

INSPECTION REPORT

CATON ST PAUL'S CE PRIMARY SCHOOL

Brookhouse, Lancaster

LEA area: Lancashire

Unique reference number: 119524

Headteacher: Mrs Carole O'Hare

Reporting inspector: Mr Jean-Pierre Kirkland

4483

Dates of inspection: 3rd – 5th February 2003

Inspection number: 248026

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school: Infant and Junior

School category: Voluntary aided

Age range of pupils: 4 to 11

Gender of pupils: Mixed

School address: Moorside Road
Brookhouse
Lancaster
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Appropriate authority: The Governing Body

Name of chair of governors: Dr Miles Rucklidge

Date of previous inspection: March 2001

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

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4483	Jean-Pierre Kirkland	Registered inspector	Mathematics Geography Music Provision for pupils with special educational needs Educational inclusion	Information about the school The school's results and achievements How well are pupils taught? How well the school is led and managed? What should the school do to improve further?
9928	Alan Dobson	Lay inspector		Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development How well does the school care for its pupils? How well does the school work in partnership with parents?
10611	Martin James	Team inspector	Areas of learning for children in the Foundation Stage Design and technology History Physical education	
32367	Joanna Pike	Team inspector	English Science Information and communication technology Art and design	How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils?

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Caton St Paul's is a smaller than average voluntary aided Church of England primary school. There are 111 pupils currently on roll. The school is situated in the village of Brookhouse next to Caton, and lies about five miles to the east of Lancaster. Most of the children come from the local villages where socio-economic circumstances are average. Attainment on entry is also broadly average. The school has below average numbers of pupils entitled to free school meals. The number of pupils identified with special educational needs is below average although those with specific statements are average. These include pupils with learning and behavioural difficulties. There are no pupils from ethnic minority backgrounds. Numbers attending the school have shown significant fluctuation from year to year. As a result of that and the relatively small numbers even in the better recruitment years, all four classes are mixed age. The reception age children are taught with some of the Year 1 pupils. The school has managed to arrange for Years 5 and 6 to be taught separately for English and mathematics in the mornings. The school received an Achievement Award for its improved academic performance in 2002.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

This is a very good school with some outstanding features. Standards are well above average by Year 6 in English, mathematics and science and pupils' achievements are very good. The quality of teaching and learning is very good overall supported by a very good broad and stimulating curriculum. Leadership and management are outstanding. The school provides very good value for money.

What the school does well

- Enables pupils to reach well above average standards by Year 6 in English, mathematics and science through very good achievement;
- Provides very good teaching and learning overall;
- Captures pupils' imagination and creativity and turns them into productive and concentrated enthusiasm for learning;
- Provides a rich and interesting curriculum set within a strong Christian framework where there is very good provision for spiritual, moral and social development of pupils;
- Provides outstandingly good leadership and management with a shared determination to enable all pupils to succeed and reach high standards.

What could be improved

- The provision of some additional outdoor equipment for children in the reception age range;
- Knowledge and understanding of Child Protection procedures through updated training.

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

There has been very good improvement since the school was found to be delivering an unacceptable standard of education in an inspection in November 1999. It was re-inspected by Her Majesty's Inspectorate in March 2001 when it was found to have made good progress in addressing most issues. Since then, these improvements have continued. All the Key Issues raised in 2001 have now been successfully completed with improved standards for the reception children and in the national test results in 2002 for pupils in Year 2. There have been improvements in the planning of the curriculum overall, but especially for the reception age children. The quality of teaching and learning has improved significantly. Leadership and management have also improved and are now outstanding. There have been significant improvements in pupils' performances in the national tests for Year 6 in 2002, although it

must be remembered that groups are small and statistics for individual years are unreliable. The school, however, is in a much stronger position now than in either 1999 or 2001 and is well placed to make even further improvements.

STANDARDS

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

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

Key

well above average A

above average B

average C

below average D

well below average E

Results in the national tests for Year 2 and Year 6 pupils vary from year to year due to the small numbers in each group. In addition, the composition of each group varies considerably with many more higher attaining pupils one year and a greater proportion of pupils with special educational needs another year. On average over the past four years, standards have improved. The rate of improvement has been similar to the national pattern for pupils in Year 6 in English, mathematics and science, and in reading for pupils in Year 2. In mathematics and writing in Year 2, pupils' performances in the national tests have improved at a better rate than the national pattern. In the national tests in 2002, Year 2 pupils were well above average in reading, writing and mathematics; teacher assessments in science showed pupils to be above average. In Year 6, the 2002 results showed pupils to be well above average in English and science and very high in mathematics, in the top five per cent of schools nationally. Results for Year 6 pupils were well above the average for pupils in similar schools. These results in Year 2 and Year 6 show very good achievement given the pupils' average starting points in the reception class. Inspectors found current standards to be well above average in all aspects of English, mathematics and science in Year 2 and in Year 6. The very good achievement noted for last year's group of pupils has been sustained for the current Year 6 pupils, given their average starting points when they entered reception. Targets set by governors are realistic, challenging and met each year.

Children are given a good start to their education in reception and the rate of progress rapidly improves throughout the rest of the school as a result of this. Standards in information and communication technology (ICT) are well above average throughout the school. Standards by Year 6 in all other subjects are above average with very good progress being made overall.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Excellent , and contributing highly to the very good learning taking place throughout the school.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Overall, very good at play and at work. There have been two temporary exclusions recently due to behavioural problems.
Personal development and relationships	Very good throughout the school with many pupils learning the skills of independent learning effectively.
Attendance	Excellent and significantly higher than the national average. Pupils arrive on time for school.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils in:	Reception	Years 1 – 2	Years 3 – 6
Quality of teaching	Good	Very good	Very good

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

The overall quality of teaching is very good and results in very good learning taking place in classrooms. Several examples of excellent teaching were also seen during the inspection. Teaching and learning for reception age children are good and progress is good. This is an improvement since the school was last inspected. Planning is now good, covering all required aspects of learning fully. The class is managed well. Children learn basic skills well in literacy and numeracy, as well as good social skills, through effective learning activities in the classroom.

Throughout the rest of the school, teaching is very good and this is also a significant improvement since the last inspection. The very good teaching is characterised by very good planning and high challenges to pupils. The excellent lessons in Years 1 to 6 are characterised by very rapid learning opportunities – teachers are extremely well organised and not a moment is lost; classes are managed very well with all groups of pupils having high challenges appropriate to their learning needs. A great strength in these excellent lessons is the linkage made between subjects, such as geography skills coming through mathematics in Years 1 and 2, and Years 3 and 4. In Years 5 and 6, the teacher made an excellent link between science and mathematics. The teaching of literacy and numeracy is very good, with strong links again being made between subjects. This includes measuring or using graphs across the curriculum as well as developing extended writing in geography and history. Gifted and talented pupils, as well as those with learning difficulties are very well taught and make very good progress towards their targets where appropriate.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Very good. The curriculum, which fully meets statutory requirements, is rich and stimulating to pupils. It is greatly enhanced through visits and through a very wide range of extra-curricular activities. The overall planning has improved since the previous inspection.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Very good. Pupils with potential problems are identified early and very good provision through additional support or individual education plans is made throughout the school.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Very good overall. This very good provision provides a solid and supportive backcloth to learning. The school makes very good provision to counter racism and bullying and personal development is encouraged very effectively.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Sound overall. The named Child Protection teacher has not had any recent training, although this is in hand. Other aspects of health and safety are very good. Assessment within the school is also very good and significantly improved since the last inspection.
How well the school works in partnership with parents	Very good. The school keeps parents well informed about pupils' progress, about the curriculum and about other events. Parents are strongly encouraged to help, work in partnership with the school and a significant number help in classrooms and on visits.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Excellent. The school is benefiting greatly from a head teacher appointed two years ago who has clear vision for its future. She is carrying the school forward with the full backing of governors and staff. Subject leaders now play a vital role in this development through very good overall management in their areas of respective responsibility.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Very good. Governors support the school very well; they have a clear understanding of its strengths and are fully involved in planning and evaluation. Money is spent wisely according to best value principles and school priorities. Statutory requirements are met in full.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Very good. The school is assessing its performance accurately and identifying those areas in need of development or improvement. Governors and all staff are fully involved in this.
The strategic use of resources	Very good. All spending decisions are weighed up in terms of effectiveness. There are no shortages in any areas except in terms of some play equipment for reception children. Resources are used effectively to raise standards and accommodation is used appropriately, including the new computer suite.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The quality of leadership and management in the school;• Overall standards and progress;• The Christian attitudes and values promoted by the school;• Good behaviour by pupils;• Links with parents;• Improvements made since the previous inspection.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• A more consistent approach to the teaching of spelling;• More consistency over the way homework is set.

Inspectors agree with the positive views of parents. The school has spent a lot of time and energy since the beginning of the current academic year looking carefully at the way spelling is taught and learnt. Inspectors judged that current practice in this area has improved considerably and is now good. Inspectors looked carefully at the quality and range of homework. They judged this to be of good quality overall; regular and adequate amounts are set and marked weekly.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and pupils' achievements

1. **This is a school with well above average standards and pupils' achievements are very good.** These results and achievements are a significant improvement since the previous inspection.

The main strengths are:

2. **High standards.** The national test results for pupils in Year 2 showed standards to be well above average in reading, writing and mathematics in 2002. The same year, teacher assessments in science were above average overall for pupils in Year 2. For pupils in Year 6 in 2002, test results showed well above average standards in English and science and very high standards, in the top five per cent of schools nationally, in mathematics. Results in the national tests for Year 2 and Year 6 pupils vary from year to year due to the small numbers in each group. In addition, the composition of each group varies considerably with many more higher attaining pupils one year, then a greater proportion of pupils with special educational needs another year. Over the past four years, standards have shown an upward trend for pupils in Year 2 and in Year 6. The rate of improvement has been similar to the national pattern for pupils in Year 6 in English, mathematics and science, and in reading for pupils in Year 2. In mathematics and writing in Year 2, pupils' performances in the national tests have improved at a better rate than the national pattern. Results for Year 6 pupils were well above the average for pupils in similar schools. These results in Year 2 and Year 6 show very good achievement given the pupils' average starting points in the reception class. Inspectors found current standards to be well above average in all aspects of English, mathematics and science in Year 2 and in Year 6. The very good achievement noted for last year's group of pupils has been sustained for the current Year 6 pupils, given their average starting points when they entered the school. Standards in ICT are also well above average throughout the school, showing very good overall achievement by pupils. The improvement since the previous inspection in these results and current standards is due to:

- Improved teaching and learning;
- Better and more consistent planning of basic skills development;
- Better subject management and leadership;
- Very good use of assessment to set achievable and realistic targets.

3. **Children are given a good start to their education in reception.** The rate of progress rapidly improves throughout the rest of the school as a result of this. The basic skills of literacy and numeracy are learnt well and pupils make good progress. Social skills development is an integral part of learning for reception age children and they make good progress in communication, co-operation and collaboration, learning to share fairly and without fuss. Other skills, such as investigation in scientific topics, creative and physical confidence also improve well. ICT skills are acquired from an early age, with children becoming familiar with the basic layout and functions of the computer. Most children are likely to reach the expected standards before they finish their initial reception year.

4. **Achievement by pupils is very good.** Pupils learn their basic skills well when they arrive in school and build on the secure foundation throughout the remainder of the school. Progress in reading and writing is never less than good, with higher attaining pupils writing in a long, interesting and extended format by Year 6. Lower attaining pupils and those with learning difficulties make equally good progress towards their targets. By Year 6, they too have made very good progress in reading and writing. Their speaking and listening skills are

also very good, as they are for the higher attainers. In mathematics, all areas are developed well across the infant and junior classes. The basic skills, plus others such as mental calculation and problem solving, progress very well. The use of visual aids and other similar resources enables those with learning difficulties to progress at a similar rate to the rest of the class. Higher attainers excel in many areas, such as mental agility and problem solving, with staff catering well for their needs. Similarly in science, progress is very good. Pupils learn how to investigate effectively, and in Years 1 and 2, start to record their findings clearly and accurately. Higher up in the school, pupils advance these skills as they do more independent research, often reaching very high standards when they present their work in written form. Achievement in other areas of the curriculum is good overall, with some examples of very good achievement, such as in history, geography, ICT and music. Standards by Year 6 are above average right across the curriculum. The use of ICT, literacy and numeracy across the curriculum has a very notable impact on raising standards. Incorporating ICT into research in geography and history, for example, or mathematical skills into science, as well as using literacy to a very effective extent in geography and history, helps significantly to raise standards.

5. **Targets set are realistic and attainable.** The school records how well pupils are doing from the moment they enter the school. They use this information very effectively to measure progress. If pupils excel or fall behind what is expected of them, appropriate remedial action is taken. In this manner, the school tracking system is very effective. When governors come to publish their targets for attainment in English and mathematics annually, they are able to base it on reliable and accurate information. In this manner, targets are achievable and challenging and they are met each year. Within these general targets, individual targets for pupils who are gifted and talented, or who have learning difficulties, are equally realistic and lead to the very good progress made by these groups over time.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

6. **The pupils' attitudes to school life and learning are excellent and their behaviour is very good.** These judgements represent an improvement since the previous inspection. The very good relationships in the school noted previously have been maintained. Attendance remains very high by national standards. Strengths in this area are:

7. **The pupils enjoy school very much and are eager to learn.** Pupils' enthusiasm is apparent throughout the school - they love the process of learning. Hands shoot up, faces are alert, pupils are very keen to offer ideas and when given a task to do, they get on with it and work hard, often very hard. They try their best. This high level of motivation is due in no small part to very good teaching. Pupils consider Caton St Paul's to be a good school where 'the teachers are really nice'.

8. **Behaviour in the school is very good.** Lessons are very orderly with an atmosphere that is highly conducive to learning. Pupils understand the rules and think they are fair but discipline is very low-key. Pupils willingly meet the high standards expected of them. Assemblies are quiet and pupils are very respectful during prayers. Dining is a civilised social occasion with noise levels that allow easy conversation. Table manners are very good. Playgrounds are friendly and no signs of oppressive behaviour were seen. Pupils report that bullying is not a problem and that the teachers quickly sort out the occasional incident of name-calling. Pupils show a very high level of understanding and compassion for others, for instance, for children with specific behavioural problems. There have been no incidents of racism. The two recent temporary exclusions were both due to a pupil with behavioural difficulties.

9. **Relationships within the school are very good.** Pupils get on very well with each other and the many adults in the school. Pupils are friendly and very polite. They show respect, open doors and say 'please' and 'thank you' naturally. When working in groups they collaborate very well together and learn better as a result.

10. **Pupils become confident, articulate and sensible.** Pupils' personal qualities develop very well during their time at the school, particularly their social skills and their ability to learn by themselves. Pupils enjoy researching subjects and working on projects. Speaking skills are very good allowing pupils to discuss, reason and develop ideas very well. They are confident without being cocky. During the inspection a group of Year 5 pupils were asked, without any notice, to outline to an inspector a computer-based presentation they were preparing on recycling. Their explanation showed complete confidence in using new technology, a thorough understanding of some environmental issues affecting modern society and individual opinions that indicated they each had thought seriously about the subject. What they had to say was interesting – and this was typical of many older pupils in the school.

11. **Attendance at the school is very high.** The rate (97.7 percent) puts the school in the top one percent of primary schools nationally for good attendance. Punctuality is good allowing a prompt registration. Lessons start on time.

12. The pupils' exemplary attitudes to school, their very good behaviour and their very high level of attendance provide an excellent framework for raising standards even further. The pupils are a credit to the school and their parents.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?

13. **The overall quality of teaching is very good** and results in very good learning taking place in classrooms. The quality of teaching has improved very significantly since the school was previously inspected. All teaching was judged to be at least good or better with a significant number of outstanding lessons. The main strengths are:

14. **Learning is taking place at a rapid rate.** During the inspection, teaching and learning were judged to be excellent in twenty-one per cent of lessons, very good in a further forty-one per cent and good in the remaining thirty-eight per cent. This is a very strong teaching profile and has resulted in standards rising throughout the school in all subjects. In classrooms where the teaching is excellent, learning is rapid and enthusiastic. No time is wasted; pupils are on task throughout; there is an excitement about learning and a strong thirst for knowledge from pupils. The qualities of learning taking place focus on the very fast way in which all pupils, including those with learning difficulties, acquire new facts, knowledge and understanding. Pupils learn new skills very quickly such as investigation, problem solving and sharing their work-load with each other; they learn the skills of note-taking and presenting their work to high standards. Homework is used effectively to extend the learning process.

15. **Planning for learning is very good.** When teachers plan in the longer term, they do so with the needs of all the different pupils in mind. Work is carefully graded with inclines of difficulty to ensure that all pupils make maximum progress. In the two excellent lessons observed in mathematics, for example, the tasks of understanding co-ordinates or shapes of objects were carefully differentiated to ensure no one individual found the work too hard or too easy. As a result, in both lessons, all pupils, whether they had learning difficulties or a gift for the subject, made equally outstanding progress.

16. **Planning is also of a high standard in that it makes very good links between the subjects.** Staff in the school have placed great emphasis on the reinforcement of learning the skills of literacy and numeracy, for instance, through other subjects, and vice versa. For example, in a Year 3 and 4 lesson on co-ordinates, pupils were also acquiring very good geographical skills by being introduced to scale and direction using compass points and measures. Teachers plan to extend literacy skills very well through extended writing in geography and history, using topics such as the Ancient Greeks or climate throughout the world as vehicles for this. The numeracy skills of measurement and graph conversion figure strongly in Year 5 and 6 science books, as well as in geography and history books throughout the school. There are countless examples of where ICT has been used in the classroom and at home to enhance the quality of learning across the curriculum.

17. **Challenges are very high.** Teachers are not content with one-word answers from their pupils. They use searching and probing techniques to ensure pupils have worked out their answers effectively and not just guessed them. Teachers vary the degree of challenge in their questioning in order to give all pupils a fair chance of answering. This was a key feature of a Year 6 mathematics lesson and a reception and Year 1 numeracy session. In a Year 1 and 2 literacy lesson, pupils were challenged very strongly to use connective vocabulary when constructing sentences, with words such as because. Using a ramp and a mobile car, the teacher demonstrated how the car moved down the ramp, making a very good connection to science. Pupils grasped this readily, and those with specific educational needs in literacy were very soon able to explain that the car moved down because there was a slope. The structure of the lesson enabled higher attaining pupils to go even further. They were able to import their scientific principles into the debate and explain that the car moved down the ramp because of gravity.

18. **Challenges are also high in terms of behaviour and presentation of work.** Teachers know their pupils very well, and ensure that when they are working in groups, opportunities to wander off task are minimised. Teachers deploy the very good learning support assistants to work with specific groups of children effectively. These assistants are fully briefed and know their individual tasks well. A significant number of parent and governor volunteers also help in the classrooms. They, too, are fully briefed and have clear effective roles. This frees up the teacher to work with those who concentrate less readily, those who have specific learning difficulties or those who need even higher challenges. Work seen by inspectors in books is of a high standard in terms of neatness and general presentation. Teachers insist on very high standards of clear handwriting, heading and tailing the work, using a ruler, doing diagrams in pencil and dating the work. Pupils are proud of their work and very pleased to receive rewards in the weekly assembly, which celebrates their successes. As a result, they learn a wider range of skills than is often seen in schools, and their determination to do even better is a strong outcome of the very good teaching.

19. **There has been a significant improvement in the quality of teaching and learning for reception age children.** Teaching and learning are good and progress is good. This is an improvement since the school was last inspected. Planning is now good and focuses clearly on all required aspects of learning fully. The class is managed well and tasks set are planned to give children a wide range of learning experiences from sand and water play through to counting and spelling. Children learn basic skills well in literacy and numeracy as a result, as well as good social skills, through these effective learning activities in the classroom.

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

20. **Overall the curricular provision for pupils is very good.** This is a significant improvement since the previous inspection, particularly in terms of planning. Provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is very good overall.

The strengths are:

21. **Pupils are offered a wide and stimulating range of learning opportunities.** The school has developed a very broad and balanced curriculum, which meets statutory requirements, and reflects the school's priorities. Planning for the mixed age classes is very effective and this is a significant improvement since the previous inspection. Pupils are offered a very good selection of extra curricular activities, which cater for all pupils. Activities are well attended by pupils, and include: art, recorders, guitar, ensemble, orchestra, computers, science, Spanish, French, drama, football, cricket, netball, rounders, swimming and gardening. Pupils enjoy these opportunities, and reach high standards. For example in the science club, pupils gain certificates from the British Association of Young Scientists, from bronze to gold. Such activities, supplemented by many curriculum areas, including history, literacy and music, ensure that cultural provision is good. Some parents come to the additional activities, helping to foster a positive attitude to learning. The National Strategies for Literacy and Numeracy have been very well implemented, and have had a significant impact on raising standards, especially in other areas of the curriculum, notably history and geography. Opportunities for improving basic skills, including using computers, are well provided for in other subjects of the curriculum such as mathematics and science. Sex education and drugs education are fully incorporated into the broad curriculum. All activities and areas of the curriculum are readily accessible to all pupils. The planning of the curriculum, which is of a very good standard, ensures that pupils with learning difficulties and those who have special gifts or talents are suitably supported or challenged

22. **The curriculum for reception age children is good.** Detailed plans are in place, which successfully incorporate all the areas of learning that should be taught to children before they enter Year 1. Lesson planning is comprehensive, and children have access to a wide range of interesting activities and learning experiences. A generally stimulating and varied curriculum is the result. However, whilst pupils have a suitable range of wheeled vehicles to use outside, there is no current provision for permanent outdoor equipment, such as climbing frames.

23. **Pupils are given numerous, high quality, opportunities to develop very good social skills, and consider moral issues.** The school has high expectations of pupils' behaviour and these are displayed around the school. In assemblies and lessons, pupils are asked to reflect on moral dilemmas and virtues such as 'what is a friend?' This helps pupils to think through more clearly the values on which they base their decisions, resulting in very good moral provision. In lessons teachers make very good use of opportunities to show pupils how to treat others kindly. They are quick to use praise and reward pupils. Pupils' achievements, both academic and personal, are celebrated in many ways and this helps pupils develop very good behaviour, and very positive attitudes to learning. Pupils are encouraged to become more independent, for example, in their research work in history or science. Older pupils can use the computers outside lesson time. Younger pupils enjoy being able to look after the school guinea pig at weekends. There are varied trips and visits, which not only enhance pupils' learning, but also help to further develop pupils' self esteem and social skills. These are strong features of the geography and science areas. Pupils treat each other with respect. They work and play well together.

24. **The school has close links with the local community, which enriches pupils' school experience.** Pupils' spiritual development is very well provided for through the close links with the local Church. Each half term, pupils visit the Church and a service for family worship is held in the school every week. Visitors from other faiths have also contributed to worship in school assemblies. There are many opportunities for pupils to reflect on their experiences during lessons, often prompted by teachers, who ask questions such as 'How do you know – think before answering?' Parents are very supportive of the school, and many come in regularly to provide very good support, in many areas of school life. The adults who work and help in the school, show pupils the value that they place on learning. Pupils are very well prepared for understanding what it means to be a responsible member of society, making social provision very good. Pupils give regular concerts to the residents of the local Old Peoples' Home. When this home was under threat of closure, pupils wrote letters to the council in support of the home. The school has good links with other schools, which has a positive impact on pupils. For example, the school shares a specialist computer teacher, who teaches in the school each week, and runs the computer club.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

25. **Arrangements for pupils' care and welfare are sound.**

The main strengths are:

26. **The school is a very friendly Christian community where pupils are valued and respected.** This is a small school where everybody knows everybody. Relationships between adults and pupils are very good. The pupils are well supervised at all times. Recently improved dining arrangements ensure that lunch-time is a civilised social occasion and this contributes well to the further development of social skills. Procedures for supporting pupils' personal development are generally informal but teachers know the pupils very well and the level of support is very good. Pupils report that they know to whom to turn if they have problems and they are confident that any concerns will be listened to sympathetically. In the pupils' annual reports, the quality of the section on personal development is very good.

27. **Procedures for health and safety are good.** A governor is involved in termly inspections, safety is stressed in lessons, all equipment is regularly checked and education in healthy living is treated seriously. All staff have had basic training in first aid but the school lacks a person who has a current higher qualification certificate in this area of care.

28. **Procedures for promoting good attendance and good behaviour are both very effective.** The school's anti-bullying strategies are well publicised in class discussions and assemblies. Pupils express confidence in these procedures. Racism is not tolerated.

29. **Assessment and its use to raise standards are significant strengths.** The school has worked very hard since the previous inspection to ensure that all aspects of assessing pupils' progress and standards are firmly in place. It has been very successful in this respect. Staff keep detailed records of all pupils. Pupils who are thought to have learning difficulties are spotted early on and appropriate monitoring takes place. If needed, special help is provided. This ensures that needs are met sooner rather than later. Pupils who might have specific gifts or talents are also recognised early on, and specific work is provided so that they are challenged effectively. Other pupils are equally well challenged through regular and effective assessments. These start when children enter reception. Targets are set based on the children's ability. This is carefully watched across the years as other assessments are made and progress towards targets is measured. Appropriate changes are made to groups within the classroom, or to the planning of lessons, to ensure that all pupils are given levels of work that help them make the best possible progress. This aspect of the work of the school is a significant improvement since the previous inspection.

30. There is one area in need of improvement:

Arrangements for Child Protection are not sufficiently secure. The responsible person has not been adequately trained, although this is now in hand. Staff are not familiar enough with current good practice. This is despite the new policy written by the school to follow local education authority guidelines.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

31. **Parents have a high opinion of the school and are very supportive.** Areas parents particularly approve of are:

- The good behaviour of the pupils;
- The impact and the vision of the head teacher;
- The high standards and clear progress made by the children;
- The links with parents;
- The way the school promotes Christian attitudes and values.

Parents also commented very favourably on the way the school had improved in recent years. The school's very successful policy of involving parents is producing a very effective partnership and this is having a very positive impact on raising standards. The inspectors agree with all these positive views.

The main strengths are:

32. **The quality of information for parents is very good.** The prospectus and the governors' annual report are both very informative and easy to read. The glossary of educational abbreviations in the governors' annual report is an excellent example of useful information for parents. Weekly newsletters, which are also available on the very informative school website, are chatty and keep parents very well informed on the life of the school. Courses and special meetings help parents be more involved in their child's learning, for instance, how numeracy is now taught. Parents are kept very well informed about their child's progress. There are formal parents' meetings in the Autumn and Spring terms and pupils' reports are of very good quality. These reports give a very clear indication of progress made, what their child can do and what needs to be done to improve. Parents of junior pupils also get useful details each year, of test results and the National Curriculum level that their child is working at. This very effectively allows parents to keep a check on progress and feel more involved in their child's learning.

33. **The school believes a strong partnership with parents is vital to improving standards.** The school believes in consultation. Questionnaires are used very effectively to gauge parents' views on subjects and, if necessary, action is taken on points raised. For instance, making sure that parents understand that teachers are available after school to discuss any concerns. Parents are strongly encouraged to help in the school. Many parents now help and this help makes a significant contribution to the pupils' learning. Courses have been arranged to involve parents, for instance the recent 'Dads and Lads' course very effectively involved more fathers and adult male role models in the school. Parents are invited to assemblies that celebrate pupils' achievements, very effectively boosting pupils' self esteem. There is an extremely active Parent Teachers' Association. Governors are fully involved in the school's development and are familiar faces around the school. A few parents have concerns over homework, and particularly the consistency with which it is set. Inspectors looked carefully at the quality and range of homework. They judged this to be of good quality overall with an adequate amount being regularly set and marked. A few parents had concerns about the lack of consistency in the way spelling is taught. The school has been targeting spelling as a priority during the current academic year. Inspectors judge that the current practice has improved considerably and is now good.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

34. **The quality of leadership and management within the school is outstanding and is largely responsible for the significant improvements, which have taken place since the school was previously inspected.**

The main strengths are:

35. **The head teacher and senior staff have clear vision for the future development of the school.** There is a shared and united commitment to succeed. Since the school was previously offering an unacceptable level of education for its pupils, the head teacher, appointed two years ago, has worked very hard with her staff to focus primarily on raising standards. This has been achieved in full for Year 2 and Year 6 pupils as the national tests and teacher assessments show. The head teacher has involved the governing body in a way that they were not previously involved, in order to share her vision more widely and effectively. The great focus on team-work and improving the role of the subject leaders has had a significant effect on the improved provision, achievement of pupils and their standards.

36. **The school is driven by an excellent development plan.** This has been arrived at through full consultation and prioritised effectively with significant input from governors. Central to the thinking behind the plan was the need to raise staff morale and standards of pupils' work. Both have been achieved, and in a very short time. Subject leaders have a very good grasp of their subjects and spend a great deal of time and energy in seeking ways of improving the curriculum in their subjects and making learning more interesting and stimulating for pupils. The school development plan is fully costed and financial considerations are carefully weighed up and evaluated in terms of their effectiveness on improvements within the school.

37. The eleven per cent carry forward of money is part of the school's budgeting for a part-time support teacher and other strategic plans not yet complete. Governors have a very good understanding of their role and they fulfil statutory requirements extremely well. Through a series of well-structured committees, they act as a critical friend to the school and enable all planning to be rigorously scrutinised, refined and improved before implementation. As a result of such involvement, the governors know the school well and have a very clear overview of its strengths and areas for future development for the benefit of pupils.

38. **Very good systems of checking on the progress of teaching, learning and staff development are fully in place.** Through the determination of all staff to improve the school, systems have been implemented to ensure that all areas of its work function at the best possible level. Subject leaders look carefully at their colleagues' planning in their specialist areas, searching for ways of improving this. Planning is of a very good quality as a result, and a great strength of the school is the way that staff raise standards of literacy and numeracy through other subjects. Planning is good for the reception age children who get a broad and balanced diet, which incorporates fully all the requirements of the law. Management of this area is effective and ensures that children get a good start to their education. In other areas of the work of the school, support staff play a vital role. In the area of special educational needs, a very well managed system ensures that pupils are recognised early and provided with very good support as long as they need it. The school has been quick off the mark to ensure that the new regulations regarding special educational needs are fully implemented. Similarly, the school has identified a number of gifted and talented pupils and makes additional provision for them, with more ways of aiding their progress in the pipeline. Temporary staff and staff new to the school are effectively welcomed and made to feel part of the team very quickly.

39. **Resources are used very well to raise the quality of learning.** The school is generally well resourced. Staff use the new computer suite well and the use of ICT to raise the standard of learning is very good. In other areas, teachers plan to use resources very well. Video clips, overhead projectors, as well as such things as mathematical aids, maps, artefacts and worksheets are all fully incorporated into the learning schedule to very good effect. All additional areas of accommodation such as the hall, corridors and other spaces are in constant use by small groups experimenting in science or working independently with supervision on research projects. The overall result is that the school uses its facilities and resources very well to raise standards and provides very good value for money.

40. The area for improvement is:

There is currently insufficient larger scale apparatus to help pupils in the reception year improve their physical development. This is recognised as an area for development by the school in its planning and is part of the completion of the issue raised by the previous inspection.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

41. In order to raise standards further and to improve the quality of educational provision, the school should now:

- (1) Complete its current plans to ensure that reception age children have sufficient provision of outdoor apparatus in order to further improve their physical growth;
(Paragraphs: 41, 54)
- (2) Ensure that the named Child Protection co-ordinator receives the most recent and updated training.
(Paragraph: 30)

The current school development plan contains further details of what additional provision is to be made for the children in reception. The school has very recently made specific arrangements for the Child Protection co-ordinator to receive updated training.

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	29
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	25

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Number	6	12	11	0	0	0	0
Percentage	21	41	38	0	0	0	0

The table gives the number and percentage of lessons observed in each of the seven categories used to make judgements about teaching. Care should be taken when interpreting these percentages as each lesson represents more than three 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)	111
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	6

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs

	YR – Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	2
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	14

English as an additional language

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

Pupil mobility in the last school year

	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	4
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	6

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	2.0

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.3

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

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 1 (Year 2)

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2002	3	12	15

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys			
	Girls			
	Total	15	15	15
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	100 (92)	100 (92)	100 (92)
	National	84 (84)	86 (86)	90 (91)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys			
	Girls			
	Total	15	15	15
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	100 (92)	100 (92)	100 (92)
	National	85 (85)	89 (89)	89 (89)

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

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

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2002	9	6	15

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys			
	Girls			
	Total	14	15	15
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	93 (71)	100 (79)	100 (86)
	National	75 (75)	73 (71)	86 (87)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys			
	Girls			
	Total	12	14	13
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	80 (86)	93 (79)	93 (86)
	National	73 (72)	74 (74)	82 (82)

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

** denotes numbers too small for individual publication*

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	111	0	0
White – Irish	0	0	0
White – any other White background	0	0	0
Mixed – White and Black Caribbean	0	0	0
Mixed – White and Black African	0	0	0
Mixed – White and Asian	0	0	0
Mixed – any other mixed background	0	0	0
Asian or Asian British - Indian	0	0	0
Asian or Asian British - Pakistani	0	0	0
Asian or Asian British – Bangladeshi	0	0	0
Asian or Asian British – any other Asian background	0	0	0
Black or Black British – Caribbean	0	0	0
Black or Black British – African	0	0	0
Black or Black British – any other Black background	0	0	0
Chinese	0	0	0
Any other ethnic group	0	0	0
No ethnic group recorded	0	0	0

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

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers and classes: YR – Y6

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	5.8
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	19.1
Average class size	24.3

Education support staff: YR – Y6

Total number of education support staff	4
Total aggregate hours worked per week	57

FTE means full-time equivalent

Financial information

Financial year	2001/2002
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	£
Total income	310 415
Total expenditure	310 415
Expenditure per pupil	2 772
Balance brought forward from previous year	35 290
Balance carried forward to next year	35 290

Recruitment of teachers

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	2.6
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	2.2

Total number of vacant teaching posts (FTE)	0
Number of vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of a term or more (FTE)	1
Number of unfilled vacancies or vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of less than one term (FTE)	0

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	111
Number of questionnaires returned	39

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	62	36	0	3	0
My child is making good progress in school.	54	44	3	0	0
Behaviour in the school is good.	38	62	0	0	0
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	33	41	18	3	5
The teaching is good.	36	56	5	0	3
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	44	38	15	0	3
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	67	26	8	0	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	64	33	0	0	3
The school works closely with parents.	46	41	10	0	3
The school is well led and managed.	49	46	0	0	5
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	51	44	3	0	3
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	51	33	13	0	3

Other issues raised by parents

A few parents raised a concern regarding the teaching of spelling.

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

Please note: comparisons to the last HMI report are only made in those few subjects which were reported on in March 2001. These are English, mathematics, science and the areas of learning for children of reception age.

AREAS OF LEARNING FOR CHILDREN IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

42. **Overall provision for reception age children is good.** This is an improvement since the previous inspection.

Strengths in this provision are:

43. **The good start that children make to their education in the reception year.** Children are provided with many stimulating and interesting activities, which are well managed. The majority of the children have experienced some form of nursery education before they come to the school. Their attainment on entering the reception year varies considerably, but overall it is broadly in line with that expected for children of this age. Their personal, social and emotional development is also broadly as expected. During their time in reception the children make good progress. They are on course to exceed the expected levels in all areas of learning by the time they leave reception.

44. **The good quality of teaching and learning.** This is a significant improvement since the time of the school's previous inspection. The teacher has a secure understanding of the social, emotional and educational needs of the children. She plans a very appropriate range of activities. She has high expectations of their work and this contributes to the good progress they make. The teacher has a pleasant, helpful and encouraging manner with the children, and gives them much praise for their work. A suitable range of strategies is used in teaching the children. Very effective use is made of the classroom space available. Procedures for recording how well children are doing are thorough. The teacher and the teaching assistant complement each other very well in ensuring that the children are provided with tasks that are suitable to their needs.

45. **The good, and often very good, response made by the children.** They listen carefully to their teacher and any other adult in the class, and they are keen to be involved in all activities. They set about their tasks with enthusiasm and they persevere until they are complete. They work well on their own, and in groups, where they readily help each other if a need arises. They are well motivated, keen to please and always try to produce their best work. They are happy in seeking advice from adults, should any difficulties arise, and they are also confident in organising themselves when the opportunities are presented.

46. **The standards being achieved in all areas of learning:**

Personal, social and emotional development

47. Children are making good progress, and they are on course to exceed the expected level of attainment by the end of reception. The children have settled very well into school life. They have learnt how to behave in school and be part of a social group. They are prepared to work with other children, take turns and share fairly. They are able to move confidently around the classroom and the school, and they ask for assistance where required. Children readily help their teacher in giving out materials and equipment, and then in tidying up at the end. They are eager to explore new learning and they are able to concentrate on work being undertaken. They have a well-developed sense of what is right and wrong. Their behaviour is

consistently good, and often very good. Their attitudes to school, to other children, to their teacher and the teaching assistant, and to their whole environment, are most positive.

Communication, language and literacy

48. Children are making good progress, and they are on course to exceed the expected levels of attainment by the time they leave reception. All children pay close attention to their teacher, listening with interest and concentration to stories, poems and instructions. Speaking skills are well developed. The majority are keen to answer questions and offer opinions, sometimes at length. Children show a keen interest in books and they handle them with care. The majority of the class understand letter sounds and they are able to read a number of words in their books. Most of these children are on course to becoming fluent readers. Through practising their writing, the children are forming their letters correctly. All can write their names independently. A majority of children are also producing short pieces of text, such as about their 'news', or when writing pieces of text, for instance, about penguins and polar bears. Most children successfully practise their emergent writing skills, such as when they write out notes in their role-play activities. Writing has improved significantly since the previous inspection.

Mathematical development

49. Children's progress is good, and they are on course to exceed the expected level of attainment by the end of the reception year. Most children can successfully count to twenty, with some counting further. The majority clearly understand the concept, and most can count out an appropriate number of objects with confidence. They are familiar with counting games and rhymes, such as 'Five Currant Buns', and the children can sort and sequence objects. In using water and sand, they understand such words as 'empty' and 'full', and in comparing the weights of teddy bears, they confidently use 'heavier' and 'lighter'. Many children successfully extend their mathematical vocabulary to name a variety of two-dimensional shapes. The children understand the concept of addition, and the majority successfully add two numbers. Most children are developing appropriate control in forming their numbers correctly, with only a very small number occasionally reversing some digits. The children are also successfully developing their number skills through paying for items in the 'Toy Museum shop'.

Knowledge and understanding of the world

50. Children are making good progress. They are on course to exceed the expected levels of attainment at the end of the reception year. Most children are able to explain about past and present events in the context of their families. They confidently, for example, explain about older members of their family, and some of the experiences they had when they were younger. Children readily use the expressions 'old' and 'new', when talking about toys. They have studied aspects of the local environment, and many can talk confidently about, for example, roads and houses, in explaining what they can see around the school. Children can name the main external features of the human body, and they understand the importance of the various senses. Children have been provided with opportunities to work with food, and they have successfully made items such as sweets and gingerbread men. All children are given the chance to use a computer. They show considerable confidence and independence in using the mouse and keyboard to undertake a range of work, for example, producing pictures of teddy bears.

Physical development

51. Children's progress is good, and they are on course to exceed the expected levels of attainment at the end of reception. In class, children hold pencils and crayons correctly, and they show increasing skill in producing their writing neatly and colouring pictures carefully. Their dexterity in handling large and small items in the classroom is developing well, such as when they use construction kits and jigsaws, and thread small objects onto a string. Children's manipulative skills are good. Malleable materials, such as 'playdough' and 'plasticene', are used successfully, for instance, when they make items such as small animals, and letters and numbers. Children show appropriate control over such things as paint brushes and scissors. They cut out items, such as lanterns, with some accuracy. They use construction toys with confidence, producing a range of houses and vehicles. They have suitable opportunities to use balls, ropes, hoops and climbing apparatus, when receiving lessons in the hall. These activities aid the further development of their physical skills.

Creative development

52. Children are making good progress, and they are on course to exceed the expected level of attainment by the end of reception. Children can confidently sing songs and rhymes, clap a steady beat and perform an appropriate range of actions to their songs. They can successfully use untuned percussion instruments to accompany the rest of the class singing. They listen carefully to a range of pre-recorded music. Children confidently use a variety of paints and crayons, and they produce pictures from direct observation as well as from their imagination. They have successfully produced, for example, pictures of themselves and houses, and their observations of different animals. They have also shown some confidence in making three-dimensional items, and they have successfully produced collages of leaves and twigs, to represent a forest scene. Children use their imagination well, for instance when undertaking role-play in the class 'Museum'.

53. Bearing in mind the above average standards being achieved in children's physical development, an area for further development is:

The provision of a range of permanent playground equipment, such as climbing frames. The overall curriculum provision is good, with a wide range of activities available to enrich pupils' learning. The absence of permanent outdoor facilities currently restricts physical development, even though standards are above average generally.

ENGLISH

54. **Throughout the school standards in English are well above average.** Achievement is very good. This is a very good improvement since the previous inspection. The strengths of the subject are:

55. **Pupils reach well above average standards at the end of Year 2 and Year 6.** In the national tests in 2002, pupils in Year 2 and Year 6 reached well above average standards in English. The inspection found current standards to be well above average in all aspects of English. Pupils reach well above average standards in speaking and listening skills, as a result of the numerous opportunities they are given throughout the school. For example, in the weekly achievement assembly pupils explained why they were receiving certificates. Reading is also well above average. In Year 6, pupils read with expression and understanding. They can select appropriate words or sentences to support their views. High and average attaining pupils can 'read between the lines', to get at different levels of meaning. The emphasis on using literacy across the school leads to Year 6 pupils being able to structure their writing for different audiences and purposes. In their stories they use imaginative vocabulary to describe scenes and characters. In a story about a tortoise that

had no shell, a pupil wrote: 'he has had so many encounters with death that he shouldn't be alive'. Standards of writing like this are well above average.

56. Pupils' behaviour and attitudes are very good, and are further enhanced by teachers' skilful and positive use of effective strategies. Pupils show enthusiasm and interest for their learning in English. The very good relationships between pupils and teachers allow children to understand that making mistakes is part of learning. Teachers are quick to praise and reward pupils in lessons. Progress is celebrated in many ways, such as the award of achievement certificates for handwriting and reading. The attractive displays of English work make it clear to pupils that their work is highly valued. During lessons, pupils concentrate for long periods of time, enabling them to make very good gains in their learning.

57. Teachers' planning is very good and helps to structure learning into small manageable steps, matched to pupils' needs. Teaching and learning are very good. Teachers' knowledge of the subject matter is very good. Teachers identify the aims of the lesson and share this with their pupils. Pupils know what they are about to learn as a result. Resources are carefully prepared and chosen to match the purposes of the lesson. Teachers know their pupils well and use a mixture of teaching methods. They have adapted approaches from the National Literacy Strategy very effectively. These include: groups of pupils working and learning intensively with the teacher; pupils learning independently and time at the end of lessons for the whole class to reflect on what they have learnt. A further strength is in the teaching and learning by pupils with specific learning difficulties. In a very good Year 1 and 2 lesson, the teacher used visual aids very effectively to help pupils grasp the concept of how to use connecting words to link sentences. A lower attaining pupil was able to say that 'a car travels down a ramp because of the slope'. Equally, a higher attaining pupil was able to go further by applying his learning in science, stating that the car travelled down the ramp because of the force of gravity. Such open-ended and very good visual material raises the rate of learning very effectively while at the same time catering for the different ability groups in the class. Higher attaining pupils also have their writing capabilities challenged and extended in other subjects such as geography and history. Here, they write at length on projects about the effects of climate on lifestyle, or what life in Ancient Greece was like.

58. Leadership of the subject is very good. The subject leader provides very good leadership and management. She analyses pupils' performance in national tests. Teachers keep detailed and informative records of how pupils are progressing, from when they enter the school to when they leave. Any concerns are quickly noted and appropriate action is taken. Appropriately challenging targets are set, based on this information of pupils. The basing of the planning in the National Literacy Strategy has been a great success and is responsible along with other factors for rising standards.

59. A minor area for improvement is:

To continue to improve the quality of pupils' spelling. The school has identified that standards in spelling need to be improved, and has put in place a number of strategies to achieve this. Currently the methods used to learn spellings, and for marking spelling, are not consistent across the school.

MATHEMATICS

60. Standards in mathematics are well above average by Year 6 and significantly better than when the school received its last report. Achievement is very good.

Strengths are:

61. Pupils learn rapidly and achieve to an excellent degree due to very good teaching. The overall quality of teaching and learning in mathematics is very good with several outstanding lessons observed. Teachers are very effectively prepared and plan thoroughly to ensure that learning is well suited to the needs of all pupils. Clear lesson plans, specific targets and very good classroom management ensure that no time is lost, that all pupils are fully occupied and that resources are to hand. The National Numeracy Strategy has been adapted and firmly embedded into the planning. This gives pupils a very wide range of opportunities for learning which, through careful planning, are effectively extended in many other subject areas. This occurs, for instance, when Year 3 and 4 pupils learn co-ordinates and use them in geography; pupils use their measuring skills in Year 5 and 6 science; pupils learning about the location of towns in the Isle of Wight apply their mathematical knowledge very well in Year 1 and 2 as they follow a grid pattern and record their results. Time and chronology are taught in history using mathematical skills; measuring and precision are part and parcel of science and design and technology throughout the school. As a result, the very good learning in mathematics lessons is reinforced and consolidated throughout the curriculum.

62. Teachers use knowledge of their pupils to set high targets and help them reach high standards. Teachers have outstandingly good knowledge and understanding of mathematics. All staff have received very good training and use their very good knowledge to excellent effect. Challenges are high in the mental sessions at the start of lessons. Pupils are expected to explain their strategies when they solve problems. Questioning by teachers is sharp and probing. Outstanding examples of this occurred in Year 5 where pupils were studying angles. In order to explain how they reached a specific answer, the teacher asked the pupils to demonstrate using a protractor on the overhead projector. There was immediate visual recognition and understanding of how to work out angles as a result. Teachers know their pupils and set high targets for them. This in part accounts for the very high standards achieved by pupils in Year 6 in the national tests last year, putting them in the top five per cent of schools nationally. Progress over time last year was excellent. This year standards in Years 2 and Year 6 are well above average, although in both classes there are a number of pupils experiencing learning difficulties. Progress by these pupils, and all others in the class, is very good, given their respective starting points when they entered the school.

63. Learning is made interesting, challenging and fun. The hallmark of lessons is that learning mathematics is fun. Excellent examples occur in Years 3 and 4 as pupils try to make a mouse move through a maze searching for blocks of cheese. Pupils record the turns they make in the maze, using co-ordinates and points of the compass. Linking the work in this way to geography made the lesson stimulating and fun, yet led to very rapid learning by all pupils who grasped the principle readily. The use of visual aids to learn about shapes in Years 1 and 2 was also of a high quality. By the end of the session, pupils were able to correctly identify triangular prisms or tetrahedrons, for example, showing understanding that is well above average. In Year 6, pupils were asked to solve simple problems on a more complex 'dart-board' frame, on an overhead transparency. At first, they found it hard, but the visual impact soon drove home the point very effectively and all learnt the principle quickly. The capturing of pupils' imaginations in these ways is very much a strong contributory factor to the way in which so many pupils learn so rapidly, and make such good progress over time.

64. The subject is very well led and managed. The subject leader has a very clear overview of the subject. Targets set are based on very good use of assessment data collected from direct observation in classrooms, national test results and other forms of testing. The subject leader also arranges for colleagues to observe each other so that there is shared learning of what good practice there is, and how to improve individually. ICT is used very well in the work pupils undertake on graphs and tallying, as well as the use of spreadsheets. Work is carefully scrutinised for any apparent weaknesses, which are rectified

through changing lesson plans. All planning is carefully looked at to ensure that the diet pupils receive meets the statutory requirements, yet offers them a broad, relevant and interesting series of learning experiences. There are no areas of concern for improvement.

SCIENCE

65. Throughout the school standards in science are well above average. Achievement is very good. This is a very good improvement since the previous inspection. The strengths of the subject are:

66. Pupils reach well above average standards at the end of Year 2 and Year 6. In the national tests in 2002, pupils in Year 6 reached well above average standards. All pupils reached the expected level, and high attaining pupils achieved well above average results. The inspection found current standards to be well above average in all aspects of science. In their science experiments, Year 1 pupils are able to explain why they think something is going to happen. They show awareness of forces like gravity. They understand the difference between living and non-living things, and sort living things into plants and animals. In their experimental work, Year 6 pupils know how to carry out a fair test, by keeping some factors the same. They record their measurements carefully and can explain what their results show. High attaining pupils know that by repeating measurements, they will get a more reliable result.

67. Teachers have good subject matter knowledge and this leads to very good teaching and learning. Teachers' planning identifies what pupils will learn and this is shared with pupils. Activities are well thought out and often include those areas where pupils need more practice. For example, when pupils were finding out what effects the rate that water cools down, they were asked to interpret their graphs. This was a weakness identified by the science co-ordinator, from her thorough monitoring of pupils' learning. The co-ordinator provides very good leadership and management. She has contributed to teachers' very good scientific knowledge, through giving demonstration lessons. Teachers use approaches from the National Literacy Strategy to extend pupils' learning. They work with groups of pupils intensively, and they end their lessons by asking pupils to reflect on what has been learnt. Teachers challenge pupils because they have high expectations. For example, during the lesson about interpreting graphs, the teacher worked with a group of higher attaining pupils, asking them to explain what the different shapes on their line graphs meant. This very good use of both mathematics and ICT combined to enhance learning very effectively. Teachers' very good knowledge enables them to make lessons varied and exciting. In a lesson on the force of friction, for example, it ended with a demonstration of how earthquakes create friction, which helped bring the subject matter alive to pupils and enhance their learning very effectively. Pupils are encouraged to present their reports about their experiments in different ways, including using various computer programs, such as data handling and word processing.

68. Pupils' understanding of scientific terms is very good, and this helps them to make very good progress. Pupils are encouraged to learn and to use scientific terms throughout the school. They enjoy science and look forward to their lessons. They concentrate very well and work effectively on tasks. Teachers help pupils learn and understand difficult concepts through effective use of models. While introducing the up-thrust force of water on floating objects, the teacher asked pupils to pretend to be rockets taking off. In a lesson about friction, lower attaining pupils were confident in explaining how different textured surfaces would affect friction. There are attractive displays of science work around the school, with key words and terms to aid pupils' understanding. The pupils who attend the weekly science club gain in-depth knowledge about science, and they share their expertise

with others during lessons. Pupils have very positive attitudes to learning and this enhances the very good rates of progress that they make.

69. A minor area for improvement is:

To further develop assessment, so that pupils know their next learning steps.

Teachers know their pupils well and plan effectively to enable pupils to take the next step in their learning. This is not always shared with pupils, neither are pupils aware of how they can get better at science.

ART AND DESIGN AND DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

70. **Standards by the end of both Year 2 and Year 6 are above average in both subjects.** Pupils' achievement is good.

The strengths in art and design and design and technology are:

71. **There is a good standard of work produced by pupils.** Pupils show skills that are above those expected in all aspects of work. Their work in observational drawing, for example, in art and design, shows that they study their subjects very closely and then produce minute detail in their work. The pictures of houses drawn by pupils in Years 1 and 2 are realistic and well proportioned, and the drawings of fruit produced by pupils in Years 5 and 6 are of a particularly high quality. Pupils take great care in using the correct pencils and pastels to give their work a most appropriate appearance. Pupils pay similar care and attention when producing artefacts in design and technology. Having produced suitable plans and chosen their materials and tools, pupils take the utmost care in shaping and joining their components accurately. The resulting wheeled vehicles, food items and model houses produced by pupils in Years 1 and 2, and the books, model chairs, rockets and money containers produced by older pupils are most carefully finished. Pupils are confident in evaluating their work in both subjects. For instance, when they have produced painting in the style of, for example, Mondrian or Picasso, they readily identify how they might improve their work. This skill contributes significantly towards the overall quality of the work that is being produced.

72. **The teaching and learning is of a good quality.** Teachers' subject knowledge is good, they are confident in the subjects and their expectations of the pupils are high. Teachers provide a wide variety of activities and experiences for pupils, organise sessions well and provide them with much support and advice. For example, in art and design, teachers regularly provide pupils with clear and helpful demonstrations of all the techniques that are to be used. In design and technology, where appropriate, teachers provide pupils with the opportunity to dismantle examples of the items they are going to make in order to learn how to re-assemble them. This enables the pupils to identify the components they need, as well as providing them with the chance to see how the parts are joined together. Teaching strategies such as these contribute well towards developing pupils' ability to introduce quality in their work, as well as allowing them to make good progress in their various skills. Teachers also take pleasure in producing displays of pupils' work that greatly enhance the learning environment.

73. **Pupils' have good, and often very good, attitudes to their work.** This contributes significantly to the good progress that they make. Pupils take their work very seriously, they are keen to master all the techniques and skills presented to them and they produce work of good quality. They take great care with all aspects of their work, such as with the fine detail added to their pencil drawings, and they learn accuracy in their work when producing various components for their models. They behave well and they collaborate successfully with other pupils when required to do so. They readily follow safety routines when handling tools in design and technology. Pupils confidently discuss work with both their teachers and with

each other. This helps them clarify their thoughts about particular features in the pictures and artefacts on which they are working, as well as enabling them to identify ways in which they might improve their own work further.

74. Bearing in mind the above average standards being achieved, the areas for development are:

- **In art and design, a more consistent approach to the use of sketch-books.** Currently, sketch-books are not used consistently well in all classes in order to build up pupils' various artistic skills and techniques.
- **In design and technology, pupils' evaluations of their own work.** Whilst evaluations are regularly undertaken, they are not always as detailed as the plans that are produced.

GEOGRAPHY AND HISTORY

75. **Standards in both subjects are above average by Year 6.** This represents very good achievement by pupils.

Strengths are:

76. **Consistently very good development of skills in both subjects.** There is a very good focus on developing essential and basic skills in both subjects and pupils' progress is very good. In history, there are many opportunities for pupils to undertake research and produce their own projects on topics such as the Ancient Greeks or the Victorians in Years 3 and 4. Pupils learn the skills of independent research and incorporate ICT well and effectively into their topics. They learn to investigate sources of evidence and to draw their own conclusions. In geography, pupils learn the basic skills of map reading and direction through excellent lessons focusing on the Isle of Wight in Years 1 and 2, or related to mathematics when learning about co-ordinates in Years 3 and 4.

77. **Very good teaching enables very good independent learning to take place.** Teachers prepare very good lessons, which engage the interests and enthusiasm of pupils from an early age. In a Year 1 and 2 lesson in geography on map-work, the teacher decided to use a real place, the Isle of Wight, rather than the more traditional imaginary island often used at this age. In the geography lessons seen during the inspection, pupils' attitudes and eagerness to learn were excellent. Pupils' imaginations were fired and several had begun to collect information from holidays, friends or relatives to support their study. Teaching brought the subjects alive in this way and pupils learnt far more because it was relevant. Similarly in history, where teaching and learning are good throughout the school, pupils are encouraged to bring in old artefacts from home, or artefacts from holidays, to reinforce and exemplify what can be learnt from the past to help explain the present. Newspaper cuttings are used to illustrate mankind's first steps on the moon; pupils write in detail about the dreams of Martin Luther King, using video and written evidence, with very good learning taking place.

78. **Very good management of the two subjects, including visits and field-work, enhances learning effectively.** In history, good and sustained use is made of the area to investigate the nature of historical buildings as well as to visit the local museum. Pupils' learning is enhanced through this first hand discovery during visits to the Cottage Museum or the Judge's Lodgings, for example. In geography, there is field-work for every class. In reception, pupils learn effectively about their immediate environment and begin to draw real plans, of the classroom or their school in Year 1. They move on to look at the work of rivers in the Lune Valley and supplement this effectively higher up in the school by examining first hand the development of Heysham as a port. Such visits and research lead to stronger more effective learning, while bringing the subjects alive.

79. **Both subjects encourage the development of numeracy and literacy skills very effectively.** Pupils learn how to construct and draw bar charts and temperature charts when studying climates across the world. They use their very good levels of mathematical knowledge to translate the data into graphs, which they then interpret in their books. This strategy is very effective in raising the degree of learning from mathematics as well as helping pupils realise its significance in an applied sense. Similarly, in history in Years 1 and 2, pupils use their counting to gain a sense of chronology, correctly learning to sequence events such as those reported about the Great Fire of London. They learn to write at length and in a very imaginative manner about life in Ancient Greece in Years 3 and 4, extending their literacy skills very well. Similarly, in geography in Years 5 and 6, pupils extend and learn to develop their literacy skills very effectively when writing about life in the tundra as an Inuit. There are no areas of concern for improvement.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

80. **Throughout the school standards in ICT are well above average.** Achievement is very good.

The strengths of the subject are:

81. **Standards seen during the inspection were well above average throughout the school.** Only a few lessons were seen during the inspection, and these were very good in terms of teaching input and subsequent learning. Pupils' work, displays, and discussions with both pupils and teachers showed that pupils reach standards which are well above average. Pupils learn to use computers effectively in their work in other subjects, as well as during specific skills lessons in ICT. Year 2 pupils know how to use computers to write stories and poems. They use punctuation and paragraphs effectively. They know how to use a graphics program to draw shapes and have learnt how to use colour to good effect. Year 5 pupils enjoyed preparing a presentation about recycling, showing increased confidence in using features of the program. By Year 6, pupils learn how to use computers to carry out a very wide range of tasks. For example, they use word processing and data handling programs to present information in a variety of ways. In mathematics they understand how spreadsheets are used to carry out calculations. They know how designs can be built up, by repeating images from the digital camera. In geography, pupils use the Internet effectively to access information about the Inuit. High attaining pupils are selective of information and effectively blend it into their own writing.

82. **Pupils have very positive attitudes to their learning in computers and behave very well.** Pupils talk knowledgeably about their wide range of experiences of using computers. Year 2 pupils spoke enthusiastically about using the computer for designing their Mondrian pictures, and for writing their winter poems. During a lesson on planning a sequence of instructions to make a floor turtle move in a pre-determined way, pupils sustained their concentration very well. They were eager to try out more difficult moves, such as using turns of less than a right angle. By persevering, they realised that it was very important to give very precise instructions. Low attaining pupils were able to write a simple sequence of instructions. Older pupils use the computer suite in a responsible way at lunch-time, and this helps them to consolidate their skills through independent work. As a consequence of their very good attitudes, pupils make very good progress.

83. **The subject leader has had a positive impact on the development of ICT.** The subject leader has very good knowledge about computers. She has developed a very effective syllabus, made up of separate units. Each unit is carefully planned for the mixed age classes in the school. The subject leader is able to monitor teaching and learning very well, through the record book for each unit. Additionally, pupils' learning is tracked through the log books which form part of the scheme so that assessment procedures are good. The suite

has a very good range of software, and the recent addition of a projector is enhancing the already very good teaching. Laptops are also used to provide a flexible way of utilising the projector or sensing equipment. Access to the Internet is through an intranet to ensure security. Through her very good monitoring the subject leader knows the strengths and areas for improvement. All staff are due to receive training in using the projector. The addition of a specialist teacher who visits the school each week, is also helping to raise standards. Each year group has a lesson a fortnight. Every week there are opportunities for pupils to attend a computer club, run by the specialist teacher. Higher attaining pupils are identified and are provided with additional opportunities to learn. There are no significant areas for improvement.

MUSIC

84. Standards in music are above average throughout the school with very good achievement by pupils.

The main strengths are:

85. Pupils learn to sing very well. Their diction is very clear. Voice levels are very well controlled so that the contrast between loud and soft emphasises the composers' intentions very well. Singing is 'together', with pupils having learnt to listen effectively for cues and to sing with each other, rather than trying to emphasise their own contributions. The overall effect is a sound of good harmony and sweetness, very effectively promoted through regular practice in assemblies. Standards are above average overall.

86. Pupils have good knowledge and understanding of technical terms and their use. Through much specialised teaching, pupils learn a wide range of technical terms which they can apply and use correctly. For example, in conversation and in lessons, they know what is meant by 'tempo' and 'pitch', and they can explain these terms to the lay person clearly. Pupils learn the difference between crotchets and quavers and they learn to syncopate the rhythm when clapping, following the teacher's lead. Pupils in Year 6 have a good understanding of how different families of instruments work – they know, for example, that woodwind instruments make their sounds through a vibrating reed; they know that stringed instruments are 'plucked' or 'bowed'. Pupils can also express a clear preference in musical terms for what they like and do not like, explaining with reasons why they are not fond of ballet, for example, but prefer other types of music. Their levels of reasoning are convincing and above average for their age.

87. Teaching and learning are very good. Few opportunities to observe lessons were available during the inspection, but those seen were well planned with good challenges. The specialist teacher prepares the lessons effectively to give pupils plenty of opportunities to contribute to learning through composing, performing and appraising. Resources, such as the keyboard, are used well and effectively to aid learning. Pupils get frequent opportunities to learn how to experiment with sound using a range of tuned and untuned instruments. The teacher questions pupils purposefully and makes them think. Learning this way is made enjoyable and fun. Pupils' attitudes are very positive and they enjoy lessons, and this adds to their learning significantly.

88. The subject is very well led and managed. The head teacher is the music specialist and she has put together a very good policy and planned a very good curriculum, which gives pupils a broad and balanced musical diet. Good records are now being kept of those pupils who do better than expected and those who might experience problems. This information is used effectively to ensure pupils are challenged with demanding work, or supported if they have not understood at first.

89. There is one area for improvement:

The subject does make full use of new technology. Currently, newer programs to aid learning using ICT facilities are not being used.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

90. **Standards by the end of both Year 2 and Year 6 are above average.** Pupils' achievement is good.

The strengths in physical education are:

91. **Pupils produce a good standard of work.** By the end of Year 6 pupils confidently develop and improve their games skills. They show considerable accuracy and skill both in moving with a ball and in passing and shooting. In taking part in small-sided team games, pupils also show an increasingly good understanding of tactics. Pupils in Years 3 and 4 show good gymnastic skills, especially when balancing on various 'points and patches'. They show good fluency in their routines and they use this ability well when developing and performing a sequence of movements. Pupils in Years 5 and 6 attend swimming lessons during the year, and by the end of Year 6 almost all pupils can swim 25 metres unaided, with many swimming significantly further. By the end of Year 2, pupils successfully move around the hall, showing good awareness of space and other pupils. In Year 2, they confidently carry out a sequence of dance movements, to music, that show better than expected control and co-ordination. In particular, pupils introduce most suitable stillness and gesture into the work, to emphasise the routines they are developing. Pupils in Year 1 readily develop their games skills, when dribbling and passing a ball. They show good accuracy when passing the ball to a partner.

92. **There is good quality teaching and learning.** The teachers plan well and provide clear and helpful instruction, together with a wide and varied range of resources, enabling all pupils to make good gains in their physical skills. The teachers change appropriately for lessons, and they join in and demonstrate for pupils, which helps them identify areas where they might improve themselves. Teachers have good subject knowledge and have high expectations of the pupils' performance. Lessons are conducted at a brisk pace, with very good control and management. Pupils respond by trying hard to accomplish the tasks set for them, and making a good physical and creative effort. The teachers provide help and support to pupils in all aspects of their work, and in particular they try to identify areas of work that pupils find more difficult. This contributes significantly to the progress that is made.

93. **Pupils have very good attitudes and behaviour.** In all lessons, pupils join in most appropriately, enjoying themselves and taking pleasure in the quality of their performance. This helps them to achieve well. Pupils are enthusiastic and keen to please. They show very good attitudes, behave very well, work well alone and with a partner or group and carry equipment carefully and safely.

94. **There is very good provision of extra-curricular activities.** The school provides a very good range of extra-curricular activities, including football, netball, cricket, rounders, athletics and swimming. Pupils in Years 5 and 6 also make a residential visit to Cumbria, to develop their outdoor and adventure skills. These activities are very well supported by pupils, staff and, in some cases, parents. They significantly enhance pupils' overall skills and confidence in the subject.

95. Taking into account the above average standards being achieved, an area for development is:

Providing pupils with regular opportunities to discuss and evaluate their own and other pupils' work. During lessons, teachers always take the opportunity to allow pupils to demonstrate their work to other pupils. However, opportunities are usually missed to allow pupils to discuss that work and to identify possible ways in which they might improve their own performance further.