

INSPECTION REPORT

NORTH WALNEY PRIMARY SCHOOL

Barrow-in-Furness

LEA area: Cumbria

Unique reference number: 112240

Head teacher: Mr J Sharples

Reporting inspector: Mr C Smith
25211

Dates of inspection: 13th – 16th January 2003

Inspection number: 250063

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: | Community |
| Age range of pupils: | 3 to 11 |
| Gender of pupils: | Mixed |
| School address: | Duddon Drive Walney Barrow-in-Furness |
| Postcode: | LA14 3TN |
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| Appropriate authority: | The governing body |
| Name of chair of governors: | Mrs H Edmondson |
| Date of previous inspection: | November 1997 |

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

| Team members | | | Subject responsibilities | Aspect responsibilities |
|--------------|-----------------|----------------------|--|--|
| 25211 | Mr C Smith | Registered inspector | Mathematics | What sort of school is it? |
| | | | Science | The school results and pupils' achievements. |
| | | | Design and technology | How well are pupils taught? |
| | | | Physical education | What should the school do to improve further? |
| | | | Education inclusion | |
| 9952 | Mrs L Brock | 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? |
| 23887 | Mr P Nettleship | Team inspector | English | How well is the school led and managed? |
| | | | Religious education | |
| | | | Art and design | |
| | | | Music | |
| | | | Special educational needs | |
| 29188 | Mrs G Ulyatt | Team inspector | Areas of learning for children in the foundation stage | How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils? |
| | | | Information and communication technology | |
| | | | Geography | |
| | | | History | |
| | | | Citizenship | |

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London
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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

The school is a smaller than average primary school that serves the community of the northern part of the island of Walney, near Barrow-in-Furness in Cumbria. There are 145 pupils on roll; 81 boys and 64 girls in the main school and seven boys and nine girls in the nursery. All of the pupils are white and English speaking. Pupil numbers are falling, reflecting some industrial decline in the area. The school is part of an Educational Action Zone (EAZ). The school has 52 pupils who are eligible for free school meals (35 per cent), which is well above average. Thirty-seven pupils (26 per cent) have special educational needs. The figure has been above average in recent years. Most of these pupils need help with learning but some also have behaviour difficulties. Five pupils have statements of specific need; this is higher than the average nationally. The school has a unit for hearing-impaired children but, since there is only one pupil with hearing impairment, the unit is not currently in operation. There have been many changes of staff over the last two years. When children enter the nursery, their attainment is very low.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

The school provides a satisfactory standard of education for its pupils. Standards in mathematics, science and reading are below average by the age of 11, but pupils achieve steadily from a low starting point to reach these levels. However, standards in writing are not as high as they should be. Teaching is satisfactory overall and almost half is good. Pupils have good attitudes to learning and most behave well. The head teacher, key staff and governors provide sound leadership for the school. The school provides satisfactory value for money.

What the school does well

- Teaching in the nursery and reception classes, (the foundation stage), is strong and children get off to a good start.
- Infant and junior pupils achieve well in mathematics, history and physical education.
- Most pupils have good attitudes to learning and behave well.
- Teachers and classroom assistants cater well for pupils with special educational needs and this enables them to make good progress.
- Financial planning is efficient and the day-to-day to management of the school is good.

What could be improved

- Junior pupils do not achieve well enough in writing and standards are too low.
- The work provided for the more able pupils lacks challenge and holds them back.
- Pupils' work in their books is not examined rigorously enough to detect any weaknesses.
- Standards in music are lower than they should be by the age of 11.

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

Satisfactory improvements have been made since the school was last inspected in November 1997. Teaching and learning have improved, particularly in the planning of lessons. Results in English, mathematics and science have all improved significantly over the last five years but there is still more to do to raise the levels achieved by the more able pupils. The head teacher and staff now assess pupils' learning at the end of each school year and analyse the results. This has led to the setting of more ambitious targets. Standards in information and communication technology (ICT), design and

technology and history have also improved but standards in music are still too low. The head teacher, staff and governors check on the work of the school in most respects. This ensures that most of the strengths and weaknesses are understood and the school has the capacity to move forward.

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 | E* | D | E | D |
| mathematics | D | E | D | C |
| science | D | E | D | C |

| Key | |
|--------------------|---|
| well above average | A |
| above average | B |
| average | C |
| below average | D |
| well below average | E |

In the 2002 tests for 11 year-olds, standards were below average in mathematics and science and well below average in English. Although the results in mathematics and science match those in similar schools, they are lower in English. Closer analysis of the results show that standards in reading are only just below the national average but standards in writing are very low and urgently require improvement. From a low starting point, pupils have achieved at least steadily to reach these levels, apart from writing. Pupils with special educational needs respond positively to the effective support they receive and make good progress. Improved assessment of pupils' learning has enabled teachers to set more accurate and challenging targets and these have been reached each year. Since 1997, when the school was last inspected, the proportion of pupils reaching the levels expected at 11, in English, mathematics and science, has almost doubled. In recognition of this, the school received an achievement award in 2000. Since then, standards have fluctuated but have continued to rise along with national trends, apart from writing. However, no separate targets are set for the more able pupils and some teachers do not expect enough of them. This is largely why the more able pupils do not all reach the higher levels of which they are capable. The performance of boys is not significantly different to that of girls at the age of 11.

Standards on entry to the nursery are very low, however, effective teaching in the foundation stage enables children to achieve well. Children are gaining confidence and overcoming some of their initial difficulties. Their knowledge and understanding is broadened well and they learn to socialise and improve their language skills at a good rate. However, despite the good start, many children have a long way to go and even at the end of the reception year, their attainment in all areas of learning is still well below average. Pupils achieve slightly better in infant than in junior classes, although in Year 4 they achieve very well. Although the results at seven are below average in writing, mathematics and science, they match those in similar schools. Results in reading are lower but standards are improving this year. Infant pupils achieve well in religious education, music and art and design. They reach the standards expected in these, and all other subjects, apart from geography. Junior pupils make satisfactory progress to reach the standards expected in ICT, religious education and all other subjects, apart from music and geography. Pupils achieve well in physical education and reach good standards throughout.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

| Aspect | Comment |
|--|--|
| Attitudes to the school | Good; most pupils listen attentively, show interest and concentrate. |
| Behaviour, in and out of classrooms | Good; a small number of Year 5 and 6 pupils with behaviour difficulties are occasionally distracted. On the whole, pupils do as they are asked and show consideration towards others. There have been two fixed term exclusions. |
| Personal development and relationships | Good; pupils almost always work and play well together. Their capacity to accept responsibility and work independently is typical for their age. |
| Attendance | Below average, but improving this year. Pupils are punctual. |

Pupils with special educational needs are totally involved and enjoy all aspects of school life.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

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

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

Teaching is satisfactory; it is very good in the reception class and often excellent in Year 4. The newly qualified teachers have settled into school well and are increasingly effective in finding the ability levels in their class and knowing where to pitch the work. Teaching is unsatisfactory in a few lessons. This happens when the work provided is not challenging enough or the purpose is not clear. When this happens, a few pupils become distracted and disturb others, particularly in Years 5 and 6. Young children benefit from good teaching when they begin school. In the nursery and in the reception class, staff provide a rich assortment of interesting and exciting activities. At the same time, they encourage children to explore and find out for themselves. All staff understand the need to improve children's language skills and take every opportunity to engage them in conversation. These factors ensure that children's learning is built on a good foundation.

On the whole, teachers manage pupils well. Most lessons are well prepared and well-organised. The purpose of the lesson is usually made crystal clear to pupils and this enables them to concentrate and give of their best. Teachers have a secure understanding of most of the subjects they teach. They explain new ideas clearly and use demonstrations and illustrations to good effect to help pupils to visualise the more complex steps. They back these approaches by shrewd questioning to find out how much pupils understand. These features are common in many lessons and make an important contribution to pupils' learning. However, teachers are less sure of how to teach music, improve pupils' writing or to guide them in planning and carrying out their own scientific investigations. This lack of expertise sometimes results in pupils filling in worksheets or copying passages, rather than developing their own ideas. Teachers assess pupils' learning carefully at regular intervals by observing their responses, setting tests and marking their work. The information they gather is used well to set the level of work for most pupils, particularly for those with special educational needs. However, not

all teachers expect enough of the more able pupils and sometimes set the challenge at too low a level to move their learning on. The teaching of numeracy is good and most elements of literacy are adequately taught. However, the weakness in the teaching of writing is reflected in pupils' low level of attainment in the junior classes.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

| Aspect | Comment |
|---|--|
| The quality and range of the curriculum | Satisfactory; pupils have adequate opportunities to learn all subjects and the extra-curricular activities are good. Children in the foundation stage benefit from a good curriculum but the provision for more able pupils needs improvement. |
| Provision for pupils with special educational needs | Good; their needs are well understood and effective learning support enables these pupils to prosper and make good progress. |
| Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development | Satisfactory; the school is very successful in raising pupils' moral and social awareness and adequate provision is made for their spiritual development. However, pupils know little about other cultures and are not being suitably prepared for life in a culturally diverse society. |
| How well the school cares for its pupils | Good; staff are caring and pupils' academic and personal development is carefully assessed, although the information is not always used to set the correct level of challenge. |

Parents appreciate what the school does for their children, although more information would help them to play a greater part in the life of the school. The procedures to ensure child protection and pupils' welfare are very good.

A small number of pupils have severe physical difficulties relating to visual and hearing impairment. These pupils receive constant caring attention and the school can be justifiably proud of its provision.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

| Aspect | Comment |
|---|--|
| Leadership and management by the head teacher and other key staff | Satisfactory; the head teacher has provided a positive climate for learning and day-to-day management is good. However, not enough attention is given to evaluating the quality of pupils' learning. The deputy head teacher is a major force in driving up standards. |
| How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities | Good; governors are keen, knowledgeable and very involved in the management of the school. |
| The school's evaluation of its performance | Satisfactory; the quality of teaching and assessments completed by pupils are regularly overseen to make improvements. However, pupils' written work is not checked enough to eradicate the weaknesses. |
| The strategic use of resources | Good; financial planning is good and governors and staff are resourceful. The school makes good use of national and local information to set realistic aims and obtain the best possible value in whatever is provided. |

There are sufficient qualified and experienced teachers and good levels of effective support staff. The accommodation and resources are good.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

| What pleases parents most | What parents would like to see improved |
|--|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Children like school, are well behaved and make good progress.• Parents feel that they are kept well informed and find the staff helpful and easy to talk to.• Parents appreciate the leadership of the school and the teaching.• The school is successful in helping children to act responsibly and to care for others. | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• A few parents do not feel that their children get the right amount of homework. |

The inspection team largely agrees with parents' positive views, although leadership and teaching are satisfactory rather than good. The homework provided is satisfactory in the infant classes and in Year 6 but has not been regularly provided in the other junior classes.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and pupils' achievements

1 Results in the 2002 National Tests and teachers' assessment show that standards at the age of seven are below the national average in writing, mathematics and science but match those of similar schools. Pupils have achieved well to reach these standards, since they entered school with very low attainment. Results in reading are well below average but are improving this year.

2 Results in the 2002 National Tests for 11 year-olds in reading, mathematics and science are below average but equal to those of similar schools. Results in writing, however, are very low because the skills are not taught well and pupils do not have enough opportunities to improve their writing in other subjects. Pupils' speaking and listening skills improve significantly as they progress through the school. Almost twice as many pupils now reach the standards expected by the age of 11 in English, mathematics and science than at the time of the last inspection. This is attributable to more effective teaching and pupils' improved attitudes to learning. Pupils' learning is now more accurately assessed and the progress made by each pupil is carefully tracked. When pupils' performance falters, they are given good quality additional support, either individually or in groups. The increased use of classroom assistants has made this possible. However, the information gathered from assessment is not used well enough to provide sufficiently high levels of challenge for the more able pupils.

3 Standards on entry to the nursery are very low. Many children enter the nursery with little background knowledge and poor social and language skills. They achieve well in all areas of learning because the teaching is good and a good range of lively and exciting activities is provided to gain their attention and waken their curiosity. Despite their good achievement, they have a lot of ground to make up, particularly in speaking and listening and in their understanding of number. By the time children are ready to move into Year 1, there has been a marked improvement but their levels of attainment are still well below average in all areas of learning.

4 Throughout the school, the greatest improvements have been made in mathematics and these are continuing. Pupils are now achieving well in this subject and are gaining confidence in their calculation skills. Some pupils still have difficulty in understanding written questions, which hampers their attempts to solve problems. However, teachers are aware of this and more opportunities are provided for pupils to apply their learning and strengthen these weaknesses. Very effective subject leadership is moving this subject on and raising standards.

5 Teachers appreciate the need to improve pupils' speaking and listening skills to raise their levels of literacy. Therefore, pupils are encouraged to listen carefully, discuss their ideas in pairs and groups and reflect on their learning at the end of most lessons. These strategies are not only improving pupils' use of language but also raising standards in reading. Pupils' reading skills are developing steadily. Although teachers encourage pupils to read out of school, not all pupils have opportunities to practise and improve their skills at home, which holds them back. Standards in writing have improved little and many junior pupils are not making the progress of which they are capable. The technical skills of spelling, punctuation and grammar are taught regularly and adequately but handwriting skills are not developed well enough through the school. Some teachers are unsure about how to improve the actual content of the pupils' writing. Therefore, pupils are seldom encouraged to redraft and improve their work. There are not enough opportunities for pupils to develop different writing styles in other subjects, such as writing instructions in design and technology. Until these weaknesses in teaching are remedied, pupils' writing is unlikely to improve and standards will remain low.

6 Pupils achieve steadily in science. At the time of the last inspection, pupils were not achieving well enough in acquiring the skills to experiment and investigate. There have been modest improvements in this area. For example, pupils throughout the school, now have far more opportunities to work practically, handle equipment, observe and draw conclusions about their findings. They are learning to work methodically. However, much of the work they do is by following teachers' instructions. There are still too few opportunities for pupils to plan and carry out their own investigations. In particular, many pupils do not fully understand that the principle feature of a scientific test is that it is fair. Further training is needed to enable teachers to improve this area.

7 There has been a substantial improvement in standards in ICT since the last inspection and pupils are now achieving steadily. A computer suite has been provided and staff have been well-trained to use it. Pupils respond well to the teaching of ICT skills and standards are now at the levels expected at the ages of seven and 11. That said, pupils and teachers do not use computers well enough in some other subjects. However, in Year 4, computers are used in almost all lessons and pupils' ICT skills progress rapidly.

8 In religious education, pupils achieve well in the infant classes to reach the standards expected at the age of seven as identified in the syllabus taught in Cumbria schools. Much of the work is based on pupils' own experiences, which gives meaning and adds relevance to their learning. The standards achieved by the age of 11 are satisfactory. However, pupils understand more about the factual nature of religions and less about how religion affects their lives and values, because of the way it is taught.

9 In art and design, and in design and technology, pupils achieve steadily to reach the standards expected at the ages of seven and 11. Since the last inspection, pupils' work has improved in design and technology and history because the pupils' skills are built up more effectively from one year to the next. Pupils continue to achieve well in physical education and standards are higher than expected because of good coaching and the excellent range of extra-curricular sports available. Standards are below average in geography but pupils achieve steadily in view of their very limited background knowledge and experiences. Although infant pupils achieve well in music, standards by the age of 11 are lower than they should be because music is not being regularly taught in the upper junior classes.

10 Pupils with special educational needs benefit from skilled support from classroom assistants and make good progress, particularly in literacy and numeracy and also in other subjects. However, more able pupils are not achieving as much as they could and this is reflected in the comparatively small number of pupils reaching the higher levels. Talented pupils are often identified and given encouragement to extend their talents, particularly in the field of sport. However, the school has not yet identified its gifted pupils in other subjects. Although there is some evidence to suggest that girls are performing better than boys at the age of seven, there is a little difference in their attainment by the age of 11.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

11 Pupils' attitudes to school, their behaviour and personal development are good. Relationships between all members of the school community are also good. This shows an improvement since the last inspection. The school is a happy place where pupils enjoy their learning, have respect for others and behave well in most lessons and at play.

12 Pupils' attitudes to learning and to the school are good. When motivated by lively teaching, pupils are stimulated to make suggestions and express curiosity, for example when children in the

reception class tried hard to decide which country their “snack of the day” came from. Pupils with a special educational, or physical need, concentrate well in lessons, especially where the learning has a brisk pace and is fun. They are generally interested and enthusiastic, particularly where the support enables them to be fully involved in lessons. This was seen in a Year 3 literacy lesson when a pupil with a hearing impairment gained sufficient self-confidence to take the ‘hot seat’ and answer questions from other pupils. Pupils enjoy seeing tasks through. Most have an appetite for learning and take their work seriously. However, a few pupils are not able to concentrate for long periods particularly when teachers spend too long talking.

13 Behaviour is generally good. In most lessons, pupils shoot their hands up to answer questions and try not to speak out of turn. They are friendly and welcoming to visitors and other adults and willingly show them their work. The behaviour of a small number of pupils in Years 5 and 6 deteriorates, particularly when their normal routines are changed. These pupils have difficulties in maintaining their concentration and controlling their behaviour. In many lessons, particularly in the mornings, classroom assistants work with them and provide good support. On these occasions, the atmosphere is calm and purposeful. However, when the level of challenge is not suitable or the purpose is not clear, they become distracted and others can be disturbed. There have been exclusions to emphasise that certain behaviours are not acceptable. The very good provision for moral development is clearly influencing the behaviour of most pupils. Many parents feel that the school is doing a good job in this area and quoted examples of pupils growing in confidence. There was unanimous agreement in the questionnaire returns that their children like school. Year 6 pupils said that behaviour was a lot better now than during their earlier time in school. Lunchtimes are pleasant social occasions and the management of pupils during this time has improved over recent years. Good links between teaching staff, lunchtime staff and pupils are key features of successful dinner times. The generous-sized playgrounds and the variety of playtime resources have a good impact on pupils’ behaviour and all pupils were observed playing happily and purposefully.

14 Pupils’ personal development is good and it is clear that their self-discipline is growing. There are good opportunities in school for pupils to take on positions of responsibility. Year 6 pupils confirm that they consider these to be a privilege and not a chore. ‘Playground Pals’ in their brightly coloured jumpers befriend any pupil who is feeling lonely. The school council has a ‘voice’ in the school and their meetings are business-like with formal agendas and minutes of meeting. The council has been active in contributing to researching the views of other pupils for inclusion in the behaviour policy. Pupils support each other as seen in the ‘Peer Mentoring’ scheme. They confirm that whilst their teachers are helpful and approachable, it is occasionally useful to share their concerns with their peer mentors who are of a similar age. There are opportunities in some lessons for pupils to work independently but this is not a strong feature in all classes. This holds back the learning of the more able pupils, in particular. Pupils compete in a large variety of sporting activities and are good ambassadors for the school when on visits to places of interest. Relationships are good because pupils treat each other pleasantly and with respect. A harmonious atmosphere is apparent in and out of most lessons.

15 Whilst attendance has improved over the last three years, it is still just below the national average. The school has been successful in encouraging parents to inform them of absence and as a result, there is very little unauthorised absence. However, this has still not brought the overall attendance figures up to the national average because some parents take their children away for holidays in term time and a small number of children are frequently absent. Most pupils are punctual to school ensuring that lessons get off to a prompt start.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?

16 Teaching is satisfactory, as it was at the time the last inspection. However, there have been improvements. There is now more very good and excellent teaching and less of the teaching is unsatisfactory. There have been many staff changes over the last three years, including some very recent appointments. Teaching in the foundation stage is good and teaching is satisfactory in the infant and junior classes.

17 On the whole, pupils are well managed and teachers and pupils enjoy good relationships. Most lessons run smoothly. Pupils listen carefully, contribute ideas and concentrate on their work. From Nursery and Reception to Year 4 classes, the atmosphere for learning is consistently good in virtually all lessons. In Years 5 and 6, several pupils have emotional and behaviour difficulties and some receive individual support from classroom assistants. In the morning, when lessons such as a literacy and numeracy take place, the atmosphere is calm and purposeful. This is because pupils with poor concentration benefit from the clear structure of the lesson and the good pace of teaching. In these lessons, they know what to do, the work provided is at the right level and classroom assistants are on hand to give support. Arranging pupils in rows works well and secures their attention. However, occasionally, during afternoon sessions, particularly when practical activities are introduced, the few who are easily distracted lose concentration and disturb others. Isolated examples of unsatisfactory teaching occur on these occasions, when the structure of the lesson is not as clear as it should be, the pace of learning is too slow or the level of challenge is not exactly right.

18 Teaching in the foundation stage is good. In the nursery, teaching is at least satisfactory and in the reception class it is very good. Staff work hard to provide interesting and exciting activities, such as operating programmable toys. The lively activities provided stir children's curiosity, awaken their interests and encourage them to talk. Many of the children have poor language and one of the strengths of the teaching is the skilful way the children's spoken language is developed. Many children have only a short concentration span. In recognition of this, the teachers and assistants introduce games, practical tasks and use lots of pictures and objects for the children to handle. For example, in the reception class, children were involved in making pizzas. The activity attracted their interest, enabled them to learn and practise new words for the ingredients and gave them practical opportunities to count the mushrooms and tomatoes. The children's learning is very carefully assessed and the information gathered is used successfully to plan the next learning steps.

19 In all classes, a strong emphasis is placed on teaching the skills of speaking and listening. Discussion sessions at the beginning and the end of lessons are extremely valuable. In some lessons pupils have 'talking partners' to share their ideas. On these occasions, pupils are able to clarify their thinking. Reading skills, such as learning to recognise letters and words and sound them out, are taught thoroughly and pupils are encouraged to read with understanding and use books as a source of information. However, not all pupils have regular opportunities to practise reading at home and this holds them back. Infant pupils benefit from some good teaching of writing. They are encouraged to write independently and spell and form letters correctly. However, there are weaknesses in the teaching of writing in some of the junior classes. In particular, pupils are not taught how to redraft and improve their writing and many opportunities are missed to develop pupils' writing styles in other subjects. In mathematics, pupils successfully learn how to calculate quickly and accurately. Opportunities for them to use and apply these skills to solve mathematical problems are satisfactory and increasing, although not evenly offered in all classes. Pupils' reading and numeracy skills are developed adequately in other subjects.

20 The new teachers are becoming more proficient in finding the level of attainment in their class as a whole. The content of most lessons is now at the right level for most pupils. This ensures that they understand the work and, with effort, complete it correctly. Pupils who find learning difficult are often given extra support from well-trained and skilled classroom assistants. This ensures that

pupils' learning moves on at a good rate and they make good progress. Those with special educational needs, particularly those with hearing and visual impairment, receive the most attention and make the best progress. The more able pupils, in general, are the least well catered for and not all teachers expect enough of them. For example, in English and science, in some classes, all pupils are given the same work, irrespective of their different learning needs. On other occasions, such as in mathematics, the more able pupils are often asked to complete the work given to all other pupils before having an opportunity to tackle more ambitious tasks. Some of their time is wasted ploughing through unnecessary examples. Even when the challenge is greater, it is more often related to the written task, rather than extending pupils' learning of science ideas, for example. Occasionally, pupils are asked to copy work from worksheets or whiteboards. This practice has very limited value for any of the pupils. The teaching in Year 4 is outstanding, largely because the teacher has high expectations and the tasks present a stiff challenge to all pupils.

21 The best features of teaching are mainly related to the whole class part of the lesson. Teachers are well prepared and well organised. They know exactly what they want to teach and explain this well to the pupils, using resources and demonstrations imaginatively. The learning steps are often broken down into manageable units. These are taught in a careful sequence and at a good pace. At intervals, teachers check pupils' understanding effectively by asking probing questions and asking them to show their answers on white boards, which the teacher can see. In subjects where teachers have good expertise, such as mathematics, physical education and almost all areas of learning in the foundation stage, the methods are very successful. For example, in physical education, pupils are encouraged to evaluate their performance and improve it. This results in good standards. Where teachers are less certain and lack expertise, for example, in some aspects of teaching writing, music and science, lessons tend to be dominated by the teacher and pupils do not have enough opportunities to investigate, compose and discover for themselves. This restricts their capacity to gain and refine skills and independence in learning. The teaching of music is unsatisfactory mainly because regular lessons are not provided in some classes.

22 Pupils' learning is regularly and conscientiously assessed. Their work is carefully marked and teachers give pointers to help them to improve. However, the information gained is not used enough to set a high level of challenge for the more able pupils. Targets are set to help pupils to reach the next level of understanding. However, this is a new venture and, although teachers know what the pupils' targets are, these have not been communicated to all pupils in all classes, as yet. The parents' questionnaires indicated some concern is about homework. The homework provided is fairly typical in the infant classes and in Year 6. The homework included in the additional literacy support programmes is effective in raising the skills of the pupils involved. However, in junior classes, the level of homework does not gradually increase and there is scope to make better use of homework, particularly to improve pupils' writing. The teaching of ICT has improved considerably since the last inspection, mainly through staff training on the use of the computer suite. However, computers are still not used enough in the learning of other subjects and for developing the skills of pupils with special educational needs.

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

23 The curriculum provided is satisfactory, as it was at the time of the last inspection. However, a good range of worthwhile and interesting activities and experiences are provided for nursery and reception children. Their different learning needs are well catered for and much attention is given to the development of their language skills, which in many cases are very weak. The good links with the 'Sure Start' and 'Educare' groups, provide valuable pre-school care and experiences for children and help them to quickly adjust to school. A suitable range of learning opportunities is

provided for infant and junior pupils. However, upper junior pupils are not currently receiving regular music lessons. This is adversely affecting the progress they make and the standards they achieve. At the time of the last inspection the school was directed to provide better guidance for teachers to enable them to know what to teach and how each subject might best be taught. Subject leaders have worked hard to prepare the necessary guidance, consequently, pupils are able to learn smoothly from one year to the next, apart from music.

24 The strategies for teaching literacy are satisfactory. Pupils have good opportunities to express their ideas and listen to those of others. However, opportunities to express themselves in writing are much weaker. Pupils are encouraged to read widely and those identified as requiring additional literacy support are well provided for and their skills improve markedly.

25 The strategies for teaching numeracy are satisfactory. Pupils benefit from frequent and well planned opportunities to improve their calculation skills and handle number operations, such as dividing, successfully. In science, pupils' knowledge and understanding is effectively promoted through discussions about the many interesting practical sessions. However, when conducting experiments, pupils are often told to follow the teacher's instructions. There are not enough opportunities for pupils to plan and carry out their own investigations and fair testing is not explored enough. The school has identified music and religious education as weaker areas. In particular, composing elements in music and learning to compare their own values with those of believers in other faiths are seldom evident in junior pupils' work. The last inspection identified music as a weakness and this subject has not improved.

26 Provision for pupils with special educational needs is good. Planning takes good account of the learning needs of these pupils. Their needs are carefully identified and suitable activities are planned. They are given extra support in classes and are sometimes withdrawn for special activities. These sessions ensure that they make good progress. A small number of pupils have severe physical difficulties in the areas of visual and hearing impairment. These pupils are given constant caring attention and the school can be justifiably proud of its work in this area. However, the learning needs of the more able pupils are not sufficiently considered and they are sometimes given work that is too easy for them. This is evident in English and science and in mathematics to a lesser extent. Boys and girls receive equal shares of attention and encouragement and their progress is similar.

27 Links with the community are strong. The school recognises that many pupils have very limited background experiences and compensates well for this by organising a good range of visits and extra-curricular activities to support the curriculum. For example, there are planned opportunities for pupils to visit places of interest such as the Dock Museum and London, to support the teaching of history and geography. The range of extra-curricular sport is excellent with over two-thirds of the boys and girls involved. As a result, pupils frequently win matches and tournaments. These sporting activities have a good impact on physical education standards in the school.

28 Since the previous inspection the school has made sound provision for pupils' personal, social and health education (PSHE). For example, pupils in Year 1 learn to work together and show care for others, while those in Year 6 tackle issues on citizenship and resolving conflict. These experiences have helped bring about improvements in the way that pupils behave and in their attitudes to learning and one another. Residential visits to the Lake District support pupils' development in terms of self-esteem, leadership and skills of co-operation well.

29 The provision for pupils' spiritual, moral and social development is satisfactory. However, the provision for pupils' cultural development is unsatisfactory. Although they have adequate

opportunities to study their own culture, they seldom study cultures other than their own. This was also noted at the time of the last inspection.

30 The school continues to make satisfactory provision for pupils' spiritual development. Most assemblies provide suitable opportunities for pupils to reflect on their thoughts and feelings on the issues raised. Spirituality is promoted less strongly in lessons and teachers do not always 'seize the moment' to raise pupils' spiritual awareness. One good example was seen in a Year 4 literacy lesson when pupils entered into the imaginary world of a range of pictures. Their creative writing improved as a result of the opportunity provided. A map of opportunities for spiritual development that might arise in subjects has been drawn up but this has not yet had time to have an impact on pupils' learning.

31 The provision for pupils' moral development is very good. Pupils are presented with a clear moral code that is promoted through the good relationships that exist across the school. Pupils are taught the skills and abilities to analyse why behaviour deteriorated and not to focus on the behaviour itself. Pupils themselves have been involved in setting the ground rules for behaviour and so they have a sense of ownership and try to conform to them. The additional support that some pupils receive from their staff mentors enables them to discuss their worries or concerns before they escalate into a problem. Pupils can talk to an adult without being judged and as a result, they grow in self-confidence.

32 Pupils are given many opportunities to develop their social skills. Teaching in the foundation stage sets pupils off on the road to independence and other teachers build on this steadily. Some children have poor social skills when they enter the nursery and reception classes and the supportive atmosphere enables them to gain the confidence to cope with school life. Pupils are expected to collaborate in their work during lessons, making decisions as a group about what they need to do and how to do it. This was seen in an additional literacy support session when pupils in Key Stage 2 worked well together on identifying vowel sounds. Outside lessons, there is a good range of activities in which pupils must work as a team. For example, participation in a range of sporting activities, the school council, the litter patrol and 'Playground Pals'. Pupils enjoy working with senior citizens from the local community as seen in an art and design lesson for Year 4 pupils.

33 There is room for improvement in the provision for pupils' cultural development. Whilst there are some examples of pupils studying their own culture through visits into the local and wider community, there are too few opportunities for them to gain an awareness of the rich and diverse cultural heritage of people in today's society. A good example of raising pupils' awareness of other cultures was seen in an assembly that celebrated the traditions and festivals connected with Chinese New Year. The school is aware of these weaknesses and in response the deputy head teacher is establishing links with a school in China.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

34 Pupils continue to grow and flourish within the "family" of North Walney School, as they did at the time of the last inspection. The procedures for child protection and pupils' welfare are very good. There are very good procedures for monitoring and promoting good behaviour and satisfactory procedures for monitoring and promoting good attendance. The good features have been maintained since the last inspection and have been built on in terms of better supervision of pupils in the playground.

35 The staff and governing body contribute well to the provision of a caring school where the personal needs of pupils are well met. There is a positive atmosphere and the teachers and support staff know their pupils well. Pupils who have a special educational or physical need are very well supported and make good strides in their learning. The support for the more able pupils is not as well

defined. 'Looked After Children' are well cared for and there is good support from external agencies as and when requested.

36 First aid procedures are secure with two fully qualified members of staff and all adults are aware of the medical needs of pupils in their care. There are regular risk assessments of the premises, which follow local authority guidelines and are well documented. The caretaker is vigilant on a daily basis and ensures that the site is kept clean and free from debris. The interior of the school is kept clean ensuring a safe working environment for pupils. The personal and social education programme includes sex education through the "Health for Life" initiative. The school nurse offers additional support to pupils in Year 6. Pupils in their final year in school confirm that there is always someone they can turn to if they have a problem and whilst they are excited about their move to secondary education, they are sad to leave the school.

37 The procedures for monitoring and promoting behaviour are very good and their success can be seen in the good behaviour of most pupils. The school has been concerned to involve pupils in developing their own rules of conduct and this has successfully fostered a good atmosphere. Unacceptable behaviour is dealt with appropriately and any detentions are held during the school day with pupils only losing one of the two morning playtimes. Good behaviour is rewarded and staff concentrate on reinforcing its success. There are special assemblies held when pupils celebrate each other's achievements. The very good social development of pupils was seen as they spontaneously applauded the success of other pupils. Pupils confirm that the head teacher and staff would not tolerate bullying.

38 The procedures for monitoring and promoting good attendance are satisfactory with room for improvement. The computerised registration system enables correct records of attendance to be completed but the records are not used well enough to improve the overall attendance of pupils. Holidays taken in term time affect attendance figures as well as the intermittent attendance of a few pupils. Parents are informed in the prospectus and the annual report of the governing body of the details of attendance and absence but are not informed that attendance is below the national average. Most pupils arrive at school on time, which results in lessons starting promptly.

39 The use of assessment to measure how well pupils are learning has improved since the last inspection. Teachers and assistants, working in the nursery and reception classes, assess children's learning thoroughly and use this information well in formulating their lesson plans. Pupils' learning in the core subjects of English, mathematics and science is carefully and thoroughly assessed at the end of each half-termly topic and at the end of the school year. Pupils' learning in the other subjects is also suitably assessed at regular intervals. For example, samples of work are collected to help teachers to gauge the levels that different pupils are working at. The end of year assessments of pupils' learning, in the core subjects, are analysed by subject leaders so that weaknesses in learning can be identified and strengthened in the teaching. Teachers make good use of the information gained to set clear and measurable targets. These are carefully documented and readily available to teachers. However, teachers have to 'find time' during the week to explain and discuss these targets with individual pupils. This is proving very difficult to achieve in the busy classroom atmosphere and not all pupils are able to recall what their targets are. This prevents pupils from taking more responsibility for their own learning. For pupils with learning difficulties, including those with special educational needs, the system works much more effectively. Their specific needs are quickly established and shared well with classroom assistants. Helpful support programmes and accurately targeted individual education plans are devised, which enable these pupils to learn productively.

40 Teachers are steadily making better use of the information they glean from observations, tests and marking pupils' work. There are many examples of teachers changing their plans to recap or

reinforce some uncertainties from a previous lesson. However, there remains one weakness. Not all teachers use the assessment information enough to set sufficiently challenging work for the more able pupils particularly in English and science.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

41 Parents' regard the school as a very good one, which their children enjoy attending. They feel that the school promotes the attitudes and values they would expect and develops an understanding of moral issues. Inspection findings confirm this and this was the picture that emerged at the time of the last inspection. Most parents consider that the school expects children to work hard and achieve their best. The strong relationships built up when some governors had children in the school have continued to flourish. Governors are continually looking at new ways to involve parents in the life of the school.

42 The effectiveness of the school's links with parents is satisfactory. The general information that parents receive is satisfactory, however, there is room for improvement in the information they receive on the progress their children are making. Pupils' strengths and weaknesses in learning are not always spelt out. The prospectus is easy to read and includes useful information such as how to contact the school. There are newsletters that tell parents what is going on in school but they expressed a wish to know more about the topics that their children are learning. However, there is only one formal consultation evening when parents can talk to teachers on an individual basis. Consequently, parents are not able to regularly check how their children are progressing. Annual written reports on pupils' progress give clear details of what pupils can do in subjects but apart from those in upper Key Stage 2, there is very little information on what pupils need to do to improve. Teachers make themselves available on a daily basis as seen during the inspection when parents consulted them informally.

43 The school works in line with the guidance in the national Code of Practice for the parents of children who have special educational or physical needs. Parents attend reviews and can make a contribution to these and to their children's individual learning plans. They are informed of targets and pupils also know what their targets are. This close liaison with these parents is an example the school could usefully put into practice for all parents so that information on pupils' progress is on-going throughout the year.

44 Parental involvement in the life of the school is satisfactory. When children start in the nursery or reception classes, parents can stay with them until they become secure and confident in their new environment. There was unanimous agreement from parents in the questionnaire return that they would feel comfortable approaching the school with questions or complaints. However, some parents are not happy with the amount of work that children do at home and inspection findings confirm this view. In discussion with pupils in Year 6, they confirm that whilst they now get a reasonable amount of homework, they would have liked more during their earlier years in school in order to prepare them for secondary education. The Parent Teachers' Association is a small but dedicated band of parents, which organises social and fund raising activities that help to enhance the lives of pupils and their families. Courses on literacy and numeracy for parents are held in the school but these have yet to have an impact on pupils' learning.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

45 The head teacher and key staff provide sound leadership and manage the day-to-day running of the school well. This has enabled standards in English, mathematics and science to rise significantly since the last inspection, despite many staff changes. There is now a very genuine team spirit that

permeates the school. The head teacher has a strong, caring commitment to the social and emotional well being of his staff and pupils. This was recognised as a key element when the school gained a prestigious award as 'Investors in People'. As one member of staff noted, "Everyone's opinion matters and is valued". He has also been resourceful in securing grants, additional facilities and in developing community involvement with the school. These initiatives have broadened the opportunities and the experiences available to the pupils in a wide range of subjects. The head teacher is committed to including all pupils at the school and in meeting their needs to the full. However, he has not been as successful in maintaining an overview of the whole curriculum. For example, standards in music continue to be low, as they were at the last inspection, there is still some underachievement amongst the able pupils and standards in writing have not improved enough. These weaknesses have not been sufficiently noted and rectified. The deputy head teacher plays a pivotal role in raising teaching standards by observing the quality of the teaching and providing good feedback to the staff. She also checks how well subjects are being taught through the school, has the trust and respect of the staff and sets them a high standard. For example, she co-ordinates the mathematics in the school and demonstrates good subject knowledge, enthusiasm and flair. She also helps to monitor standards in English and science by closely analysing the annual test results.

46 Until recently, subject leadership was not effective. With many staff changes in recent years, a new structure has now been established and added responsibilities devolved. Leadership at this level of management is now satisfactory. Subject leaders have been given greater 'ownership' of their area of responsibility. Teachers' lesson plans are checked and full reviews are made each half term. Every subject now benefits from an annual review. This is an in-depth analysis of what has been done and what needs to be done. However, subject leaders are not expected to check the work produced by the pupils. As a consequence, they do not gain a clear picture of how well pupils achieve in the subject.

47 Good leadership is provided by the co-ordinator for special educational needs. The team of teachers and support staff work very closely together to cater for the wide range of special needs represented at the school. Pupils with hearing and visual impairment are very well supported. They are able to benefit from the full range of educational experiences. Teachers have been well trained to put into practice the new directives that govern how pupils with special educational needs are to be taught. However, the school has not identified its gifted pupils sufficiently well to provide them with a distinctly individual curriculum to cater for their needs.

48 The governing body has a very strong commitment and loyalty to the school. Governors have a very good knowledge of the school and how it operates. For example one governor runs a computer club, twice weekly, after school. Through regular contacts, they have good working links with the staff and the local community. Governors play a central role in the financial management of the school. They keep a strategic overview of the school and are aware of potential problems it may face in the coming years. They are strongly committed to driving up standards still further. However, governors are too reliant on the advice they receive from the head teacher. For example, they are aware of weaknesses in the school but lack sufficient guidance on how these can be overcome.

49 Strategies for the appraisal and performance management of teachers are sound. They help the staff to identify targets for improvement that they set for themselves. However, these individual targets are not sufficiently linked to the identified needs of the school. Consequently, standards in the specified area of their teaching may improve, whilst the weaknesses in the school remain as before. Teachers joining the school, including those just entering the profession, are given good support from colleagues and the deputy head teacher. This enables them to settle quickly and to be accepted as full members of the school team. However, there are occasions in Year 5 and 6 where teachers need more help to manage pupils with behaviour difficulties.

50 The school uses its financial resources well to support educational priorities. For example, since the last inspection there has been a large investment in developing the computer suites. This has proved to be very beneficial, both to the school and to the wider community. The day-to-day administration and budgetary control are efficient. The recommendations of most recent financial audit have been fully implemented. The school administrator gives the head teacher and staff good support. New technology is used well to maintain good levels of communication throughout the school. Efficient systems are in place that monitor progress and lessen workloads. The school has sufficient, suitably qualified teaching and support. Accommodation is good and well maintained. Space is used imaginatively. Resources in most subjects are good and enhance the quality of the pupils' learning.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

51 The head teacher staff and governors should now:

(1) Raise standards in writing in junior classes by:

- providing lots of encouragement and opportunities for pupils to express their own ideas in writing;
- teaching pupils how to redraft and improve their work;
- taking advantage of the many good experiences pupils have in other subjects to provide a stimulus for writing;
- teaching handwriting regularly and consistently.
(Paragraphs 5, 19, 24, 61, 64, 65, 74, 81 and 84)

(2) Improve the progress made by the more able pupils by:

- identifying the more able and gifted pupils to ensure that all staff know who they are;
- raising teachers' expectations of what the more able pupils can achieve;
- including higher levels of challenge in the tasks provided in the different subjects and not merely only the written elements.
(Paragraphs 2, 10, 20, 26, 40, 61, 71, 72, 75, 80, 82, 87 and 90)

(3) Improve the monitoring procedures by regularly and carefully examining pupils' work in their books and folders to identify, share and remedy any weaknesses.
(Paragraphs 46, 61, 74 and 82)

(4) Raise standards in music by:

- ensuring that pupils in all classes are provided with regular music lessons;
- providing training for teachers to improve their expertise;
- checking that the action taken to raise standards is effective.
(Paragraphs 9, 21, 25, 91 and 93)

52 In addition to the above issues, the following more minor issues should be considered for inclusion in the action plan.

Improve pupils' understanding of cultural diversity by:

- planning opportunities for pupils to learn about other cultures, including visits to different cultural centres;
- developing links with schools with pupils from different ethnic minority backgrounds.
(Paragraphs 33, 63, 76, 83 and 96)

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

| | |
|--|----|
| Number of lessons observed | 49 |
| Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils | 37 |

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

| | Excellent | Very good | Good | Satisfactory | Unsatisfactory | Poor | Very Poor |
|------------|-----------|-----------|------|--------------|----------------|------|-----------|
| Number | 4 | 6 | 16 | 20 | 3 | 0 | 0 |
| Percentage | 8 | 12 | 33 | 41 | 6 | 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 one percentage point.

Information about the school's pupils

| Pupils on the school's roll | Nursery | YR – Y6 |
|---|---------|---------|
| Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils) | 7 | 145 |
| Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals | 0 | 52 |

FTE means full-time equivalent.

| Special educational needs | Nursery | YR – Y6 |
|---|---------|---------|
| Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs | 0 | 5 |
| Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register | 0 | 37 |

| 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 | 8 |
| Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving | 21 |

Attendance

Authorised absence

| | % |
|---------------------------|-----|
| School data | 6.7 |
| National comparative data | 5.4 |

Unauthorised absence

| | % |
|---------------------------|-----|
| School data | 0.0 |
| National comparative data | 0.5 |

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

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

| Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year | Year | Boys | Girls | Total |
|--|------|------|-------|-------|
| | | 2002 | 10 | 11 |

| National Curriculum Test/Task Results | | Reading | Writing | Mathematics |
|---|----------|-----------|-----------|-------------|
| Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above | Boys | - | - | - |
| | Girls | - | - | 11 |
| | Total | 13 | 20 | 21 |
| Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above | School | 62% (50%) | 95% (41%) | 100% (64%) |
| | National | 84% (84%) | 86% (86%) | 90% (91%) |

| Teachers' Assessments | | English | Mathematics | Science |
|---|----------|-----------|-------------|-----------|
| Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above | Boys | - | - | - |
| | Girls | - | - | - |
| | Total | 13 | 20 | 19 |
| Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above | School | 62% (50%) | 95% (64%) | 90% (64%) |
| | National | 85% (85%) | 89% (89%) | 89% (89%) |

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

*Where the number of boys or girls is 10 or less, figures are omitted.

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

| Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2 for the latest reporting year | Year | Boys | Girls | Total |
|--|------|------|-------|-------|
| | | 2002 | 21 | 14 |

| National Curriculum Test/Task Results | | English | Mathematics | Science |
|---|----------|-----------|-------------|-----------|
| Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above | Boys | 11 | 12 | 18 |
| | Girls | - | 12 | 13 |
| | Total | 20 | 24 | 31 |
| Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above | School | 57% (63%) | 69% (48%) | 89% (78%) |
| | National | 75% (75%) | 73% (71%) | 86% (87%) |

| Teachers' Assessments | | English | Mathematics | Science |
|---|----------|-----------|-------------|-----------|
| Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above | Boys | 12 | 11 | 18 |
| | Girls | - | 12 | 12 |
| | Total | 20 | 23 | 30 |
| Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above | School | 57% (59%) | 66% (48%) | 86% (78%) |
| | National | 73% (72%) | 74% (74%) | 82% (82%) |

*Percentages in brackets refer to the year before the latest reporting year.
Where the number of boys or girls is 10 or less, figures are omitted.

| | |
|---------------------------------------|----|
| Total aggregate hours worked per week | 30 |
| Number of pupils per FTE adult | 10 |

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Recruitment of teachers

| | |
|--|---|
| Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years | 8 |
| Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years | 4 |

| | |
|--|---|
| Total number of vacant teaching posts (FTE) | 0 |
| Number of vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of a term or more (FTE) | 2 |
| Number of unfilled vacancies or vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of less than one term (FTE) | 2 |

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

| | |
|-----------------------------------|-----|
| Number of questionnaires sent out | 151 |
| 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. | 72 | 28 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| My child is making good progress in school. | 67 | 33 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Behaviour in the school is good. | 39 | 54 | 5 | 3 | 0 |
| My child gets the right amount of work to do at home. | 26 | 51 | 13 | 5 | 5 |
| The teaching is good. | 77 | 23 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on. | 56 | 36 | 8 | 0 | 0 |
| I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem. | 87 | 13 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best. | 62 | 36 | 0 | 0 | 3 |
| The school works closely with parents. | 60 | 39 | 3 | 0 | 0 |
| The school is well led and managed. | 74 | 26 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| The school is helping my child become mature and responsible. | 64 | 33 | 3 | 0 | 0 |
| The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons. | 77 | 18 | 5 | 0 | 0 |

Percentages are rounded to the nearest integer and may not total 100.

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

AREAS OF LEARNING FOR CHILDREN IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

53 The good provision in the foundation stage has been maintained since the previous inspection. Children enter the nursery with very low language, mathematical personal and social skills, when compared with children of similar age. By the time they enter Year 1, standards of attainment are well below what is normally expected for children of this age group, however, all children make good progress. This is due to good teaching overall. Teaching is at least satisfactory in the nursery and very good in the reception class. Staff work very well as a team and plan a good range of interesting activities that inspire children and help them improve their knowledge and understanding. Staff have rightly identified the need to develop a better range of outdoor activities to further improve learning opportunities. Adults working with the children in both the reception and nursery classes plan well towards the Early Learning Goals identified for children in the foundation stage, with clear, defined aims for learning. Assessments include all six areas of learning and are used to plan challenging activities. Staff adjust effectively the level of talk to match children's understanding.

54 The school admits children into the nursery for either a morning or afternoon session during the academic year in which they will be four years of age. Children then move into full time places in the reception class in September in the academic year in which they will become five. At the time of the inspection there were five children attending the morning session and nine attending the afternoon session in the nursery. In the reception class there were 16 children attending. Children who attend the morning session generally work and play alongside reception aged children for part of the session.

Personal, social and emotional development

55 Children enter the nursery with limited confidence and concentration skills. They achieve well, but are well below the standard expected for their age by the end of the reception year. Teaching is good in the nursery and very good in reception. Staff know that young children learn best through practical experiences, consequently all children develop interest and excitement in their activities. The resources in both classes are well organised and easily accessible. This helps children to feel secure and confident to use what they need and encourages them to take some responsibility for their own learning. They take care of the equipment, for example, they nurture the daffodils growing in pots outdoors. Relationships are very good throughout the foundation stage. Adults are very good examples for the children; they teach nursery children how to play together. Reception class children have established friendships, sharing equipment and toys and playing well together. Behaviour is good; adults have high expectations and make sure that children are sure about boundaries; they follow rules and routines well, lining up sensibly when going out to play. Staff praise children often and listen carefully to what they have to say. This helps children develop self-esteem. Children in the nursery lack confidence when talking to adults, whereas most reception children are happy to talk. During small group activities and self-directed play children become very involved in what they are doing, for example when playing with wooden blocks, two reception children worked well together constructing their building and staying at the activity for a considerable period of time. The teacher is very skilled at helping children improve concentration during whole group sessions. For example, when working with reception class children, she showed the ingredients for making pizza to teach letter sounds. Children learn about their own cultures and beliefs, however, activities to help them gain enjoyment from beliefs other than their own are limited and this affects their understanding of differences between people of different cultures.

Communication, language and literacy

56 In this area of learning children achieve well, although their language skills are well below the levels expected for their age. Teaching is good in the nursery and very good in the reception class. Staff give a great deal of attention to communication skills and this has a significant impact on children's learning. Staff work well with small groups encouraging children to listen and talk. For example, in one session, children examined kitchen utensils and staff taught them to use the names, such as 'coffee grinder' and 'garlic press', correctly. Well-planned role-play scenarios such as the 'Pizza Place' help children improve the way they speak to each other. Children show interest in books, have good, regular access to them, and know how to handle them correctly. For example, the reception teacher helps children to make up their own books using photographs. They are keen to share these with adults. Staff place good emphasis on early reading and some children are beginning to identify letters and sounds through topics. For example, when learning about making pizza, the teacher introduces 't' for tomato and 'ch' for cheese. Writing is at an early stage. Nursery children make marks and reception children draw pictures to express their thoughts and ideas, very few write letters or words. Adults help children develop eye/hand co-ordination as they make necklaces from pasta shapes and use the good range of one-handed tools such as staplers, scissors and pencils, in the writing area. Children are encouraged to write as they play. As a result, in the reception class, they learn to identify their own name and some attempt to write it.

Mathematical development

57 Children achieve well in mathematics although by the end of the foundation stage their attainment is well below the levels expected. Teaching is satisfactory in the nursery and good in the reception class. However nursery staff do not place enough emphasis on written numbers as they play and work with children, therefore most cannot recognise the symbols. The reception teacher makes learning mathematics fun, which helps to extend the children's limited concentration. Enjoyable activities, such as counting slices of pizza left, as they are eaten, give children an understanding of adding and taking away. Many children find counting difficult, even when using their fingers. In recognition of this, the reception teacher seizes on every opportunity to raise their awareness of numbers. For example, she encouraged them to count all of the different ingredients for the pizza, such as the mushrooms and tomatoes. This also helps the children to improve their ability to sort and classify objects, particularly when the teacher provides different boxes to put the ingredients in. Children learn to make matching patterns effectively by threading beads. Opportunities to choose different shapes of paper for their paintings helps children to identify common shapes such as square, rectangle and triangle.

Knowledge and understanding of the world

58 Teaching is satisfactory in the nursery and very good in the reception class. Children achieve well because adults plan many stimulating activities to widen their experiences. Despite this, children's levels are well below what is expected for their age when they transfer to Year 1. The reception teacher plans for both the nursery and reception groups. This ensures that interesting and worthwhile activities are provided. For example, reception children investigated what happened when different objects were placed in water. This was very successful in helping them to understand such ideas as floating and sinking and which objects contained air. Children could see changes occurring in the way objects moved and experienced a tremendous sense of amazement. Teachers value children's ideas and give them ample opportunities to talk about why things happen. Children successfully learn the basic skills of designing and making models and their buildings are displayed for all to see. They use the computer programs well to learn letter sounds and to read storybooks and they are able to use the mouse to move cursors, drag shapes across the screen and click on correct answers. They enjoy using the programmable toy and direct the robot to the Pizza Shop correctly. A

photographic timeline of the day at school helps them to become aware of the passage of time. Their awareness of different cultures is broadened suitably through learning about food from different countries, such as croissants from France and tortillas from Mexico, for example.

Physical development

59 Teaching is good in both classes and children achieve well, but the standard reached is below what is expected for this age group by the time they transfer to Year 1. Throughout the week children have suitable opportunities to learn through outdoor play. For example, they master the art of riding tricycles, kick footballs and walk on stilts. Through these activities, they learn to control their body and to balance well. However, during outdoor play, more could be done to stimulate children's imagination by providing more resources. Indoors, in dancing sessions, they do develop some creativity, for example in pretending to be animals. Children develop a good awareness of a healthy lifestyle when they drink milk each day and have healthy snacks. There is a range of tools and equipment available and children are developing their fine finger skills, although many do not control a pencil well. They play with construction equipment purposefully and some manage to push and pull to join pieces together. Nursery children know how to use tools safely and to handle dough. They learn to carefully pour their milk from a jug into a cup without spilling it.

Creative development

60 Teaching and children's progress in creative development are good, although the levels children achieve are well below what is expected for their age by the end of the reception year. Adults encourage the children as they work and show how much they value their efforts by displaying their work in an inspiring way. For example, teachers frame some of the children's artwork. When painting pictures of themselves, they learn effectively to mix colours. Drawings for the majority are immature and generally lack detail. All children enjoy singing rhymes and use musical instruments during outdoor play. Children develop their imagination as they act out scenes in role-play such as the 'Pizza Café'. They like to smell and taste food during baking sessions.

ENGLISH

61 Pupils achieve well in speaking and listening throughout the school. They have many opportunities to discuss and to share their views. Up to the age of seven, pupils make satisfactory progress with reading. They gain a love of books and the basic foundations are well established. This enables pupils to achieve steadily in reading in the junior classes. Up to the age of seven, pupils achieve well in writing, with basic skills being well taught. However, in the later years progress is unsatisfactory because writing is not taught well enough. Insufficient attention is given to setting work to suit pupils of different abilities. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress because, even if the work set is too hard, classroom assistants support them very well. However, teachers' expectations of the more able pupils are often low. As a consequence, comparatively few manage to reach an above average level. Handwriting skills are not developed sufficiently. Many pupils find it difficult to express their ideas on paper with confidence and fluency. In the years since the last inspection, standards overall have risen in English, but not sufficiently in writing. There have been good checks on the standards of teaching throughout the school. However, there have not been enough checks on the quality of pupils' work in all classes for weaker areas to be identified and strengthened. Leadership is sound. The subject leader is very skilled and is keen to raise standards by analysing test results to note pupil progress and to see who needs extra help. However, she has not been expected to analyse the quality of the pupils' learning, for example by examining samples of their work in every class. Consequently, the weaknesses in writing go undetected.

62 By the age of 11, standards in speaking and listening are almost at the levels expected for pupils of this age. Literacy lessons often contain rich opportunities for discussion, as a whole class, as a small group and often with a partner. This helps to develop both speaking and listening skills well. All pupils are drawn into these discussions. For example, a pupil with hearing impairment in Year 3 thought about Aesop's fable 'The Tortoise and the Hare'. He told the class, "The hare thinks he is really smart but he has a snuggle". "I think that's snooze", added his support assistant. "No, ... snuggle", he insisted, "because it's a sunny day." Pupils generally listen well and this assists their learning in all subjects.

63 Reading standards are well below average by the age of seven and are below average by the age of 11. From a low starting point, this represents reasonable progress. Infant pupils gradually learn to recognise letters and simple words. Thorough teaching of a range of strategies enables them to break down unfamiliar words into manageable parts. Although these basic skills are taught systematically, insufficient use is made of computer programs to develop these further. Support assistants work effectively with special 'booster' groups of pupils. The courses have been beneficial in helping these pupils to improve their reading and spelling, both in the infant and the junior classes. Parents support the work of these courses well by helping with regular homework. The school provides reading diaries for all pupils and parents to maintain. In some classes they are also used well by the teachers to pass on information to the parents about the progress of their children. By the age of 11, many pupils develop a love of reading, having favourite authors and styles, although they have very little experience of literature from other cultures. They are also taught the skills of how to use books for research but do not develop the additional skills of presenting this information in their own words. Too much of the information found in books is simply copied and is not necessarily understood.

64 Raising standards in writing is a key issue for the school to resolve. Standards are below average at seven but are well below at 11. There are three main reasons for this. Pupils have too few opportunities to express their own ideas on paper, the work provided does not always match pupils' learning needs, and handwriting skills are not developed systematically though the school. Problems in all three areas are more acute in the junior classes than in the infants. In Years 1 and 2, writing skills are well taught. There are useful opportunities for pupils to write about their own experiences. Most work is linked to the daily literacy hour tasks so there are limited opportunities for extended writing or free expression. However, this is occasionally developed well in written work in other subjects. For example, during a historical study about seaside holidays in Victorian times, one more able Year 2 pupil wrote, "I would catch a train to the beach. I would get dressed in a bathing machine. I would wear lots of clothes on the beach." This indicates that basic sentence writing exercises, practised in the literacy hour lessons, have been well grasped. Despite this regular training, however, few infant pupils reach above average standards in reading or writing. There is a tendency to give the more able pupils greater independence in undertaking the same tasks that the other pupils, with support, are able to complete. As a consequence, the more able do not benefit from as much attention as other pupils and are not always as fully challenged by the writing tasks they are set.

65 In most junior classes, there are greater weaknesses to address. Writing tasks set in the literacy hour tend to be confined to single lessons and so ideas are rarely developed beyond a single page. Invariably all groups are set similar tasks to complete. The written work is very prescribed and pupils have too few opportunities to develop their own ideas. There is too much copying texts from worksheets, especially in Year 6. These factors inhibit the development of all groups of pupils but particularly the more able. Pupils rarely evaluate and improve upon their original work through redrafting. This means they do not develop a sense of ownership or pride in achievement. Very little of the pupils' work is displayed around the school to boost their confidence in, as well as their enthusiasm for, writing. There have been some good initiatives to raise levels of interest, such as the 'Writing Week' held last year. Pupils experienced the full writing process as each class produced its

own book. Ideas were explored and refined on computers in an inspirational fashion. However, pupils do not have enough opportunities to develop creativity in weekly lessons.

66 On balance, the quality of the teaching in English is good in the infant classes and satisfactory in the juniors. Good order is maintained in lessons and teachers strive to make the work interesting. Rapid pace is maintained between the different elements of the lesson. Planning is detailed, with clear objectives established and communicated. However, teachers do not accurately assess pupils' on a day-to-day basis and use the information to plan suitable work? As a result, the work set is not sufficiently matched to the actual abilities of the pupils. Opportunities are also missed to give the work in the literacy lessons greater relevance by linking it to work being undertaken in other subjects. Marking is thorough and positive, especially in Years 2 and 4. This is also where the best teaching was observed. In these classes, there is a very strong commitment to raising standards rather than a more limited focus on teaching the National Literacy Strategy. In all classes the teaching is considerably enhanced by the work of the support staff. They help pupils to develop their academic, as well as their behavioural standards. They ensure that all pupils are fully included in the lessons. For example, books in Braille are provided so that a pupil with visual impairment is able to read the simplified text in his literacy work. There are good levels of communication between the teachers and these support staff. Assessment is well organised, with annual test results analysed by the subject leader to keep a check on individual progress and to identify groups of pupils who would benefit from extra support. There are good resources in the subject. For example tape recorders, with multiple headphones, develop pupils' listening skills well in the infant classes. The reference library and the class libraries are well stocked to encourage pupils to read for information as well as pleasure, and larger writing books, to promote extended writing, are used in Year 6. However, the subject leader does not check how successfully these different resources are used. Although there is good practice in all areas of literacy, it has not yet been identified and adopted throughout the school.

MATHEMATICS

67 Mathematics is the most improved subject in the school. Results in national tests have doubled since the school was last inspected. Although, standards are below the national average at the ages of seven and 11, pupils achieve well from a low starting point to reach these levels. There is still some potential to increase the number of pupils reaching higher levels. Teachers are aware of this and some of the strategies implemented are having the desired effect. Many of the improvements are attributable to very good subject leadership. The subject leader provides a powerful example of how mathematics should be taught, knows exactly where the school is in its drive to raise standards and provides strong support and guidance for other teachers.

68 Acquiring the correct mathematical language does not come easily to many pupils and teachers work hard to encourage pupils to understand and use the correct terms. The start of almost every lesson is marked by careful introduction of any unfamiliar mathematical terms and, as a result, pupils' confidence in expressing their ideas is increasing. The essential and important skills of adding, subtracting, multiplying and dividing are taught well and frequently practised. Pupils are encouraged to explore different ways to find the answer. This involves separating numbers, using brackets, listing numbers vertically and horizontally and finding close approximations. Although these various methods take longer to learn than would a single approach, pupils' understanding is stronger. Pupils also benefit from a concentration on mental skills. Lessons usually succeed in improving pupils' reasoning skills.

69 Pupils achieve well in the infant classes. Teaching is good and the work provided is closely matched to pupils' different learning needs. Pupils with special educational needs, in all classes, benefit from good levels of support. Very skilled classroom assistants often work with these pupils. For example, in one lesson, the classroom assistant pretended not to understand, thereby prompting

pupils to explain. This motivated them and reinforced their learning. A small number of pupils have very short concentration spans. To compensate for this, the classroom assistants constantly remind them to give the teacher eye contact. These factors result in their good progress. The level of challenge in the work provided for more able pupils is increasing each week and the gap is widening between the different ability groups. In Year 1, for example, some pupils are still unsure of numbers up to 20, whilst the more able pupils are confident in recognising and writing numbers up to 1000. Infant teachers make a very effective use of mathematical games. This injects fun into learning and significantly speeds up the rate at which pupils think. In a Year 2 lesson, for example, pupils had to quickly recognise numbers written on cards, and change places with the person who had a matching card. This helped them think quickly and reinforced their understanding of tens and units.

70 Pupils achieve steadily in most junior classes and they make rapid progress in Year 4 because of the very high levels of challenge. The rate of learning in junior classes is increasing. The recently qualified teachers are becoming more experienced in gauging pupils' levels of understanding and in matching the work accordingly. The quality of teaching in junior classes is satisfactory overall and improving. Whole class teaching is usually effective. Teachers are clear about the purpose of the lesson and share this with pupils. New ideas are carefully explained and all teachers use questioning very effectively to lead pupils through the steps of understanding. Teachers often increase the pace of the lesson by introducing activities, such as "racing your partner". Invariably, teachers make effective use of learning resources to enable pupils to visualise a process or a problem. In particular, the use of overhead projectors moves pupils' learning on successfully. In one lesson, for example, Year 6 pupils learnt to handle negative and positive numbers much more effectively when the teacher projected a large picture of a calculator onto the whiteboards. By operating the calculator keys, she was able to clear up some pupils' misunderstanding.

71 There are one or two weaknesses in teaching and learning in some junior classes. Teachers assume that more able pupils work at a quicker rate, complete the tasks set for the whole class and then move on to the more challenging extension activities. In practice, this assumption is flawed; more able pupils do not always complete the initial tasks and the harder tasks are simply not reached. It is often the case that more able pupils acquire a good grasp of the work quite early in the lesson and could move on to the more challenging tasks straight away. This is exactly what happens in Year 4 where the teaching is very good. In this class, the work given to each group, and often each pair of pupils, is different, according to the stages the pupils have reached. The teacher has a very good understanding of how pupils think and takes every opportunity to raise the level of challenge, even in the questions she asks. Pupils' responses are always appreciated and they are never made to feel inadequate. Consequently, they are not afraid to make mistakes and regard this as a natural part of learning. Pupils are made to feel good about themselves. One pupil spontaneously commented, "I want to learn" in response to the teacher's very positive feedback. In this class, there is very effective use of information and communication technology (ICT) to assess pupils' understanding and reinforce their learning. However, ICT is not used sufficiently in other classes.

SCIENCE

72 When pupils enter the infant classes, many have limited background knowledge and some still have inadequate use of language. For example, most Year 1 pupils know what is inside the 'feely bag' but struggle to find the words to describe the hidden objects. By the ages of seven and 11, standards are below average, but taking account of pupils' low starting points, this represents satisfactory progress. In fact, the school's results in national tests for 11 year-olds have almost doubled over the last five years. Pupils with special needs make good progress. They often benefit from the very good support provided by classroom assistants. For example, in a Year 1 science lesson, they prompted pupils' conversations and helped them to understand scientific vocabulary. They

also acted as scribes, noting down pupils' ideas. The pupils' skills of predicting, observing and describing improved considerably. However, additional teaching support is not available in all lessons and, on too many occasions, pupils are all given the same work to complete, irrespective of their different learning needs. When this happens, the learning of the more able pupils, in particular, is held back. This is partly why comparatively few pupils reach the higher levels by the age of 11.

73 Teachers offer pupils many worthwhile opportunities to handle and explore materials and scientific equipment. They encounter new and exciting experiences, which are fascinating and raise their levels of curiosity. Pupils enjoy these practical experiences and gradually learn to use scientific terms correctly. Their knowledge and understanding of living things, materials and forces, develops well. For example, Year 2 pupils explain correctly the life cycle of a frog and understand why bread changes when it is heated, whereas butter and chocolate melt and then solidify again. Infant pupils also make a good start in acquiring the skills to investigate and find out for themselves. The scientific approach is introduced very early. For example, Year 1 pupils are familiar with identifying a problem, predicting what will happen, observing events and reconsidering whether their predictions are right. In Year 2, pupils are prompted to give reasons for what they observe and to explain their ideas.

74 Pupils' knowledge and understanding of the different areas of science continues to develop steadily in the junior classes. Lessons usually combine demonstrations, provided by the teacher, and experiments, carried out by pupils. There is plenty to see, touch and talk about and, as a result, the pupils' use of scientific language improves, along with their ability to observe, measure and draw conclusions. However, the development of their skills of scientific enquiry is still not strong enough. For example, there is very little evidence of pupils planning and carrying out their own investigations. In particular, the question of how to ensure that a scientific test is fair is not raised as often as it should be. These weaknesses go undetected because pupils' books are not examined and a number of teachers, including the subject leader, do not have expertise in this aspect of the subject. At the time of the last inspection, pupils' enquiry skills were regarded as unsatisfactory and an issue to improve. They have improved in some respects. For instance, pupils now have many more opportunities to conduct experiments. However, there is still some way to go before the skills of enquiry are fully established. This also has implications for improving pupils' weaknesses in writing. They are not specifically taught to think logically in planning the steps to be taken to try to solve a problem. Opportunities are therefore missed for pupils to learn to write well-ordered scientific accounts and improve their thinking skills. There is also very limited use of ICT in the learning of science, such as sorting and researching information.

75 On balance, teaching is satisfactory. It is usually good in the infant classes and excellent in Year 4. Lessons are well prepared and safely managed. Teachers explain new ideas clearly and often illustrate by way of helpful demonstrations. In Year 6, for example, the teacher gathered pupils around the table, mixed various substances to create solutions and asked pupils to predict, observe and explain what they noticed. The demonstration was valuable in helping them to understand the release of gas in water. However, in some lessons, the actual scientific tasks provided are not sufficiently challenging to extend the learning of the more able pupils. The exception is Year 4 where the teacher has high expectations of all pupils and recognises the importance of involving pupils at all levels. For example, the teacher said, "Talk to the people in your group. See if you can agree what a liquid is and how you would describe it". This deepens pupils' understanding because they have to justify their views. The teachers' use of questioning is highly sophisticated. Pupils are made to think hard and at the same time the teacher is astutely probing their understanding. Instructions are explicitly given and the investigations are highly structured. For example the teacher provides worksheets to guide and support pupils in their attempts to discover and learn for themselves. These approaches particularly help those pupils in the school who easily become overexcited and distract others when the structure of the lesson is not made clear. When these steps are not taken, lessons can lose direction. In the one

unsatisfactory lesson, for example, the challenge was too low and the purpose was not made clear. Consequently, the pupils lost focus and their progress was minimal.

ART AND DESIGN

76 Standards in art and design are higher than expected at seven and at the levels expected at 11. This is an improvement on the findings of the last inspection. Since then sketchbooks have been introduced to enable pupils to plan and reflect on their work and the subject is influenced more by new technology. There is better guidance for teachers on what should be taught to each year group. However, pupils still do not have enough opportunities to work in three dimensions, such as sculpting, or to develop an appreciation of the art and creativity of other cultures.

77 Pupils achieve well from Year 1 to Year 4. Infant pupils are encouraged to think about their work. For example, in Year 1, a range of materials was examined through magnifying glasses and discussed before sketches were attempted. By Year 2, pupils assess their own work. This helps them to focus their attention and to take their work very seriously. For example, they were challenged to use watercolour paints to capture the mood of Henri Rousseau's painting, 'A Tropical Storm with a Tiger'. Tall, spiky plants were imaginatively used to create a dramatic jungle scene. A powerful musical accompaniment established the wild atmosphere of an equatorial storm. Pupils' responded very enthusiastically to these rich stimuli. For example, they experimented with mixing shades of green and tried to paint trees being buffeted by the storm. Pupils with special educational needs are well catered for and this helps them to make good progress. For example, a pupil with visual impairment was helped to mix colours and was given large cut-outs of cardboard leaves with string veins to feel and to paint. This very sensitive handling enabled him to play a full part in the lesson. Visiting artists allow all pupils to gain valuable glimpses into the creative process. For example, pupils worked with an artist. Together they looked at the work of Georges Seurat and noted how colours reflect moods. They made charcoal sketches and finally produced portraits on acetate. These now form two large attractive friezes displayed in the school. Pupils' work is satisfactory in Years 5 and 6 but the rate of progress slows. These pupils have fewer opportunities for exploring ideas and experimenting with techniques than the younger pupils. This, in turn, affects the quality of their work.

78 The quality of teaching in the infants is good and in the juniors is satisfactory. A lesson of high quality was seen in Year 4. Here, the teacher used the Internet to download images of chairs that were then used as a 'slideshow' to stimulate discussion in the lesson. Not only were the pupils fully involved in the work but also four visitors from 'Help the Aged' joined in with the lesson during their weekly visit. Two very different chairs were then used as subjects. Before they began their sketches of chairs, the class and the visitors were told to figuratively, "Put on your artist's hat ... now draw!" Leadership in the subject is sound but there are no planned opportunities to check standards of work throughout the school. Consequently the more limited provision in the top classes has not been identified.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

79 At the time last inspection pupils were not achieving well enough in design and technology. Prompt and effective action was taken and teachers were provided with guidance on what should be taught to each age group. As a result, pupils are now able to build on what they have learnt in previous years and are achieving steadily to reach the standards expected at the ages of seven and 11. The subject is managed adequately. Although the subject leader has only recently taken over responsibility, she knows that the quality of pupils' work could be improved further.

80 Pupils' design skills develop well. For example, in Year 1 they draw simple pictures to help them to visualise what they want to make. By Year 3, they produce carefully labelled diagrams and by Year 5, a list of materials needed and instructions for making, accompany these. Pupils' skills of measuring, cutting and joining are typical for their age. Before a new project begins, pupils are carefully taught the specific skills needed to enable them to work accurately. For example, the teachers' clear explanation of how to use the tools for cutting and modelling clay was reflected in the attractive name plaques made in Year 3. Teachers and classroom assistants provide valuable support for pupils with special educational needs. This enables them to make good progress. In one lesson, for example, they were asked to present their ideas to the class. This was difficult for them and, since they lacked the spoken language skills to explain clearly, they pointed to pictures in a book. However, the classroom assistant joined them and with encouragement, they put across their message well and received a round of applause. More able pupils are not as well provided for. Although they are given scope to explore and try out new ideas, the range of materials offered is sometimes too narrow to provide the extra challenge they need.

81 Teaching is satisfactory. Lessons are carefully prepared, well organised and safely managed. This ensures that pupils work methodically, purposefully and with enjoyment. Demonstrations are particularly useful. In a Year 2 lesson the variety and individuality in the pupils' printed designs, reflected the teacher's encouragement to experiment by rotating and inverting a printing block. Talking about what pupils have achieved in the lesson is done well and has many benefits in helping pupils to develop their spoken language. For example, when asked how the printed effect had been achieved, one seven-year-old pupil explained, "I made a left and right, half turn pattern". In Year 4, the teaching is excellent. This is largely because very careful thought goes into the sequencing of activities. Pupils have to think hard and reflect on their work every step of the way. Carefully selected resources, which grab the pupils' attention and challenge their thinking, are introduced. Pupils' skills of evaluation are developed to the full. In the particular lesson seen, for example, pupils examined a range of colourful and exciting 'pop up' books. Through careful guidance, they were able to appreciate the effect that the surprise pages had on the reader and how the actual mechanisms to create these pop up images worked. However, pupils are not developing the skills of evaluating their work in order to improve it, to the same degree in all classes. For example, pupils in some classes do not have books in which to plan, reflect on and record their work. This is a pity because many pupils' writing skills are weak and opportunities are missed to improve their ability to write instructions and evaluate results.

GEOGRAPHY

82 Pupils' attainment is below the level expected at the ages of seven and 11 but they achieve steadily from a low start to reach these standards. Standards in geography have slipped a little since the last inspection because the subject has not been a priority for development or a focus of attention. Subject leadership is satisfactory. The subject leader, who is new in post, has worked hard to make some improvements. For example, teachers now follow an agreed set of plans to ensure that all elements of the subject are taught in a careful sequence. In addition, pupils' work is now assessed to enable teachers to measure how well they are teaching. The subject leader checks over teachers' planning, but not pupils' work in their books. Weaknesses, such as the lack of extension work for more able pupils, go unnoticed. The use of computer programs to support the subject is developing slowly but not enough is done to compensate for pupils' very limited knowledge of other cultures.

83 Pupils make satisfactory progress over time. Their work is neatly presented with carefully drawn pictures and diagrams. Local geography makes an important contribution to infant pupils' learning. For example, their understanding of mapping is enhanced through recording their journey to school. They also manage to draw natural and man-made human features in the area. Pupils know

how to make judgements about the places they study, for example, in identifying what makes it suitable as a seaside resort and what people do to make it that way. Junior pupils build up their knowledge of continents and countries steadily by learning to identify similarities and differences in the way maps are produced and used. Their learning goes beyond the factual in considering the impact people have on the environment and how improvements can be made. Year 6 pupils use the Internet knowledgeably for personal research, on such topics as rivers. However, many pupils have not travelled out of the area and have little background knowledge about different places. This makes it harder for them to understand geographical patterns and explain how places change.

84 Teaching is satisfactory. Teachers make sure that pupils know what they are going to learn and how this links to previous lessons. Plans are detailed and resources are ready. This enables lessons to flow smoothly. Teachers know the value of helping pupils to understand distant places by comparing them with their own locality. For example, Year 2 pupils gain important insights into island life by comparing their own experiences of Walney Island with the Island of Struay. Stories about a character, known to the pupils as 'Katie Morag' makes learning more interesting as they learn about the area where she lives. In Year 4 the teaching is excellent, particularly in the way that pupils are taught to carry out geographical research. The project fully involves the pupils and focuses on them improving the school environment. Pupils collect rubbish from class bins, research the contents, make graphs to record and compare quantities, decide how much can be recycled and how this can be done. Through this, pupils learn to negotiate with each other and work in teams. There are some weaknesses in the teaching and learning. For example, there are missed opportunities to improve and broaden pupils' experience of writing and the work provided for the more able pupils does not always extend their learning enough.

HISTORY

85 Since the previous inspection there have been good improvements in teaching and learning in history. Children enter school with very limited background knowledge and understanding and achieve well to reach the standards expected by the age of 11. The improvements have resulted from sound leadership in reviewing and planning what is to be taught and how this can best be done. Strategies for monitoring of pupils' learning have been implemented for example, teachers now assess pupils' knowledge and understanding at the end of each topic.

86 Pupils produce neat and careful work. They illustrate their work well with diagrams and drawings. This helps further their understanding. Pupils build well on their previous knowledge and learn to investigate the reasons for change. For example, infant pupils handle artefacts from the early 1900's and discuss and explain what they are and what they were used for. They compare life then and life today through interesting topics, including 'The Seaside'. Junior pupils begin to understand the legacy left by great civilizations such as the Greeks and Romans. Through these well-planned topics, including the lives of famous people, pupils learn successfully about the differences in food, clothing and homes. Pupils in Year 6 make good use of the Internet to research information about life in Victorian Britain and are learning effectively how to interpret their findings. Pupils with special needs are supported well in history lessons, consequently they make good progress.

87 Teaching is good. Resources are used effectively to capture pupils' interests. In Year 1, for example, the teacher used large colourful pictures of Victorian household artefacts as well as real items, during the lesson. These stimulated pupils to discuss and question their uses and helped them to begin to make valid comparisons with life today. For example, pupils noticed that Victorians did not have electricity to make irons and carpet sweepers work. ICT is used purposefully in some, but not all lessons. For example, in Year 3, pupils found information about the 'life after death' beliefs of the Ancient Egyptians. The subject itself was interesting for pupils as they began to find out the reasons

behind mummification. In Year 5, pupils are encouraged to enter into heated debates about historical issues. In one lesson, for example, they examined the differences in opportunities for Ancient Greek men and women and refined their understanding of equal opportunities. Pupils' learning is carefully assessed but the information is not used consistently to plan work to extend the learning of the more able pupils.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

88 The planning of the ICT curriculum was identified as weak at the time of the previous inspection. Sound subject leadership, provided by a classroom assistant, ensures that pupils' learning is built up in logical steps from one year to the next. The subject leader checks that teachers evaluate the impact of their lessons by assessing pupils' learning at the end of each topic. However, she has not yet had an opportunity to observe lessons to check on the effectiveness of teaching and learning, and how well planned developments are working.

89 Pupils achieve satisfactorily to reach the levels expected at the ages of seven and 11, largely because staff are more confident in teaching the subject and there are additional, well attended, computer clubs twice a week. Resources in school are good, especially the computer suite, which is used regularly and effectively. By the age of seven, pupils find their way around the keyboard competently and operate familiar programs correctly. For example, they follow instructions purposefully and observe and check the results when editing their work. Their use of computers extends into other some subjects to a limited degree, for example, they research information from databases and record what they discover and how they found it. Pupils also use Clip Art programs effectively, for example, to make celebration cards. Some good work is produced in Year 5, using spreadsheets to compare people's eating habits and printing out various graphs and charts to illustrate their findings. By the age of 11, pupils have a sound knowledge of how to use ICT to present information in a variety of ways. For example, they know how to gather and organise information about the River Nile, using multi media presentation programs. Pupils are familiar with using the Internet, for example, to research in history and they are competent in word processing in English. However, there are very limited opportunities for pupils to use computers as sensing and control devices for use in subjects such as science.

90 Teaching and learning are satisfactory. A strong feature is the valuable support provided by the subject leader. This ensures that all teachers are confident and well prepared to teach the lessons in the computer suite. Teachers explain the purpose of the lesson clearly so that pupils understand exactly what they are expected to learn. For example, the Year 3 teacher illustrated how computers store and sort information by asking pupils to organise a set of card files. This proved to be an effective introduction to handling data. Pupils are shown how and encouraged to use the Internet as a source of information. The use of the large interactive white board is fundamental to pupils' understanding. They are able to see processes being demonstrated and this consolidates their keyboard and operational skills well. Teachers make good use of work produced by past pupils to demonstrate how to make a presentation using 'Power Point'. Pupils benefit from good opportunities to discuss how they intend to plan their own work and to raise any questions. A weakness in the teaching is that assessments of pupils' learning are not used sufficiently to provide work that is closely matched to the stages that different pupils have reached. The minority of pupils who use home computers regularly, already know some of the procedures, but this is not taken into account. Consequently, they more able and more experienced pupils do not make as much progress as they could. Those with special educational needs, however, are given extra help and achieve as well as their peers. The use of computers in the learning of other subjects is increasing, but irregular and there is scope to improve this aspect of ICT.

MUSIC

91 At the last inspection, standards in music were too low throughout the school. Action was taken to raise standards. For example, a teacher was appointed who taught the subject in most classes. However, he left the school two years ago and, since then, standards in the upper junior classes have reverted back to their former low levels. Pupils in the infant classes achieve well to reach the standards expected. However, pupils in Years 5 and 6 have not had enough opportunities to develop their skills and knowledge over a long period. Currently no music is being regularly taught to these classes, although a third of the junior pupils receive instrumental coaching from visiting tutors. Standards at the age of 11 are below those expected for pupils of this age. Leadership in the subject is unsatisfactory. In the classes where music is taught, a strong feature of the lessons is the skilled way that all pupils, including those with special educational needs, play a fully active part in all the activities. These pupils enjoy music.

92 In Year 2, music is a regular feature of daily life. One reason for this is the added dimension it gives to those pupils with practical rather than academic talents. It is also used to give greater variety and excitement to a pupil with visual impairment. In one lesson, pupils were able to name and play a wide range of percussion instruments. When split into different sections, they then performed in groups from a simple score and were reminded by their teacher, "Now you're in a band you have to play at the right time!" Next they formed pairs to write their own four bar scores with symbols representing each group of instruments. Finally they played these compositions. They were very interested and so fully involved in their learning. Music continues to be developed in the lower junior classes. For example, in Year 3 pupils listen and respond to music. They make comments such as, "The start was moving and creepy". They also recognise instruments, "The violin was used gently and the cello was rubbed by a long bow". Most pupils in the upper juniors have not progressed much beyond the levels they reached two years ago and they know very little about the music of other cultures. Those fortunate enough to receive instrumental training make very good progress in reading and playing music. For example, they provided musical interludes at the recent carol concert with a violin trio and also clarinet and trumpet duets. Other brass instruments are also played to a good standard.

93 Teaching is good in the infants but, on balance, is unsatisfactory in the junior classes. This is due to the relatively limited training that teachers have received over a long period. Attempts have been made to 'plug the gap' by involving the music teacher from a local secondary school. Such initiatives provide the pupils with some high quality tuition. However, they do not address the basic need for the subject to be taught regularly throughout the school, by staff feeling confident enough to teach the full music syllabus.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

94 Only two games and one dance lesson were seen during the inspection. The teaching of games was good and the quality of teaching in the dance lesson was very good. In the dance lesson confident and skilled teaching enabled pupils to build up and perform a very effective dance incorporating driving rain and twirling snowflakes in the wind. Pupils in all three lessons achieved above average standards. This is very similar to the picture at the time of the last inspection. The good standards in games are attributable to good teaching and coaching of specific skills but also to the excellent range of sporting activities offered to pupils after school. Many different competitive sports are represented and over two-thirds of the boys and girls from Years 4 to 6 are involved. Many pupils are keen, fit and competitive. These characteristics are reflected in the school's continuing sporting successes. Standards in swimming are high. This is largely because the school is situated on an island, which presents obvious dangers and so pupils are taken swimming every week from the age of four to 11. It is very rare for any pupil not to achieve the 25m distance and many go on to achieve

proficiency awards. The subject is soundly led. The new subject leader is enthusiastic, determined to maintain the school's good traditions, teaches the subject well and has ideas to develop the subject further.

95 Almost all lessons are based on very detailed plans held on CD-ROM. These provide excellent guidance on how to teach a lesson well and contain information on how to improve pupils' skills in all aspects of the subject. Together with teachers' personal interests and experience, the good level of planning ensures that teachers know exactly what they are trying to achieve and how to evaluate the quality of their work. All lessons begin with a vigorous warm up and end with a mental and physical cool down. Teaching points are very effectively made and often illustrated by demonstrations from the teacher or the pupils. Skills of control and co-ordination are rigorously pursued. In a Year 6 hockey lesson, for example, pupils were asked to dribble a ball around the hall, controlling it as if it were 'a dog on a lead'. In addition, pupils are taught to be aware of others. In a Year 3 lesson, pupils were asked to work with a partner standing across the hall. Whilst dribbling a football, the pupil had to call out 'high', 'low', 'middle' according to where his partner's arms were positioned. This was very effective in developing pupils' ability to control a ball and be aware of where their team-mates were at the same time. In the same lesson, a pupil with hearing impairment was asked to demonstrate his skills. During the lesson, the teacher called his name many times to tune him in to the instructions given. This typifies the care and attention given to pupils with special educational needs and explains why they make good progress. Pupils' talents are identified and developed well in the many sporting activities.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

96 By the ages of seven and 11, pupils reach levels expected in the syllabus taught in schools within Cumbria. Pupils achieve well in the infant classes and satisfactorily in the junior classes. Pupils with special educational needs are supported well and make good progress. There are strengths in the subject. Good foundations are laid in the infant classes, where the work often relates to the pupils' own experiences. There are now clear plans that show teachers exactly what to teach in each year group. Good guidance by the subject leader has also set up the right policies to raise standards. Plans are already being followed to deal with areas that the school has rightly identified as weak. The main emphasis in many junior lessons is to learn about different religions through the three faiths studied, Christianity, Buddhism and Judaism. However, pupils are not sufficiently challenged to consider what it is they might learn from these faiths, about themselves, about issues of right and wrong and about the different values held by other cultures.

97 In the infant classes, religious education helps pupils to make sense of their own experiences. For example, in a lesson about Jesus' parable of the lost sheep, pupils in Year 1 began by recalling their own feelings. They remembered occasions of being lost themselves (the sheep's experience) or of losing something very special (the shepherd's experience). They clearly sympathised with a girl who spoke of losing her cat. Some were also able to understand the message behind the parable. As one boy thoughtfully observed, "The shepherd didn't want the sheep to get hurt". This kind of learning is seen in the junior classes, but not as frequently. It was evident in a Year 5 lesson when pupils were asked to consider what it would be like to think as a Buddhist. To illustrate their views on the sanctity of life, the teacher finished the lesson by telling them about a girl who had shaved off all her hair rather than kill the head lice. However, there is usually a much greater focus on learning from books and pictures. In discussions with older pupils, it is their first-hand experiences, such as the visit to a Buddhist Centre, which they recall with most clarity.

98 The quality of teaching is good in the infant classes and satisfactory in the junior classes. It is better in the infants because it has a greater impact on how the pupils think and behave. When

considering the theme, 'Bringing Light into the World', one pupil wrote, "To make someone feel special I would look after them in the playground and I would say their work is good". Too often, challenges set for older pupils are more restricted. Pupils tend to produce similar work and much of this is copied and of less relevance to them. Subject leadership is strong and with the help of the religious education adviser, a course to improve staff confidence to teach the subject is being provided. For example, teachers are being given help to improve their skills in setting accurate learning objectives. Resources are well used and have been updated in the three faiths studied at the school. There is some use of computers to research for information but currently this is mainly limited to Year 6.