a sound scheme of work, based upon both the locally agreed syllabus and the nationally recommended scheme, which meets the needs of the pupils well.
120. The infant pupils study one major world faith alongside Christianity, and the junior pupils two. This works well, and the pupils have a clear picture of the similarities and differences between the Christian and other world faiths. The pupils gain insights and understanding into the world faiths through the effective use of the school's good collection of artefacts, and the development of their research skills using books and computers. The teacher's use of a video with the junior class to give insights into a ceremony in a Hindu temple was exemplary. She had a very good grasp of the subject and used her knowledge well to prepare the pupils to watch the session. She presented further snippets of information and insights during the viewing, and used the pause button most effectively to draw the pupils' attention to specific features. She then followed up this session with the well targeted use of a website for the older pupils to undertake further research. The work was matched very well to children's ability and understanding by having another group exploring the artefacts they had seen in the video and finding out further information from high quality reference books.

121. The teachers bring added interest to the subject by linking it effectively to other subjects. The pupils in Key Stage 1 made models and drawings of a 'special place' of their own. They recreated a stained glass window in their classroom following a visit to the local church. They did paintings of the 'last supper.' The children in Key Stage 2 linked their studies to literacy by writing at length about being present at a 'great event.' They made a superb mosaic of Christ when linking their work to history and art and design.
122. Pupils learn effectively to apply their knowledge and understanding of religious education to their daily lives. After hearing the story of Jesus washing his disciples' feet the younger pupils wrote about people they had helped. 'I helped my mum do the cleaning'. In Key Stage 2 the pupils had reflected upon the story of the Good Samaritan. 'Would we act in the same way if we came across an asylum seeker?' mused one child.
123. Standards, and the quality of teaching, have improved since the last inspection. The quality of teaching is now good overall. The school 'needed to make the spiritual elements of the curriculum more explicit'. This is now done well. A lesson on 'giving' started with the teacher asking the pupils to focus on a candle flame while thinking about a precious gift. The pupils sustained the quiet reflection for a considerable period. In the same lesson, respect for other people's beliefs became clearly evident, when pupils admonished a boy who said he thought that aspects of Hindu worship made him laugh.
124. Planning is thorough and the less able pupils are taught well. Learning is well supported at times by the content of school assemblies. However, in some assemblies, opportunities are missed for an emotional response. The standard of presentation is variable. The work, retained loosely in folders, does not allow for teachers or pupils to review previous work to see the progress that has been made or refer to prior learning. Teachers' responses to pupils' work in books is varied. In the best instances the comments help pupils' development of understanding, but in most cases the work is only corrected, or not responded to.
125. The pupils have good attitudes to the subject. They contribute readily to discussion. When given the opportunity they express their own beliefs and values and they respond with reflection and sensitivity to the opinions of others. They are keen to find out more about their own and other people's beliefs, and they are learning to become effective researchers.
126. The subject is led satisfactorily. The clear policy and the school's adherence to its teaching plan lead to a consistent approach. Resources are of a high quality and are used well. The range of books and videos is good, and the school's good collection of artefacts is well augmented from other sources. ICT is used very effectively in Key Stage 2. The school uses visits and visitors well to bring learning alive, including its contact with the parish church. Pupils' work needs to be kept in a more organised way so that they can revisit and review what they have learned more easily.