

# INSPECTION REPORT

## **BEWCASTLE SCHOOL**

Bewcastle, Carlisle

LEA area: Cumbria

Unique reference number: 112103

Head teacher: Mr J Glossop

Reporting inspector: Mrs J Bell  
2456

Dates of inspection: 2<sup>nd</sup> – 4<sup>th</sup> July 2002

Inspection number: 250190

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

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## INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Infant and junior
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	4 to 11
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Bewcastle Carlisle Cumbria
Postcode:	CA6 6PF
Telephone number:	016977 48662
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Appropriate authority:	The governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr W Nelson
Date of previous inspection:	April 1998

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members			Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
2456	Mrs J Bell	Registered inspector	Mathematics	What sort of school is it?
			Science	The school's results and pupils' achievements.
			Information and communication technology	How well are pupils taught?
			Design and technology	How well is the school led and managed?
				What should the school do to improve further?
			Physical education	
			Areas of learning for children in the foundation stage	
			Special educational needs	
13786	Mrs S Walsh	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?
12631	Mrs M McLean	Team inspector	English	How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils?
			Art and design	
			Geography	
			History	
			Music	
			Religious education	
			Equal opportunities	

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

### **INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL**

The school is a much smaller than average sized primary school situated in an isolated rural area of Cumbria, close to Carlisle and the Scottish border. It admits pupils aged four to 11. The pupils are drawn from a wide area and many live on outlying farms. Most pupils are brought to and from school each day by bus. The school has 31 pupils on roll, 18 boys and 13 girls. The pupils are organised in two classes; the infant class has reception and Years 1 and 2 and the junior class has pupils from Years 3 to 6. There is an imbalance of numbers and Year 3 pupils are taught with the infant class for English and mathematics. The head teacher teaches the junior class with a teacher who takes the class for two days each week. The other full time teacher takes the infant class. The number of pupils eligible for free school meals is below the national average. All pupils are from white, English speaking families. The children enter school with a broad range of attainment, but most have skills that are typical for four year olds, particularly in their language and social skills. The isolated area means that many children have had limited opportunities to meet and play with others. The school has four pupils on the register of special educational needs; this is below the national average. These pupils are at an early stage of need. The school is very small and all statistical information must be treated with caution since differences in numbers by one or two pupils can present a misleading picture year on year.

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

Bewcastle Primary School provides a satisfactory education for all its pupils. Teaching is good and sometimes very good in the infant class and this means that pupils have a good start to their education. The teaching is satisfactory in the juniors, and by the time pupils leave the school, standards match those expected for 11 year olds in English and mathematics but are below average in science. The leadership and management of the school are sound and the head teacher works closely with staff to establish very good relationships that encourage pupils to want to learn and to behave well. The head teacher knows pupils and their families very well and provides clear direction for the personal and social development of every pupil. All staff work well as a team and effectively promote these aspects of pupils' development. The school provides satisfactory value for money.

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

- The staff work well together to promote pupils' personal development and so pupils have good attitudes to school and enjoy learning.
- Relationships are very good and the family atmosphere in the school promotes a good ethos for learning.
- Teachers manage pupils well and behaviour is good.
- There is a substantial amount of good, and sometimes very good teaching in the infant class and so pupils make a good start to their education.
- Teachers make effective use of the environment beyond school to provide a stimulating range of activities that interest the pupils and encourage their learning.
- Attendance is very good and pupils are eager to come to school.
- Pupils make good progress and achieve well in information and communication technology (ICT).

### What could be improved

- The management of the school to ensure that all statutory requirements are met, in particular the health and safety of pupils in connection with supervision, storage of equipment and other concerns as identified and reported to the school during the inspection.
- Standards in science, geography and religious education in the junior class, ensuring that pupils' work covers all that should be taught in order to meet statutory requirements in religious education and geography.
- Whole-school procedures for planning the curriculum and the day-to-day assessment of pupils' progress to match work to their ability and build on what they already know.
- The presentation and setting out of written work in the junior class.

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

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

The school has made mainly satisfactory improvement since it was last inspected in 1998. The planning for the curriculum has improved with the adoption of national guidance for all subjects. This, together with the school's own materials, provide a secure framework for teaching and learning in most subjects. Provision for information and communication technology (ICT) has improved and standards are now good. However, the school does not fully meet the requirements of the syllabus for religious education taught in the local authority's schools and standards in the juniors are too low. The governors have ensured that some of the statutory requirements are met in respect of the pupils' reports, the prospectus and the annual report to parents. However, there are still gaps in the information that governors are legally required to include. Governors are now more actively involved in the management of the school but this is not yet developed well enough. For example, their involvement in development planning and monitoring the work of the school is still at an early stage. The school development plan has improved but does not yet contain enough detail to provide a useful framework for improvement. The presentation of written work in the junior class still requires further improvement.

### 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
	1999	2000	2001	2001
English	A*	E	C	E
mathematics	B	E	C	D
science	A	E	E	E

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

Only two pupils took the national tests for 11 year olds in 2001. This small number makes any comparison with the results of other schools unreliable. However, pupils' performance over time is just below the national trend in English, mathematics and science. The small numbers taking the tests, result in fluctuations in the school's results year on year, since the performance of one pupil contributes a large part to the overall grade obtained by the school. This presents a misleading picture since, for example, the absence of one pupil could have substantially distort the school's performance. Standards in current work in English and mathematics are at the level expected for the age of pupils in Year 6 but below this in science. Many pupils in the junior class take little pride in their written work and it is often poorly presented. The school has analysed test results and has used the teachers' knowledge of individual pupils to set realistic targets for this year and is on course to meet them.

The numbers taking the national tests for seven year olds are low and also fluctuate year on year and so comparisons with national levels are unreliable. However, standards in current work are at least satisfactory in English, mathematics and science. The pupils in this class make good progress and achieve well, whatever their ability, because of the effective teaching. Progress in the junior class is broadly satisfactory. Pupils with special educational needs are well supported by the work of the classroom support assistants and make good progress in relation to their ability.

Standards in religious education meet those expected by the age of seven but are well below those expected at the age of 11 because the statutory requirements are not met in the junior class. Pupils in this class have not done enough work in this subject to meet requirements and to attain the standards expected by the end of Year 6. Provision for ICT is good; pupils make substantial gains in their skills and attain above average standards by the age of 11. Standards in most other subjects are broadly as expected by the time pupils transfer to secondary school. However, too little work is covered in geography in the junior class; statutory requirements are not met and standards are below those expected at the age of 11.

#### **PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES**

<b>Aspect</b>	<b>Comment</b>
Attitudes to the school	Good. The pupils enjoy school and are keen to take advantage of what it offers them. They try hard and usually concentrate well on their work.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Good. The pupils know what is expected of them and mostly behave well, both in lessons and in the play areas.
Personal development and relationships	Very good. The very good relationships promote pupils' personal development. Teachers promote these well by enabling pupils to investigate independently, choose and find their own materials and make their own decisions.
Attendance	Very good. Attendance is well above the national average. Pupils enjoy coming to school.

The family atmosphere in the school provides a good ethos for learning. This promotes pupils' personal development well. They willingly take responsibility and help each other.

#### **TEACHING AND LEARNING**

Teaching of pupils:	Reception	Years 1 -2	Years 3-6
Quality of teaching	Good	Good	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 at least satisfactory. The quality of teaching is good and sometimes very good in the class containing reception children and Years 1 and 2, plus Year 3 when these pupils are taught in this class for English and mathematics. The effective teaching in this class ensures that pupils make good progress and have a good start to their learning. Teaching in the junior class is satisfactory and pupils' learning is sound. The learning could be more rapid if work was more closely matched to the needs of all pupils. However, the teachers' questioning of individual pupils enables some opportunities to extend their thinking and to challenge the more able. The teaching of literacy skills is mainly good; reading is taught well and teachers' enthusiasm for books is passed to the pupils. The teaching of writing is satisfactory, and there are some good opportunities to develop and practise writing in other subjects, such as history. The presentation of work is often untidy in the junior class where marking does not reinforce teachers' expectations for neat writing and the setting out of written work. Numeracy skills are taught satisfactorily and pupils apply these skills in subjects such as science, design and technology and ICT. Teachers make very effective use of the environment beyond the school and so practical activities linked to history are often taught well. Pupils with special educational needs are supported well in class and when withdrawn for extra help by the teaching assistant and so make good progress in relation to their ability.

#### **OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL**

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Satisfactory. The school provides a broadly based curriculum that meets the needs of most pupils although the planning of work does not meet the abilities of all pupils in the junior class. The statutory requirements for religious education and geography are not met in this class.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Good. Pupils are well supported by teachers and the classroom support assistants and make good progress.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Good. The pupils have very good opportunities to express feelings and learn to get on well together. The staff teach right from wrong and so moral development is good. The provision for raising pupils' awareness of their own culture is good but is limited for multicultural awareness.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Satisfactory. Staff know the pupils well and provide very good personal support and guidance to each pupil. However, there are many health and safety issues that need to be resolved and this aspect of pupils' care is unsatisfactory.

The school provides a good range of activities that interest the pupils and enriches the curriculum through well-planned visits out of school. Procedures for monitoring personal development are very informal but this is satisfactory because the teachers know the pupils very well. The school's procedures for monitoring academic development are satisfactory. Assessment procedures are not consistent throughout the school. Information gained from assessing pupils' progress is used well in

the infant class to provide work matched to the ages and abilities of all pupils. Although the staff in the junior class extend learning by talking to and posing more challenging questions to able pupils, they do not make enough use of day-to-day checks on pupils' progress to match work as effectively as they might to the ages and abilities of all pupils. The school works hard to develop a good partnership with parents although the isolated position of the school makes this difficult.

## 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 provides good direction for the personal and social development of every pupil. Teamwork is good. However, there is insufficient lead given to whole school planning and monitoring of the curriculum.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Satisfactory overall. The governors are supportive of the school. They do not yet have a full role in development planning and in monitoring the work of the school. Some statutory requirements for health and safety and communication to parents are not met.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Satisfactory. The school is developing sound procedures to look closely at its performance. However, some procedures are informal and do not always have sufficient effect on whole school initiatives and development.
The strategic use of resources	Satisfactory. Careful financial planning supports the priorities for improvement and the school seeks the best value in its expenditure.

A number of health and safety issues, including some related to the supervision of pupils and the safe storage of equipment, were raised with the head teacher and governors during the inspection. These now need to be resolved as a matter of urgency. The school has had little flexibility in its budget over recent years and this has meant that some equipment and resources are old and need replacing. However, the school has just sufficient resources to meet the needs of the numbers of pupils on roll. The improved budget is enabling the school to purchase new equipment and make improvements to its accommodation. The accommodation is adequate and the school makes good use of the available space. The on-site swimming pool is used well. The head teacher and governing body seek to get the best value in all goods and services.

## PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• They feel comfortable in approaching the school with any concerns.</li> <li>• The school expects their children to work hard and do their best.</li> <li>• The school is well led and managed.</li> <li>• Their children like school.</li> <li>• The school provides a good range of visits that motivate their children.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The information on how well their children make progress.</li> <li>• The amount of homework.</li> </ul>

The inspection findings support all of the parents' positive views. The information to parents about their children's progress is mainly satisfactory but the annual reports of pupils' progress and the governors' annual report do not fully meet requirements. The amount of homework is typical of that given in most primary schools but the frequency varies between classes.



## **PART B: COMMENTARY**

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

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

1 The school admits children from across the full range of attainment and previous experience. The school admits up to seven children in each year and attainment on entry varies considerably year on year. The current intake of three children started school with communication, language, literacy and mathematical skills that were typical for their age. Many children have had limited opportunities to play with other children because of the isolated area in which they live. However, most have experience of some pre-school provision. Their personal and social skills were sound. The effective teaching in the infant class means that reception age children have a good start to their education and make good progress. They achieve well and meet the goals identified as typical for their age in all the areas of learning. Their personal and social development is given high priority and is above expectations by the time they reach Year 1.

2 The numbers taking the national tests for seven year olds are low and fluctuate year on year and so comparisons with national levels are unreliable. The pupils make good progress in their learning throughout the infant class and by the end of Year 2 standards in English, mathematics and science are at least matching those expected for their age. The pupils in this class achieve well, whatever their age or ability, because of the effective teaching. The teacher plans well to meet the different ages and abilities in this class that contains pupils for reception to Year 2, with Year 3 pupils joining the class each morning for English and mathematics. The class is organised very well to enable all pupils to work on appropriate tasks that build on their earlier learning.

3 Only two pupils took the national tests for 11 year olds in 2001. This small number makes any comparison with the results of other schools unreliable and causes fluctuations in results year on year. However, pupils' performance over time is just below the national trend in English, mathematics and science. Standards in current work in English and mathematics are at the level expected for the age of pupils in Year 6 but below this in science. The standards have been maintained in English and mathematics since the last inspection but have dropped in science due to the limited amount of work covered.

4 The school has analysed test results and used the information to set realistic group targets for this year and is on course to meet them. Pupils in the infant class are given realistic individual targets and their progress against them checked but this is not continued in the junior class and means pupils cannot check on their own progress.

5 The school has few pupils with special educational needs and these are at an early stage of need. They are well supported by the work of the classroom support assistants and make good progress in relation to their ability. Their individual learning plans identify manageable targets and their progress is checked regularly and the plans modified accordingly.

6 Pupils have sound speaking and listening skills and make steady progress throughout the school. From an early age they have good opportunities to develop their ideas and express their opinions. In the infant class the pupils speak confidently and listen carefully to each other. In the junior class, pupils talk sensibly to teachers about their work and talk together to negotiate roles and decide on the content of their class assemblies. The staff provide good opportunities for pupils to present plays to the rest of the pupils and to parents.

7 Teachers show that they enjoy books and share them well with pupils. Standards in reading are satisfactory throughout the school. By the end of Year 2, pupils read with understanding and appropriate expression. By the end of Year 6, pupils read confidently and know how to use information books to support work in history and science. Pupils develop sound writing skills and by the end of Year 2 they write with due regard to full stops and capital letters. They spell commonly used words accurately and use sensible alternatives for unfamiliar words. Handwriting is taught well in the infant class and letters and words are well formed. Pupils in the junior class learn to write imaginatively and write for a good range of purposes including stories, factual accounts, letters and plays. However, their handwriting is often untidy and the presentation of written work is unsatisfactory. This was identified in the last inspection and has not improved.

8 Standards in mathematics are satisfactory and pupils' numeracy skills are used in other subjects, such as science and design and technology. Pupils make at least satisfactory progress in their learning throughout the infant class. By the age of seven they can work out number bonds to ten, understand the place value of digits and can arrange numbers to 100 in order of size. They learn to recognize and name simple shapes such as cones, cylinders, cubes and cuboids. They can read time in hours and half hours and collect and sort data and communicate their findings in simple graphs. In the junior class pupils continue to make mainly sound progress and attain satisfactory standards in their mathematics work. By the age of 11 most pupils recall their tables and use the four rules of number, understand and use data and interpret and solve real-life problems. Pupils work successfully with simple graphs, data handling (using spreadsheets), shape and symmetry. There are some good opportunities for pupils to carry out mathematical investigations.

9 Standards in science meet those expected at the age of seven. They investigate push and pull forces and by the age of seven know when and where these forces are applied to move a range of objects. They are developing an understanding of the characteristics of living and non-living things and learn about materials and their properties through practical investigations. The pupils in the infant class achieve well and by the end of Year 2, most pupils understand and use appropriate scientific terms and are beginning to understand the need for a fair test. Although pupils record many of their findings by completing worksheets, they also used simple tables to record their observations of animals around the school and to record different groups of materials.

10 Standards in science are below those expected by the age of 11. There are several factors that contribute to the lower standards in the junior class. There is a limited amount of time given to ensuring pupils complete their recording of investigations. Written work is often scrappy and untidy; much work is undated and is often unfinished. The amount of completed work is thin and few pupils write about their findings in their own words. By the end of Year 6, pupils have a satisfactory understanding of the need for a fair test and most know how to make sure a test is fair. They know the differences between man-made and natural materials and have conducted tests to see which substances dissolve in water. Pupils know how to make an electrical circuit and can introduce a switch to break the circuit. However, much of the pupils' written work is at a level below that expected for their age, and does not reflect their earlier good grounding in science.

11 Standards in religious education meet those expected by the age of seven but are well below those expected at the age of 11 because the statutory requirements are not met in the junior class. These pupils have not covered enough work in this subject to meet requirements and to attain the standards expected by the end of Year 6.

12 Provision for ICT is good and so pupils make substantial gains in their skills and attain above average standards by the age of 11. They have good opportunities to use ICT to support and reinforce work in other subjects. Standards in most other subjects are broadly as expected by the time pupils

transfer to secondary school. However, the strong focus on history this year means not enough work has been done to meet the National Curriculum requirements for geography in the junior class and this has impacted on standards and they are well below those expected at the age of 11.

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

13 Pupils have good attitudes to school; they are eager and enthusiastic. These good attitudes have been sustained since the previous inspection. Pupils arrive by bus, which almost always arrives promptly. However, time is lost during the school day as pupils are slow to settle and organise themselves after breaks. Most pupils catch the bus home immediately after lessons. This makes it difficult to arrange activities after school but the staff provide many interesting and unusual trips out and activities during the school day. For example, older pupils were very enthusiastic about their forthcoming trip to Hadrian's Wall. They were heavily involved in making costumes for Celts and Romans, preparing their shields and baking bread for a Roman style lunch. They work well in their lessons. Younger pupils settle well and work productively. Those in the juniors are full of enthusiasm but the teachers do not always effectively channel this to ensure sufficient work is produced.

14 Behaviour is good. There have been no exclusions for at least twenty years. Pupils behave well around school. They are eager to take responsibility for answering the school telephone and putting away chairs after assembly but sometimes they are over enthusiastic and dash everywhere, creating a risk of an accident occurring. In assemblies behaviour is good; pupils listen carefully to moral stories. They also listen tolerantly to the views of others in lessons. Behaviour at playtimes is generally good, however large numbers of pupils play football and dominate the playground. Pupils can choose to stay inside school and those that do so are sensible and well behaved. There were no incidents of bullying reported to the inspection team.

15 Relationships are very good. They are sometimes excellent in the infant class where everyone knows each other exceptionally well. This promotes paired and group work where there is friendly negotiation of tasks. The very good rapport encourages pupils to work hard and try their best. Relationships are also very good in the junior class where pupils enjoy the teacher's use of humour. Personal development is good. A significant strength is the way that the teachers allow the pupils to investigate independently, and choose and find their own materials making their own decisions.

16 Attendance rates are very good and well above the national average. Attendance was severely affected last year by the Foot and Mouth epidemic but has risen significantly this year. Pupils rarely miss school.

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

17 Teaching is at least satisfactory and is often good, and sometimes very good, in the infant class, which contains pupils from reception, Year 1 and Year 2. In the mornings, Year 3 pupils join the class for English and mathematics lessons, since numbers are imbalanced between year groups. The effective teaching in this class enables pupils to achieve well and make good progress, whatever their age and ability. The high proportion of good teaching in this class promotes good standards of work and behaviour; this has a positive effect on standards. The teaching in the junior class is satisfactory and although progress is sound it could be better, particularly for more able pupils. There was no unsatisfactory teaching seen.

18 The reception age children in mixed age infant class are well taught and the consistently good teaching ensures that these children have a good start to their learning. The teacher and classroom support assistant have a good understanding of the needs of this age group and ensure that they are supported well through activities planned to provide a range of good experiences within all areas of learning.

19 In many lessons, teachers provide a good range of interesting activities. In the infant class the tasks are well matched to the different ages and abilities and build well on what the pupils already know. The teacher's day-to-day checking on what pupils have learned in lessons is good and ensures that the next work is modified to take account of this assessment. In the junior class the same work is often given to all the pupils irrespective of their ability. As a result, pupils do not build well enough upon previous work and they could achieve more highly. However, in some lessons with this class all pupils have similar tasks but the teacher supports every pupil at some point in the lesson and this extends learning and provides some challenge. For example, in an English lesson, pupils worked on autobiographies and by the end of the lesson the teacher's intervention had enabled most pupils to write a few lines about themselves in the roles of actors and writers based on examples from Roald Dahl, Betsy Byers and Ann Frank.

20 In the infant class lessons have good pace and the teacher's high expectations ensure that pupils achieve well. In a very good mathematics lesson, with pupils from reception to Year 3, the teacher very effectively managed the oral work at the start of the lessons with questions that were matched to the different ages and abilities of the group. These motivated pupils well and reinforced their self-esteem, as each pupil was able to achieve success. In the junior class some good, exploratory questioning in science enabled the teacher to reinforce how to ensure a fair test as he demonstrated holding musical instruments in different ways and so 'deadening' the sound.

21 In some lessons in the junior class the pace of work is too slow and pupils do not complete tasks. For example, in a science lesson pupils worked in groups according to age to conduct their own experiments on how sounds are conveyed by vibration. A strength of the teaching in this lesson was the way the teacher encouraged pupils to carry out their own, independent investigations. However, the Year 6 pupils were required to find which material made the best ear defenders. This deteriorated into silly behaviour as pupils cut material to make earmuffs and spent so long 'dressing up' that very little work was done on setting out and recording their investigation and what they found out.

22 In many lessons teachers provide good opportunities for discussion. They encourage pupils to take responsibility for their learning and to plan their own work. For example, pupils in the juniors worked independently in the hall to write their own play-scripts. In both classes relationships are very good. Teachers know the pupils well and this enables pupils to feel comfortable when discussing ideas with others, secure in the knowledge that they will be listened to and their contributions valued. All pupils talk confidently to adults. For example, Year 3 pupils work well in the infant class for their English and mathematics lessons. Although not in this class for other lessons, they talked confidently with the teacher, reading aloud the stories they had written and listening to her useful feedback and guidance on what worked well and where work could be improved. Occasionally, in the junior class, too much time is spent on the teacher's introduction and class discussion. These interest many pupils but are often unplanned and anecdotal and not all pupils make sufficient progress given their earlier learning since they do not have time to complete their written tasks.

23 There are no agreed procedures for formally assessing pupils' attainment and progress throughout the school and procedures are different in each class. However, informal on-going assessment is satisfactory. Although individual teachers have tried to develop their own systems there has been no direction or lead given to ensure that good practice is shared or to make necessary changes to the curriculum. As a result the information gained is not used consistently well to support teachers' planning of work to match work closely to the needs of all pupils and this slows the progress of the higher attainers. The marking of work is inconsistent. When it is effective pupils are provided with feedback about their progress and given guidance on how to improve their work. However, this is not true of both classes. This results in work where pupils in the junior class continue to make the same careless mistakes and are not expected to refine their work.

24 The teachers' weekly and daily planning for lessons varies too much between the classes and this impacts on the rate of learning. It is good in the infant class where it ensures that work is matched very well to the needs of the different age groups in the class, even when Year 3 pupils are included. The part-time teacher who works with the junior class two days each week also plans carefully for the areas she teaches and takes account of the mixed ages in the class. However, the teacher's planning for the rest of the lessons in this class is often thin. There is great reliance on his very good knowledge of the pupils and years of experience in teaching. This is not always successful enough in ensuring that pupils work productively and complete sufficient work. This impacts on the standards they achieve. For example, many pupils in this class have done very little written work in science.

25 The teaching of literacy skills is mainly good. Reading is taught effectively and teachers share their love of books with pupils and promote their interest in reading. They choose good quality literature and ensure a wide range of interesting books so that pupils learn to enjoy different types of author. The teaching of writing is satisfactory and pupils have opportunities to write for a wide range of purposes such as plays, letters, stories and poems. However, although the teaching of handwriting ensures that pupils in the infant class learn to form letters well and write neatly there are marked differences between the teachers' expectations for the quality of written work. In the junior class much of the work is untidy, with many crossings out and careless spellings. This was an issue in the last inspection and there has been little improvement in ensuring that older pupils take a pride in their work. The teaching of numeracy is mainly sound. Pupils have some useful opportunities to apply these skills in science, design and technology and in ICT where they use spreadsheets to handle data.

26 Throughout the school, teachers use a good range of strategies that include whole class, group and individual work. Pupils are mainly well managed and discipline is mostly good. Pupils are encouraged to make choices of equipment and materials and to take responsibility for getting out and returning them. The school has few pupils with special educational needs and these are mainly well taught and they make good progress towards the targets set for them.

27 Teachers and support staff work hard to reinforce pupils' personal and social development throughout the curriculum. Relationships with pupils are very good. Staff encourage pupils' self-esteem through well-timed praise and feedback about their work. The classroom support assistants are well deployed and briefed. Their work complements that of the teaching staff. Throughout the school, teachers give homework that has a positive impact upon pupils' reading, spelling, and learning of number facts and in finding information to support topic work. However, the amount and frequency is inconsistent.

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

28 The last inspection report judged the school's curriculum to be broad and balanced in all subjects, including religious education. This is not the case now. Religious education and geography are not meeting statutory requirements for pupils in Years 3 to 6. There is no planned programme of personal, social and health education. Pupils are taught sex education as it occurs in the curriculum. During the inspection the local Community policeman visited the school, but this only a very recent initiative. Although the head teacher took this opportunity to teach older pupils about drugs awareness, this teaching is incidental and there is no planned programme to teach about healthy lifestyles or to raise pupils' awareness of issues such as the misuse of drugs.

29 Since the last inspection the key issue to produce schemes of work for all subjects has been overtaken by national initiatives. All subjects are now planned using national guidance to ensure that there is progression throughout the school. There are useful written policies for all subjects. The National Strategies for Literacy and Numeracy are implemented satisfactorily and form the basis for planning English and mathematics. There is no written guidance to support teaching the agreed syllabus for religious education, although the syllabus offers a wide range of learning opportunities. Most of the curriculum is taught through a two-year topic cycle to avoid repetition in mixed age classes.

30 There is a marked difference between the planning of the curriculum in the two classes. Pupils in the junior class do not build well enough on their previous learning in geography and religious education because of the absence of any clear overview of what they are expected to learn. Teachers' short term planning for lessons is also very variable. It is good in the infant class, and where the part-time teacher is teaching for two days a week in the junior class. However, other planning in this class is often thin and relies too much on this experienced teacher's very good knowledge of the pupils.

31 Children in the reception age group are taught in the infant class that has pupils from Years 1 and 2, and also Year 3 pupils for English and mathematics. The curriculum for these children is satisfactory, and activities are well matched to their needs and cover the areas of learning they should experience. These children make a smooth transfer to the National Curriculum, because they are already being taught alongside pupils in Years 1 and 2.

32 The school rightly spends a suitable amount of curriculum time on teaching English and mathematics. Literacy and numeracy skills are integrated well into other subjects. For example, younger pupils have made graphs showing how they travel to school. Older pupils have written letters to someone asking about their experiences of the Second World War. However, particularly in the junior class, there is insufficient time allocated to teaching science, religious education and geography. This is reflected in the low standards in these subjects.

33 The school enriches the curriculum well through extra-curricular activities, which include a wide range of visits to support the curriculum. The head teacher is keen to ensure that education has practical, and enjoyable, experiences. For example, some pupils preparing for a visit to the Roman Wall were baking their own bread and making shields. These experiences enrich learning well. Older pupils benefit from residential visits where they experience a range of outdoor activities. These promote independence and an understanding of the importance of teamwork.

34 Provision for pupils with special educational needs is good. All pupils have access to the full curriculum. Adult support is good, either in classes or by withdrawing pupils from lessons, for support in English and mathematics.

35 The school makes very good use of facilities and resources in the local community. For example, local rivers are used for studies in geography and local woods for nature walks. The rich local history is explored well. Pupils are involved in the local show, and a special sports day was held for the Queen's jubilee, involving the whole of the local community. Parents are pleased at the opportunities available for competitive sport and that their children have opportunities to meet pupils from other local schools. Pupils visit cities such as Newcastle so they can have brief taste of a very different way of life.

36 The school makes good provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Provision for spiritual and cultural development is satisfactory, and it is good for moral and social development.

37 The provision for pupil's spiritual development is satisfactory but is not always promoted as well as it could be across the whole curriculum. However, there are good opportunities for pupils to reflect on the beauty of their environment through visits out of school. Assemblies, and collective worship are characterised by a warm 'family' atmosphere, but there are few opportunities for thoughtful reflection. In one assembly, the head teacher asked pupils to think about those school children who had been killed in the recent Russian plane disaster, but there was insufficient time given for pupils to do so. Younger pupils were thoughtfully considering the importance of special things in a religious education lesson. They shared their ideas about how they would expect other people to treat things that are special to them.

38 Pupils' moral and social development is promoted well. Assemblies are well planned to have a clear moral message. All staff set good examples to pupils, which support the school's aims well. Teachers plan moral issues well into some lessons. For example, Year 6 pupils were writing play-scripts in the style of Aesop's Fables, to present to the rest of the school in an assembly. Teachers' organisation of lessons effectively encourages pupils of widely differing ages to work together and to share opinions and ideas. Pupils are expected to be independent and to be responsible for their own welfare. Year 6 pupils have responsibility for taking telephone messages. They always speak politely and are confident. At lunchtimes, pupils are very eager to clear away plates and cutlery. They put out, and tidy away, tables and chairs but not always with sufficient attention to the safety of others. The school's extra-curricular activities, which include a residential visit, and hosting a visit by pupils from a contrasting school environment, gives pupils rich opportunities to make friends beyond their own rural environment.

39 Cultural development is satisfactory overall. The provision for pupils to learn about their own cultural heritage is very good. This is particularly well emphasised through the history curriculum. Pupils know that many of their ancestors were Border Reivers because many of their family names derive from this time. They know the impact the Roman invasion had in their locality. However, pupils' awareness and understanding of the multicultural and multi-ethnic society in which they live is poor. These pupils do not meet people from different cultures and so their understanding is reliant on the curriculum. However, the school is not making effective use of curricular opportunities to widen pupils' understanding. There is only a limited amount of work done in religious education and geography and this means that there are missed opportunities to reinforce pupils' understanding about the richness and diversity of faiths and cultures through these subjects. In discussion, pupils in Year 6, had very confused ideas about the basic Jewish beliefs, and they did not think that any Hindus live in Britain.

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

40 The school is like a big family where relationships are warm and pupils and staff know each other extremely well. However, the school lacks many of the procedures expected in schools that are designed to ensure that pupils remain safe and secure. The school's health and safety policy does not meet statutory requirements and arrangements for risk assessments are unsatisfactory. Many health and safety and supervisory issues were identified during the inspection and only a small proportion was resolved. Minor accidents have not been recorded. Arrangements for child protection are satisfactory. Monitoring of personal development is very informal but this is satisfactory because the teachers know the pupils very well. Personal development is well supported as staff spend a lot of time talking to the pupils.

41 There are few formal arrangements to monitor and promote good attendance but those used work appropriately. However, the school has no formal registration procedures or procedures to follow up absences. Parents are not contacted if their children are absent; therefore there is no way of knowing if pupils have gone missing between leaving home and getting on the school bus.

42 The school's arrangements for promoting good behaviour are satisfactory. The school does not have a behaviour policy but relies on expectations and the strength of relationships between pupils and staff. At present, this usually results in good behaviour. The school has no written anti-bullying policy. However parents felt that bullying was dealt with successfully.

43 The school's arrangements for the monitoring and support of pupils' academic performance are erratic. There are clear procedures for formal assessments, including statutory and optional national tests. The results of these are used to inform planning for small group support in English and mathematics and to identify pupils with special educational needs. Classes are small, and the teachers' very good knowledge of individual pupils is used to make informal day-to-day assessments of pupils' progress. However, records of assessment are very variable between the two classes. In the infant class, the teacher regularly assesses how well pupils have learnt in all the subjects she teaches. Pupils' work is carefully marked with clear targets for improvements, particularly in English and mathematics. In this class, pupils are involved in setting their own targets. This well organised procedure is not followed in the junior class. Pupils are regularly given commercial test papers in mathematics, but assessments in English are not so regular. Targets set by pupils themselves are not aimed closely enough at making improvements in their work. For example, targets displayed in the classroom sometimes refer to things like 'keeping my football kit tidy'. In the infant class there are portfolios containing examples of pupils' work, but this record of progress is not maintained right through the school. The head teacher's philosophy is to keep all pupils' exercise books until they leave the school as evidence of their attainment and progress. Since much of this work is undated this has limited value.

44 The school development plan has identified the setting up of a system, using ICT to record individual pupil's progress, the results of statutory tests and the results of regular checks on pupils' reading ages. However, this is not yet fully in place.

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

45 Parents are pleased with the school. They are especially pleased with standards in the infant class. They are happy to report that their children like school and feel that their children are expected to work hard and make good progress. However, the inspection team found that although pupils make good progress in the infant class, progress in the junior class is just satisfactory. Parents are very comfortable about asking questions or trying to resolve problems; they feel that the head teacher is approachable. A significant number of parents are concerned about the amount of homework set; the inspection team found that the amount set was appropriate but there are inconsistencies in the amount and frequency. The findings of the inspection acknowledge that parents have little information about homework such as a homework diary or timetable. Most parents feel that behaviour is good and that their children are being helped to become mature and responsible. However, a small number of parents disagreed and thought that the school was not helping their child become mature and responsible. The school's philosophy is for pupils to manage their own behaviour and to develop self-discipline. This works for most pupils. However, a few pupils in the junior class become over exuberant and need more guidance, for instance when running through the hall or climbing unchecked over chairs to reach materials.

46 Parents are usually supportive of their children but some parents have heavy commitments to their farms and find it difficult to spare the time to hear their children read or support homework. There is a Parents and Friends Association who organise fundraising and social activities that are reasonably well supported. Some parents felt that the school could improve its partnership with parents. Although the school has run parents courses in the past there have been few recent opportunities for parents to come into school and work with their children. Parents were invited in to see the school's new computers in action but few took up the invitation.

47 Information for parents is unsatisfactory. There have been some improvements to the prospectus but the governors report to parents contains very little of the information which is required by law. For example, there is insufficient information about provision for pupils with special educational needs, facilities for the disabled, arrangements for school security, the action plan and the election of parent governors. The name and address of the chairman and clerk has not been published and there is no full financial statement. A small number of parents were concerned about the information they received about their children's progress. There are sufficient parents' nights but written reports do not meet statutory requirements. Reports often focus on children's attitudes and there is insufficient information about what children know understand and can do. The format varies for different year groups; National Curriculum levels are reported in subjects such as religious education where they are inappropriate but sometimes omitted in English, mathematics and science where they are appropriate.

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

48 The leadership and management of the school are broadly satisfactory but there are some weaknesses. The head teacher knows the pupils and their families well and works very hard to create and maintain the very positive ethos of the school. He is committed to the all round development of the pupils and he ensures that the atmosphere for learning encourages them to enjoy their time in school. He and the staff work well to provide a high level of support to the personal development of pupils and to provide a rich and varied range of experiences in and beyond the curriculum. Relationships within the school are very good and support pupils' personal development.

49 Other aspects of leadership and management are unsatisfactory. The school does not have sufficient procedures to ensure that pupils remain safe and secure. The school's health and safety policy is under review and does not currently meet statutory requirements; the governors' arrangements for risk assessments are unsatisfactory. The inspectors identified many health and safety and supervisory issues during the inspection and only a few were resolved.

50 The head teacher maintains a sound balance between his teaching commitment and his management role. This has improved with the employment of a teacher for two days a week to share the teaching in the junior class. The head teacher and the full time teacher working with the infant class share the management of the curriculum. This results in a very heavy workload in order to keep up to date with developments. There is no direct lead to ensure that planning the curriculum is consistent and national requirements are met. For example, the work in religious education and geography in the junior class does not meet statutory requirements since too little work is covered in sufficient depth. There is no whole school plan for the curriculum to ensure that there is a steady development of pupils' skills as they move through the school. It is understood that small size of the school makes the management and monitoring of teaching, learning and subject development difficult. Even so, there is too little check on pupils' work in the junior class and the good practice in the infant class has not been built upon.

51 The school has made mainly satisfactory progress in resolving the issues identified in the last inspection in 1998. The planning for the curriculum has improved with the adoption of national guidance for all subjects. Many useful initiatives concerning the planning for the curriculum and assessment of pupils' progress have been established in the infant class. However, these have not been adopted in the junior class to ensure whole-school procedures that enable shared approaches throughout the school. As a result, there is great variability in teaching and learning between the two classes. There has been some improvement in the range of information included in the prospectus and the governors' annual report to parents, but statutory requirements are still not fully met in these or in pupils' annual written reports. The school development plan is better than it was but is still a thin document that contains insufficient detail on how priorities will be achieved and so does not provide a useful framework for improving the school. The governors' role has improved and they are supportive of the school but they are not fully aware of the areas where the school needs to improve.

52 The school provides equal access to all activities. However, in the junior class, which contains pupils from Years 3 to 6, work is often presented to all pupils, irrespective of their age and ability. Although the small numbers in the class enable teachers to extend pupils' learning by skilful questioning this does not sufficiently extend the work of the more able. Younger pupils in the class sometimes find concepts too difficult and so there is some underachievement for pupils in each age group. The school has few pupils with special educational needs, and these are at an early stage of need. Provision is good and they are supported well by the teaching assistant who also provides good additional literacy support for the pupils who need it.

53 The school has sufficient teaching and support staff for the numbers and age ranges taught. Performance management is used appropriately to identify staff training needs and staff attend a useful range of in-service courses. The school has had many years of financial constraint and governors have wisely maintained the number of teachers to keep two classes. Finances are carefully managed and recent improvements in the funding allocated to the school mean that it is beginning to improve resources and accommodation. Governors manage the budget carefully and work hard to ensure that the school gets best value for the supplies and services it buys. The school provides satisfactory value for money.

54 Accommodation is satisfactory. There is sufficient space in both classrooms to teach effectively. The school has a good-sized hall and teachers make good use of this space, using it for activities such as role-play or technology. The school grounds are spacious and have the capacity to be extremely pleasant. Unfortunately, they have not been developed. The playground is bare and there is no seating or markings, which might encourage pupils to take part in activities other than football.

55 Resources are satisfactory overall. There has been very little money available until very recently to provide new, or to renew, resources. Resources for ICT are very good, particularly for the small number of pupils in the school. Resources for most subjects are satisfactory, and English resources are supported well by the regular visits to the school of the mobile library. Visits into the locality support and enrich some subjects, particularly history. Resources are barely satisfactory for physical education but the school does have its own swimming pool, which is used regularly in the summer months. This makes a good impact on pupils' standards in swimming. There are very few resources to support teaching religious education, particularly teaching about faiths other than Christianity. Resources for music are barely satisfactory because too many need replacing. There are only a few children in the reception age group but they have little equipment for outdoor play and what is available is shabby and unattractive. Resources are not well organised around the school. They are pushed into cupboards or the stock cupboard in a haphazard manner, and there are no subject inventories to alert staff to what resources are available.

## WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

56 In order to raise standards further and to improve the quality of the education provided, the head teacher, staff and governors should:

1. Strengthen the leadership and management of the school by;
  - ensuring that the health and safety issues identified during the inspection are resolved as a matter of priority;
  - improving the development plan to ensure that it more effectively identifies the school's priorities to enable them to be implemented, supported, and monitored;
  - ensuring that the governors' annual report to parents and those for pupils' annual reports are fully met;
  - ensuring that the governing body have a greater awareness and involvement in all aspects of the work of the school.  
(Paragraphs 14, 38, 40, 47, 49, 50 and 51)
  
2. Improve teaching, learning and standards in the junior class by: -
  - (a.) Improving standards in science, religious education and geography in this class through;
    - improving the presentation and ordering of work in science so that pupils know what they have achieved;
    - ensuring pupils complete their work and use their writing skills to set out their own findings to experiments and investigations;
    - planning and teaching the full range of requirements of the Agreed Syllabus in religious education;
    - ensuring that there is sufficient work done in geography to meet statutory requirements;
    - ensuring that planned activities are matched appropriately to pupils' abilities and build progressively on previous learning;
    - ensuring that pupils produce sufficient written work and that its quality is monitored regularly.  
(Paragraphs 3, 9, 10, 11, 12, 21, 23, 28, 29, 32, 91, 93, 96, 111, 115, 128 and 129)
  
  - (b.) Establishing whole school procedures for planning the curriculum and assessing pupils' progress that: -
    - build on the good practice in the infant class to ensure that there is shared approach to planning the curriculum;
    - ensure that weekly and daily planning in the junior class clearly identifies what pupils are expected to learn and how their skills will be developed;
    - ensure that planning enables work to build on what pupils have already learned;
    - develop shared approaches to assessment to ensure work is well matched to the abilities of all pupils in the mixed age junior class;
    - ensure that the day-to-day assessment of pupils' progress in lessons is used to plan work that builds on their previous learning.  
(Paragraphs 19, 23, 24, 30, 32, 43, 50, 52, 81, 83, 89, 99, 111 and 115)
  
  - (c.) Improving pupils' handwriting and the presentation and setting out of written work in the junior class.  
(Paragraphs 7, 10, 23, 25, 79, 132)

## PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

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

Number of lessons observed	12
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	12

### *Summary of teaching observed during the inspection*

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Number	0	2	6	4	0	0	0
Percentage	0	17	50	33	0	0	0

*The table gives the number and percentage of lessons observed in each of the seven categories used to make judgements about teaching. Care should be taken when interpreting these percentages as each lesson represents more than 8 percentage points*

### *Information about the school's pupils*

<b>Pupils on the school's roll</b>	YR – Y6
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	31
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	1

*FTE means full-time equivalent.*

<b>Special educational needs</b>	YR – Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	0
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	4

<b>English as an additional language</b>	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	0

<b>Pupil mobility in the last school year</b>	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	1
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	2

### *Attendance*

#### **Authorised absence**

	%
School data	8.8

#### **Unauthorised absence**

	%
School data	0.0

National comparative data	5.6
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National comparative data	0.5
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*Both tables give the percentage of half days (sessions) missed through absence for the latest complete reporting year.*

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

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2001			

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys			
	Girls			
	Total			
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	100% (71%)	100% (71%)	100% (100%)
	National	84% (83%)	86% (84%)	91% (90%)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys			
	Girls			
	Total			
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	100% (71%)	100% (100%)	100% (100%)
	National	85% (84%)	89% (88%)	89% (88%)

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

**Note: the small number taking the tests make comparisons unreliable.**

### 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
	2001			

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	n/a	n/a	n/a
	Girls			
	Total			
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	100% (75%)	100% (50%)	100% (75%)
	National	75% (75%)	71% (72%)	87% (85%)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	n/a	n/a	n/a
	Girls			
	Total			
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	100% (75%)	100% (75%)	100% (100%)
	National	72% (70%)	74% (72%)	82% (79%)

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

**Note: the small number taking the tests make comparisons unreliable.**

### ***Ethnic background of pupils***

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	0
Black – African heritage	0
Black – other	0
Indian	0
Pakistani	0
Bangladeshi	0
Chinese	0
White	28
Any other minority ethnic group	0

*This table refers to pupils of compulsory school age only.*

### ***Exclusions in the last school year***

	Fixed period	Permanent
Black – Caribbean heritage	0	0
Black – African heritage	0	0
Black – other	0	0
Indian	0	0
Pakistani	0	0
Bangladeshi	0	0
Chinese	0	0
White	0	0
Other minority ethnic groups	0	0

*This table gives the number of exclusions of pupils of compulsory school age, which may be different from the number of pupils excluded.*

### ***Teachers and classes***

#### **Qualified teachers and classes: YR – Y6**

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	2.4
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	12.9
Average class size	15.5

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

Total number of education support staff	2
Total aggregate hours worked per week	17

*FTE means full-time equivalent.*

### ***Financial information***

Financial year	2001-2002
	£
Total income	142,752
Total expenditure	124,049
Expenditure per pupil	4,002
Balance brought forward from previous year	-5,084
Balance carried forward to next year	13,619

### ***Recruitment of teachers***

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	0
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	0
Total number of vacant teaching posts (FTE)	0
Number of vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of a term or more (FTE)	0.4
Number of unfilled vacancies or vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of less than one term (FTE)	0

*FTE means full-time equivalent.*

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

### **Questionnaire return rate**

Number of questionnaires sent out	32
Number of questionnaires returned	22

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

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	50	41	9	0	0
My child is making good progress in school.	55	41	5	0	0
Behaviour in the school is good.	45	41	9	0	5
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	36	36	23	0	5
The teaching is good.	41	50	9	0	0
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	50	36	14	0	0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	68	32	0	0	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	64	32	5	0	0
The school works closely with parents.	45	41	14	0	0
The school is well led and managed.	55	41	14	0	5
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	45	36	14	0	5
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	55	32	5	5	5

## **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**

57 The school's provision for children in the foundation stage reception classes is satisfactory. There are three children of reception age and they are taught in a class containing reception, Year 1 and Year 2 pupils, with Year 3 pupils joining the class each day for English and mathematics. The teacher manages very well the planning and organisation to meet the different ages and abilities of all pupils in the class. The reception children are usually part of the whole class group and then work on their own tasks, helped either by a classroom support assistant or the teacher. On other occasions the children are briefed on what to do and work independently. The teacher has a good understanding of the learning needs of this age group and plans for them to have opportunities for practical experiences across all the areas of learning deemed suitable for the foundation stage. However, they do not have sufficient opportunities for first-hand learning through exploration and investigation to underpin work in all areas of learning. This reflects the limited resources available, particularly for outdoor play. The school has had very little flexibility in its budget until very recently and much of the equipment for practical experiences and investigative opportunities have been well used and are shabby.

58 The attainment of children on entry to school varies year on year but the current intake started school with communication, language, literacy and mathematical skills that were typical for their age. They are confident and mature and personal and social skills are sound and many children have had limited opportunities to play with other children because of the isolated area in which they live. However, most children have experience of some pre-school provision.

59 Teaching is often good and children achieve well and make good progress. The children benefit from the carefully planned literacy and numeracy sessions where they work with an adult. Classroom support assistants were deployed well and worked well with children to support their learning and this enabled them to make good progress in the lessons. The children are eager to learn and often achieve well when working with an adult. In the most successful lessons the children's learning was extended well by well-timed intervention and questioning to identify and reinforce their learning. The teacher's planning is comprehensive and incorporates the national guidance for the foundation stage.

60 The induction of children into the school works well and includes visits before they start school. There are some links with pre-school groups and most children are well prepared for entry to school. As a result, they settle in very quickly.

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

61 The children start school with broadly satisfactory personal, social and emotional development. They are often mature and have had some useful experiences to support their learning. Apart from their pre-school nurseries or playgroups, many of the children from outlying farms have had few opportunities to mix with other children before starting school and many have been with adults for much of their time. This area of learning is promoted well by all staff and the good teaching ensures that the children gain in confidence and feel comfortable to express their ideas and feelings. Children make good progress in their personal and social development; they exceed the learning goals expected for their age by the end of the reception year. They enjoy coming to school and are eager to learn. They settle well into the routines of their classrooms and relate well to each other. The children are relaxed and happy, and are secure in their class base and move confidently around the school. They achieve well because all staff give priority to developing the children's confidence in a range of

individual, small group and whole class activities. Most children play and work well together and they are learning to co-operate and share. Relationships are very warm and supportive and the children integrate well with the older pupils in the class who often help and encourage them.

62 The teacher keeps good records of the personal, social and emotional development of individual children and these are used effectively to support those that are less confident. The teacher forges good links with parents and this helps children settle well in school.

63 The children are learning to take turns and, for example, happily help each other when they work on the computers. They work together and with older pupils in the class to share activities. For example, in role-play the children responded well when Year 3 pupils shared their work in the 'hairdressing salon'. Transition to Year 1 is seamless because of the shared age ranges in the class and by the end of the reception year the children show good levels of independence and concentration when working individually or with others. The class is managed and this ensures that behaviour is good. Children quickly learn from the examples of the older pupils in the class. Staff use stories and incidents as they arise to teach children the difference between right and wrong. The teacher gives a clear priority to children's personal, social and emotional development through all activities. For example, in a well-taught music lesson, she promoted opportunities for children to talk about the feelings aroused by certain sounds. They suggested that the music played represented different emotions and indicated that higher pitch and faster pulse in music was 'happy' and the lower pitch and slow beat was 'sadder'.

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

64 Teaching is good in this area of learning and so children achieve well; by the end of the reception year their attainment is typical of what is expected for their age and they are well prepared for work in Year 1. The teacher rightly sets a high priority on the development of early speaking, listening, reading and writing skills. Staff provide good opportunities for children to practise their speaking and listening within all activities. The children listen carefully and their speaking skills are good. Role-play provides useful opportunities to promote children's speaking and listening skills and they use experiences from outside of school to act out different situations. The role-play area was set up as hairdressing shop 'Snips', and children used the 'telephone' to make appointments and questioned customers about what they wanted to have done to their hair. 'I think it should be spiky' said one and demonstrated how this might look!

65 The children enjoy listening to stories and are eager to share books with each other and with adults. Staff read stories well and this motivates the children to join in. The children have a good recall of the traditional stories they hear in their literacy lessons. For example, the teacher shared the story of 'The three Billy Goats Gruff' with the whole mixed age class and the reception children listened carefully to others as they discussed the different characters in the story. This version of the well-known story was chosen well to appeal to all age groups in the class and the richness of the language and imaginative illustrations were used to good effect to encourage the reception children to take a full part in discussion. The children were engrossed in the story and responded well to the teacher's changes of voice to match the characters. Later, when working on group tasks they had a good recall of the story and cut out and accurately sequenced pictures to make their own folding books. As they worked, the children took the role of different characters, copying the expression they had heard their teacher use.

66 The classroom support assistants are deployed well to support the children's language skills. In a well-organised group session, the classroom support assistant led discussion of an illustration of the large 'Billy Goat Gruff' who had been portrayed as a 'biker' in leather jacket, sunglasses and helmet. The children volunteered a good range of descriptive words such as 'rough hair', massive hooves' and 'shiny leather jacket'. Children make good progress in learning their letter sounds to identify words beginning or ending with 'ch', 'sh' or 'th' sounds. They volunteered a good range of words and the pace of the lesson was good as they moved on to writing the last sound they could hear

in words such as 'bed'. The children each had a different word and accurately wrote the final sound of 'wool', 'pin' and 'leg'. The children recognise their own names and recognise simple sentences in their reading books. They blend letter sounds to read simple sentences and recognise a good range of commonly used words.

67 The children are developing sound writing skills. Initially, children try to write simple sentences and their writing includes recognisable letters. The teaching of writing is good and they make good progress over time; work shows improved letter formation. They accurately spell commonly used three-letter words and try sensible alternatives of words they do not know. Children write simple sentences to match their pictures, for example 'I went to the park', and 'I can see a dog'. The children are beginning to write simple sentences to make their own stories or retell those they have heard. They are well on target to reach the standards expected for their age in early reading and writing by the end of the foundation stage.

### **Mathematical development**

68 The children are working well within the expectations for their age in the mathematical area of learning. Teaching is good and the teacher plans suitable activities for work in groups to meet the needs of the different age groups in the class. Learning is sufficiently well managed to ensure that the reception children persevere with their tasks when they are working independently. The work is planned to take account of the National Numeracy Strategy. All the pupils joined in the whole class oral activity and the teacher's questions were well matched to the different ages and abilities in the class. The children in the reception class can count in tens accurately from 10 to 100.

69 In a good lesson on 'time', the teacher's very clear instructions and good use of questioning to check on what the children understood ensured that the children were able to work independently. The children were able to look at pictures of different activities that happen in a day and sequence them in the correct order. For example, they ordered correctly pictures of a child getting up, getting washed and dressed, eating breakfast and going to school. The children learn to form numbers correctly through a range of practical tasks and can produce well-formed numbers from one to ten, with only a few reversals on five and three. They can complete simple addition and subtraction using numbers to 20 and make good progress in the session. The children have good attitudes to their work and are very supportive of each other. For example, one child sequenced her pictures and another said 'That's lovely'.

70 The children have a sound understanding of terms such as 'more than' or 'less than'. They are confident in matching ten numbers to ten objects. The children identify and colour two-dimensional shapes and recognise squares, circles, triangles and oblongs. The children in the reception class understand terminology such as 'heaviest/lightest', and gain some knowledge of capacity through practical experiences, but there are too few planned opportunities to extend and challenge the children to experiment with sand and water, although they can choose to use these areas after completing other work. Children learn the properties of simple shapes through building models, making pictures with paper shapes and using jigsaws.

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

71 The children have sound knowledge and understanding of the world about them, particularly the natural world of their own rural farming community. They understand that some things change over time. For example the children can identify differences in what they can do now and when they were babies. They develop sound skills to underpin work in geography and make observations of the weather and are beginning to know the seasons.

72 In the class topic on materials the children have found objects made of wood, metal and plastic in the classroom. They build on their earlier work to find transparent, rough, smooth and flexible objects. They are beginning to identify when push and pull forces are used in the home, for example, they know we pull light cords, pull curtains and push and pull doors. Much of their work is similar to that done by Year 1 pupils but the reception children work at their own level and worksheets are matched well to their abilities. However, the lack of resources for this age group means that the opportunities for independent, practical exploration to support their early learning in science are limited. The children's computer skills are developing well. They use the keys and the mouse to operate cursors in simple programs that enable them to practise counting and matching skills. The older pupils in the class help the reception children as they work in pairs. The children's achievement in these areas of learning is satisfactory and by Year 1 many children are likely to have sufficient knowledge of the world about them to achieve standards expected for their age.

### **Physical development**

73 The children have some opportunities to explore a range of activities in outdoor play, although they have few resources such as wheeled toys or other equipment for imaginative play. With the rest of the Year 1 and 2 pupils in the class they have regular time for physical activities in the hall. These help them to make good progress in gaining co-ordination and to develop social skills as they play circle games, dance, and learn ball skills. The children in the reception group quickly develop confidence in the large space of the hall and have good opportunities, mainly in the summer term, to learn to swim in the school's on-site pool. This enables them to gain confidence in water and to be aware of water safety. In music, the children moved in time to the tunes and responded to directions such as 'forward' and 'backwards'. The children develop good manipulative skills in practical situations to make models using construction kits, clay or play dough. They show good dexterity as they make pictures and collages. They learn effectively by watching older pupils in the class and meet the learning goals identified for their age by the end of the reception year.

### **Creative development**

74 By the time they reach the end of the reception year, the children's attainments in creative development are well on target to match those expected for the end of the foundation stage. Children are enthusiastic and keen to take part. There are opportunities for them to regularly paint, although this activity is not available on a daily basis. They learn to mix colours and produce pictures to which they add text. They have worked with others in the class to make a mobile of the seasons. The children were involved in the school visit to Maryport and contributed imaginatively to make a collage to record their visit. They used a wide range of materials including paper, wood, transparent plastic, foil and wool to re-create the textures and colours found at the seaside. In a well-planned and resourced art and design lesson the children gained experience of the texture of clay and began to note the changes as it dried out. They showed good manipulative skills as they attempted to etch a shape in the clay to create a mould. The teacher's clear explanation ensured that the children understood how the mould would be used but they found it difficult to cut into the clay without cutting through to the board below. The children made their moulds and left them to dry out, gaining great enjoyment in cutting and rolling the rest of the clay in strips; 'Look I'm making sea-horses and snakes' said one.

75 Children regularly experience singing activities; they memorise counting and action songs and learn to sing them tunefully. In a very well taught music lesson, the teacher's skilful management of the three different year groups in the class enabled all to achieve well in relation to their age and ability. The reception children joined enthusiastically in the range of singing activities and applauded voluntarily when the class sang correctly. They have a good understanding of musical terms and

responded quickly to the teacher's direction, 'We are going say the poem now and use our hands to pick up the pulse'.

## ENGLISH

76 By the end of Years 2 and 6 pupils' attainment in English matches the levels expected for their ages. They make satisfactory progress through the school. Pupils with special educational needs, and those identified for specific support in literacy are supported well. They make good progress.

77 In Years 1 and 2, pupils listen carefully to instructions. When role-playing the story 'The Three Billy Goats' Gruff', they spoke confidently and were very expressive, particularly when taking the part of the troll. Pupils include appropriate detail when talking about their work. In Years 3 to 6, pupils develop their ideas well to describe their opinions. They listen well to teachers' questions, and they are eager to answer. In Year 6, pupils talk sensibly about their work. For example, when talking about what they read, one pupil said, 'I like this book because it is an autobiography of a famous football coach'. These pupils listened well to each other, when discussing how they were going to present their own assemblies. They were confident when performing their own play scripts in front of the rest of the school.

78 The teaching of literacy skills is mainly good. Reading is taught well and teachers share their enthusiasm for books and this encourages pupils to want to read. By the end of Year 2, pupils read with appropriate expression and understanding. They take care when reading words that sound the same but have different meanings, such as 'by' and 'buy'. By the time they reach the end of Year 6, pupils are confident readers. They know how to get information from books, and understand the purpose of 'index' and 'glossary' pages. When these pupils made their own booklets, they included chapters and a brief summary about the author, as well as a synopsis of the content on the back page. This shows their understanding of the structure of books.

79 The teaching of writing is satisfactory and by the end of Year 2, pupils' develop their ideas in sentences well, sometimes using capital letters and full stops. They have written their own poems, which are set out correctly with a capital letter at the start of each line. Handwriting is of a consistent size and formed accurately, and pupils are beginning to make some letter joins. Pupils in Years 3 to 6 make steady progress in using punctuation and writing for different purposes. The presentation of their written work, however, remains unsatisfactory, as was reported in the last inspection. Pupils in the junior class often cross out carelessly and handwriting is not consistent. It is poor in many exercise books, but pupils do produce good handwriting in practice and when they redraft their work. They often write using pencils, or pens, or even coloured pens. The covers of exercise books are often covered with scribble and scrawled pictures.

80 By the end of Year 6, pupils' practise using a range of punctuation. They use speech marks and question marks, and correctly set out writing play scripts. Punctuation is often used well for effect. For example, when writing poetry in the style of W.H. Auden's 'Night Mail', one pupil wrote 'I'm off to school on the bus. What a lot of fuss!' However, in other writing, sentences are often too long because commas are used where there should be full stops. Pupils use vocabulary well to make an impact at the start of their writing sometimes starting by asking a question, or using phrases such as 'How awful it was ....'. Spelling is careless, with more able pupils spelling 'knowhere' for 'nowhere' and 'buisness' for 'business'. Grammar is often incorrect. For example, pupils write phrases such as 'maybe could have been' and 'had fell through'. Less able pupils do not consistently start sentences with capital letters.

81 Teaching is satisfactory overall, but is better in the infant class. This is because pupils' work is marked well with good suggestions for improvement, such as 'perhaps you could use animals or creatures rather than stuff'. Targets are also given to pupils to improve their work. In both classes, teachers manage pupils well. Teachers use questions well to promote learning. A major strength of the teaching in these two mixed age classes is the organisation of lessons. Teachers ensure that they support individual pupils very well. This ensures all the pupils make satisfactory progress in their learning. The classroom support assistant works well with small groups of pupils and this helps them to achieve well. ICT is planned well; in both classes, pupils use computers to support their writing tasks. However, in the junior class, planning for lessons is very brief. There is too much reliance on the teacher's long teaching experience and very good knowledge of the pupils. In this class the teachers' expectations of the presentation of pupils' work are too low. As a result, pupils rush their writing tasks, making too many grammatical mistakes and spelling errors.

82 Pupils behave well. They are interested in lessons and confidently ask questions because of the very good relationships with their teachers. They are eager to answer questions and support each other in their work. In the junior class, they enjoyed the end part of the literacy lesson where they all vied with each other to spell correctly the words they had been practicing, such as 'mission' and 'imagination'. One pupil readily took over as 'teacher' when the head teacher left the room to answer a telephone call, and pupils carried on working on this activity until he returned.

83 The small size of the school means that the management of all subjects is shared by the two full time teachers. This results in a heavy workload and makes any monitoring of the subject difficult. Although the management of English is broadly satisfactory there is too much variance in the quality of planning between teachers. A part-time teacher is now teaching for two days a week in the head teacher's class. She plans thoroughly, following the format of the literacy strategy, as does the teacher in the class with younger pupils. There is a need to have a more consistent planning format for teaching English throughout the school, to ensure that all the pupils are consistently building on what they have previously learnt.

## **MATHEMATICS**

84 The school has made satisfactory progress since the last inspection. Standards are similar and the quality of teaching has been maintained. By the end of Year 6 pupils achieve the standards expected for their ages all aspects of mathematics. At the end of Year 2, pupils achieve well and attain the standards expected of seven year olds.

85 The quality of teaching is at least satisfactory with some good teaching in both classes. This promotes positive attitudes among pupils and they enjoy their learning. In both classes, a strength in teaching is the good range of practical activities and opportunities to work on real-life problems. Teachers' planning varies and is detailed in the infant class and clearly identifies what each year group will learn. In the junior class, planning by the full time teacher is often for the whole class but each pupil is supported individually in lessons and the more able presented with more challenging questions. The part-time teacher in this class plans in detail to provide different activities within the lesson theme to match the age and ability of the different year groups in the class. For example, in a well taught lesson pupils worked on a range of activities that reinforced and developed their measuring skills. In one well resourced activity, pupils made fruit 'cocktails' and, although pupils from Years 4, 5 and 6 all measured ingredients and mixed their 'cocktails', the work increased in challenge since the recipe was changed. For example, Year 4 pupils worked out and measured ingredients to create a 'cocktail' for four people, in Year 5 they worked out the amounts for six people and by Year 6 pupils were challenged well to calculate the ingredients for 13.

86 Teachers make clear exactly what pupils need to learn so that they understand the purpose of activities. They use mathematical vocabulary well throughout lessons and so pupils understand and confidently use the terms. Teachers explain processes clearly to pupils and provide good support for them, including those with special educational needs. Skilful questioning enables pupils to explain methods of computation and helps them to explore their own reasoning. For example, the infant class has reception, Year 1 and Year 2 pupils and also contains Year 3 pupils for their mathematics lessons, and yet the teacher keeps all pupils engaged in the whole class oral sessions at the beginning of each lesson. Questions are effectively matched to the needs of each pupil in this mixed age class and enable each to achieve well. The teacher plans very well so that group tasks are well matched to the needs of each age group and she works well to support and extend the thinking of each group. In a very good lesson, pupils were motivated well because the problems they worked on were related to their own experiences. For example, Year 2 pupils were given real holiday destinations and flight times and successfully calculated check-in times before each given time. Year 3 pupils accurately used calendar pages to work out the days on which birthdays would fall in any given year. The teacher's good, probing questions enabled her to assess what pupils understood and enabled her to support individuals and groups and move on their learning.

87 The teaching of numeracy is sound and skills are taught and reinforced appropriately in other subjects. Pupils used their measuring skills when baking bread for their meal on a trip to Hadrian's Wall and made careful measurements in design and technology when making Roman shields. Pupils have a few opportunities to use their numeracy skills in science when they create and read graphs and tables to show their findings. Teachers make good use of ICT to enable pupils to practise skills such as matching shapes and solving numbers problems in the infant class and handling data in spreadsheets in the juniors.

88 By the time pupils transfer to secondary school they show good levels of attainment in number with lower attaining pupils able to complete calculations involving all four operations. They know about fractions and negative numbers when used in temperature and they can name types of angles such as acute and obtuse as well as converting weights and other measures from grams to kilograms and centimetres to metres. The skills of problem solving and the use of relationships in shape, space and measure are developed satisfactorily. Throughout the school pupils are encouraged to talk about the methods they use to solve problems and do this confidently. The oral sessions at the start of lessons are used effectively and pupils have good recall of number facts.

89 Teachers analyse pupils' performance as they move through the school and set realistic targets for each year group. In the infant class the teacher sets useful and realistic targets for each pupil. In this class the teacher uses day-to-day checks on pupils' progress in lessons to modify their next pieces of work. This is not done well in the junior class where the teacher mainly relies on extending each pupil's learning through questioning and assessment of what individual pupils can do, and it is not used as effectively to plan the next pieces of work and targets set for individual pupils rarely focus on mathematical learning.

90 The two full time teachers manage the subject satisfactorily. Although there is no formal monitoring of teaching and learning, in a school of this size there are many useful informal opportunities. However, there is not enough regular checking of pupils' work in books and the dating and setting out of work is not as good as it could be in the juniors.

## **SCIENCE**

91 Only one science lesson was seen and so judgements are based on work seen, and also on teachers' planning and records and on pupils' previous work over the past school year. The standards

at the end of Year 2 have been maintained since the last inspection but have dropped at the end of Year 6. The pupils make sound progress in their learning in the infant class that contains Years 1 and 2, but progress is uneven in the junior class with pupils from Years 3 to 6 and standards are below those expected for 11 year olds.

92 No lessons were seen in the infant class but the teacher's planning, records, pupils' past work in books and on display indicate that teaching is at least satisfactory in this class and standards are at the level expected of pupils by the end of Year 2. Pupils have investigated the properties of materials and accurately sorted examples of objects made from wood, metal, plastic, glass and paper. They have a good understanding of the particular properties of these materials and know which is best fit for different purposes. They make sensible choices and explain them well, 'I chose plastic because I have a slide at home and the water won't go through'. Pupils have a secure understanding of the best conditions for growing plants and have conducted their own experiments to grow cress under different conditions. One pupil placed a tray in sunlight and another in shade and predicted 'I think the light will make it grow'. By the end of Year 2, most pupils understand and use appropriate scientific terms and can group foods we eat under headings such as seeds, roots, leaves and stems. They are beginning to understand the need for a fair test. Although pupils record many of their findings by completing worksheets, they also used simple tables to record their observations of animals around the school and to record different groups of materials. The teacher makes good use of the immediate environment of the school to enable pupils to carry out first-hand observations.

93 The limited time given to ensuring pupils completed their recording of their investigations is one of several factors that contribute to the lower standards in the junior class. Pupils' written work is often scrappy and untidy; much work is undated and is often unfinished. Since not all the work is marked this has not been fed back to pupils as points for improvement. The amount of completed work is thin and few pupils write about their findings in their own words. They do not always set work out scientifically; many do not predict what will happen in an investigation or record what they did and found out. In many cases pupils copy the teachers' script from the board. The work is often presented to all pupils and those in Year 6 all do the same work, irrespective of their ability. Much of the pupils' written work is at a level below that expected for their age, and does not reflect their earlier good grounding in science.

94 By the end of Year 6, pupils have a satisfactory understanding of the need for a fair test and most know how to make sure a test is fair. They know the differences between man-made and natural materials and have conducted tests to see which substances dissolve in water. However, few completed their written work and work was not set out scientifically to show their predictions, what they did and what they found out. A few recall their work on evaporation but cannot explain what happened. Pupils know how to make an electrical circuit and can introduce a switch to break the circuit. In work with a student they made simple burglar alarms and learned how to apply learning in science to real-life situations. In their work on light, pupils describe accurately different sources of light and have copied down and can explain terms such as 'translucent', 'opaque' and 'transparent' and have used these terms as headings to group objects they have found. Pupils recalled enthusiastically their work on 'light' when they worked outside and drew round their friends' shadows at different times of the day. They know that the position of the sun changes the length of the shadow, but written diagrams are poorly presented and often not labelled to show what was learned.

95 They identify accurately the characteristics of different animal groups but work is not challenging. In work on forces they conduct investigations to show the force of air, but findings are not well written up. Year 6 pupils have a sound knowledge of the correct scientific names for parts of the body and learn to draw and label accurately the human eye.

96 Teaching is satisfactory in the junior class and a strength is in the good, exploratory questioning that enables the teacher to move on pupils' learning. For example, pupils were learning about sound and the teacher posed probing questions to ensure pupils knew how to make an instrument louder and change pitch. The teacher encourages pupils to be independent and make choices of equipment and materials and most pupils in the mixed age class respond well to these opportunities. Later in the lesson, pupils worked on group tasks and those in Year 6 experimented to find which materials would make good ear protectors and keep out sound. They were clear about the task but soon became noisy and wasted time trying on hats and cutting random bits of fabric to make ear muffs. Only the good intervention by the teacher encouraged them to think about testing what they had made and how the test could be made fair. By the end of the lesson pupils realised the need to keep the protectors close to the ear to block out sound. The pace of the lesson was slow; too much time was wasted and few pupils got round to completing a sheet to record their findings.

97 Pupils have some opportunities to use their numeracy skills as they measure liquids, complete simple tables or create graphs to show their findings. These opportunities are few and pupils do not use more sophisticated graphs to present their work. Literacy skills are not applied well and there are many instances where written work is unfinished because pupils have run out of time. Pupils do not use skills learned in literacy to write up experiments correctly in their own words. Handwriting is often untidy, simple words spelled wrongly and capitals letters are used for ordinary words in the middle of sentences. Pupils use ICT well and access CD-ROMs and the Internet to find information and occasionally build up their own data on a particular topic. However, they do not use computers and associated sensors to monitor experiments.

98 Teachers make good use of the environment around and beyond the school and this gives useful opportunities for first-hand experiences to support learning. There are good links between subjects such as design and technology, where pupils designed and made ear protectors and made a periscope following their work on light.

99 The planning and assessment of work varies in quality throughout the school. At best it is detailed and identifies the skills pupils will learn and how it will be taught. Planning for Years 3 to 6 is very thin and the work is not always closely matched to pupils' previous attainment. This means that more able pupils are not challenged sufficiently. Pupils' attainment at 11 does not reflect their earlier good progress and standards are not high enough.

100 The two-year cycle of topics means that pupils in the mixed age classes do not repeat the same work, but there is little difference in work offered to pupils of different attainments in the junior class and this has a negative effect on the acquisition of skills, knowledge and understanding of higher attaining pupils in particular. There is little advanced work to challenge them and written work does not reflect the depth needed for pupils at the end of Year 6.

101 The teachers manage the curriculum between them and so it is difficult to ensure sufficient monitoring of teaching and learning or the curriculum. It is difficult to manage curriculum co-ordination in a small school, but at present the school has not explored the full range of possible ways to check on pupils' work and ensure effective development in this subject. There is some analysis of test results and the curriculum is organised and planned by individual teachers. The adoption of national guidance provides a sound framework on which to build teaching and learning.

## **ART AND DESIGN**

102 Only one art and design lesson was seen, but evidence was available from teachers' planning, displays of pupils' work and samples of work from every pupil in the school. Pupils make

satisfactory progress in art and design. They are given suitable opportunities to develop their skills and work with a range of materials and tools. By the end of Year 2 and Year 6 pupils attain standards that are typical for their age.

103 Teaching is at least satisfactory and enables pupils to achieve well, whatever their ability. By the end of Year 2, pupils choose from a variety of materials to weave and make collages. They use a needle and threads to sew colourful patterns. Their observational drawings of flowers show good attention to detail. When pupils were rolling and cutting out clay shapes to wrap around cylinders to make tree trunks, they were engrossed and worked carefully using water to smooth out cracks in the clay. Their finished work was imaginative and showed a sound awareness of how to handle clay to get the best results. By the end of Year 6, pupils produce well-observed pencil portraits of themselves from digital camera photographs. They use strong lines and pencil shading is used well. Many pupils show a developing awareness of perspective in their art and design work. Pupils were working on a mermaid sculpture, using wire, cardboard and paper and this showed a sound understanding of the use of different materials to create an effect.

104 Teachers make good use of art and design in other subjects. For example, pupils in the junior class have painted a lively mural showing the historical battle of the Border Reivers, and they have painted replicas of local family crests.

105 Resources are satisfactory, although some tools are in need of renewal such as paintbrushes and wax crayons. The subject is managed well by one teacher who teaches art throughout the school. She regularly makes assessments of individual pupil's progress. This ensures that pupils are building well on their previous knowledge, understanding and skills.

## **DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY**

106 During the inspection no design and technology lessons were observed although there was work linked to these areas in science, mathematics and art. Information from teachers' planning, records, pupils' completed work and discussions with pupils show that teaching is satisfactory and enables pupils to achieve well and make sound progress. One teacher teaches design and technology throughout the school. By the end of Year 2 and Year 6, pupils attain standards that can be expected for their age. These standards have been maintained since the last inspection.

107 Pupils in the infant class have designed and made model vehicles, made sandwiches and created textured collages using wood. They develop sound skills in using manipulating materials and equipment and handle sensibly simple tools such as scissors and scrapers. In work linked to art they designed their own candle burners in the shape of a hollow tree and used tools well to shape the clay and decorate their designs. Well-timed intervention from the teacher enabled them to appraise their work and make suggestions on how they could improve it. Pupils demonstrate an awareness of scale when they make three-dimensional models using various construction kits. A recent visit to Maryport resulted in an imaginative 'seaside' collage, where pupils had thought hard about their choices of materials and their fitness for purpose before using paper, wool, card and clear plastic to create the features they had seen.

108 In the junior class, pupils have learned about the history of the border area where they live and in work linked to history have designed and made well-constructed models of a Bastle Tower, a fortified farm house and also a Pele Tower. They have worked well and show an understanding of scale when making furniture to go inside the buildings. They had even made replicas of food to go on the tables. Pupils had worked carefully to draw their designs but had limited opportunities to evaluate and modify their work. Pupils in Years 5 and 6 are currently working well together to design and make a large paper sculpture of a mermaid using a chicken wire frame. The work done so far is of good quality. In work linked to science, they designed ear protectors and made appropriate choices of suitable materials to make them.

109 By the end of Year 6 pupils understand the process of designing and making something fit for a given purpose. They understand the real-life application of design and technology through work where they have made and bound their own books or have looked at examples of packaging and then designed and made their own. Pupils have co-operated well to produce working models of fairground rides and have produced some well designed vehicles and used work in science to enable them to have working, battery powered lights. In a well-planned project out of school, pupils have worked on building stone arches and learned how best to use natural materials to recreate those in the locality.

110 The management of the subject is satisfactory. Work in design and technology is based on national guidance that provides a secure framework for teaching and learning throughout the school. Staff make good links to other subjects and the school uses the specialist skills of individual staff to teach the subject. The two-year cycle of topics ensures that the needs of pupils in the mixed-age classes are met.

## **GEOGRAPHY AND HISTORY**

111 Only one lesson was seen in history, and no lessons were seen in geography. There was evidence from teachers' planning and pupils' previous work, but this was very limited in geography in the junior class. Pupils make satisfactory progress in history throughout the school and at the end of Year 2 and Year 6, pupils' attainment is as expected for their age. Progress in geography is satisfactory up to the end of Year 2 and standards are typical of seven year olds. However, progress is unsatisfactory in the junior class due to the limited amount of work done and standards are below those expected at the age of 11. There are several reasons for this disparity. Pupils are supported well in their history topics by visits to places in the local area. The part-time teacher has taught history to the junior class pupils, and planning for this topic work is good. There is sufficient curriculum time given to teaching history, which is planned on a two-yearly cycle and taught every term. However, planning for lessons in geography in the junior class is unsatisfactory. The curriculum overview identifies the same time allocation as for history over the two years but pupils' work indicates that, because of the emphasis on history, there has been less time given to geography and so National Curriculum requirements are not met. This is impacting on standards by the end of Year 6.

112 In Years 1 and 2, pupils learn about famous people in the past, such as Florence Nightingale. By the end of Year 2, pupils recount the events in her life and they identify some of the differences between life then, and now, by saying that 'hospitals were dirty then'. In geography they make their own simple maps, showing the route to school and label their drawings of landmarks. They identify the physical features of different locations using appropriate geographical vocabulary.

113 By the end of Year 6 pupils understand the impact of the Second World War on everyday life in Britain. They know about the history of the local Border Reivers, and they use dates correctly. They understand the impact of the Roman invasion in their local area. In contrast, in geography by the end of Year 6, pupils only talked about using atlases to find places but they do not use the correct geographical vocabulary. For example, talking about 'lines on each bit that say where places are'. The only evidence available of geography work by pupils in the junior class was a few worksheets, undated, and some incomplete, that were scattered amongst a plethora of mathematical worksheets.

114 In both classes the teaching of history is satisfactory. In geography, teaching is sound in the infant class but unsatisfactory in the juniors. Strengths in teaching are the effective use of visits in the local area to support pupils' learning. During the inspection older pupils were preparing for a visit to Hadrian's Wall. They baked their own bread and designed shields to indicate whether they would be acting as Roman soldiers or Celts. Older pupils collected artefacts relating to the Second World War from their relatives, and they wrote letters to the parent of the part-time teacher to ask about her memories of wartime Britain. These practical opportunities impact well on pupils' learning. The whole school went on a visit to a contrasting location, but only pupils in the infant class have recorded work linked to this visit.

115 The history curriculum is well planned in topics covering a two-year cycle to accommodate the wide age range of pupils in both classes. Work from pupils indicates that an appropriate time is allocated to history. However, the same cannot be said of geography in the class of older pupils. These subjects are not managed well enough since no checks are made on the time spent teaching or the quality of pupils' work.

## **INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY**

116 The provision for ICT is good and the number of computers for the small number of pupils on roll is good. This means pupils get good opportunities to develop and practise their skills. The school's policy of allowing pupils to come into school when they first arrive (many come by bus) means that they have good opportunities to become familiar with the keyboard and to use confidently a wide range

of programmes. The school has well-established procedures to safeguard pupils' access to the Internet.

117 Teachers have good subject knowledge and share this with pupils. Teaching is good and staff use ICT well to promote and reinforce work in other subjects. The effective teaching results in good standards and by the end of Year 2 and Year 6, pupils' work is above that expected for their age. Pupils achieve well and make good progress. Pupils with special educational needs achieve well because they are well supported by teachers, classroom assistants and other pupils. Standards have improved since the last inspection. There are more up-to-date computers, additional resources have been purchased and all teachers have received training in ICT skills. This training was clearly linked to individual needs and well focused to support their work in the classroom. This has enabled the school to successfully raise standards.

118 The pupils in the infant class begin to know the position of letters of the keyboard and use these to type lists of words in their English work. They know that a red line under a word indicates that this word is spelt incorrectly and are able to correct both spelling errors and add capital letters appropriately. Pupils use the mouse well to move text and pictures on screen and know how to use a paint program to fill different parts of a picture or pattern. In mathematics, the teacher linked work on 'time' with a well-chosen program that required pupils to read the time shown on a clock and to type in the correct time. The Year 1 pupils managed this well. Many pupils can load a program and choose the level of difficulty at which they want to work. They use the mouse well to click on icons to change functions and know how to go find previous work. Pupils word process simple stories and poems and by Year 2 are confident to save and print their work unaided.

119 Throughout the junior class, pupils extend their computer skills by learning to change the colour and styles of fonts, for example when acting as 'authors' to make their own books. These books were well written and illustrated, sometimes using a digital camera or clip art and word art to attract others to read their writing. The oldest pupils have used ICT well to make books to record their residential visit and to record work done on 'sheepfolds', inspired by Andy Goldsworthy. Pupils use a digital camera well to record their work and import pictures and text from the Internet to support their topic work in history. ICT is used well to support many areas of the curriculum. Pupils use it well in numeracy to create spreadsheets to record data they have collected. By Year 6, many pupils use CD-ROMs for finding information and know that they can use computers to send and receive information faster than writing letters by using e-mails.

120 Teachers use well focused questioning skills, which extend pupils' understanding of all aspects of their work. They have very good relationships with the pupils and know them well. Staff sensitively help those who find some aspects of their work difficult and challenge others to become more independent learners. Pupils' attitudes to their work with computers are very good. They concentrate, listen well, are keenly interested and make very good use of the time available to them. Pupils confidently explain and demonstrate their knowledge and skills to visitors and when helping each other.

121 ICT is managed well and the small number of staff enables them to work well together and share ideas and expertise. The improved resources have had a big impact on standards in this area. The range of opportunities planned for pupils to develop their skills is good and programs are well chosen to link to the subjects being taught in lessons. The resources for the subject are good.

## **MUSIC**

122 Only one lesson was seen, but there was evidence from teacher's planning, examples of pupils' recorded work, and pupils singing in assemblies. By the end of Years 2 and 6 pupils' attainment in music matches the levels expected for their ages. All pupils make steady progress. In assembly, they sing hymns tunefully and with good diction. Younger pupils sing and recite well-known

songs and keep a steady pulse. They listen to what they are singing and understand simple musical terms such as fast and slow, and high and low. Older pupils record their own instrumental compositions either on taped recordings or using simple notation. They sing a range of songs in two parts, and practise and improve their singing. They experiment well with tuned percussion instruments working out the main line of a melody.

123 Teaching of music is good. The teacher has good subject knowledge and uses this well to teach pupils the correct musical terms. In a lesson with younger pupils she told them 'We're going to sing now using our hands to pick up the pulse'. She teaches music throughout the school, and so builds well on what pupils have previously learnt.

124 The subject is managed well by one teacher. She keeps careful records of pupils' progress. These are used well to inform lesson planning. Resources for music are unsatisfactory. This is because there has been no funding available for some time, and too many instruments now need replacing. Opportunities are missed for pupils to widen their musical appreciation by listening to music, particularly from other cultures, as they enter and leave the hall for assemblies. There are few opportunities for pupils to use ICT to support their music work.

## **PHYSICAL EDUCATION**

125 During the inspection it was possible to observe only one swimming lesson. This is because the school wisely makes best possible use of its on-site swimming pool in the summer when the weather is good. From discussions with staff and pupils, the examination of documents and teachers' records it is clear that the physical education curriculum covers the areas of the National Curriculum. By the age of seven and 11, pupils attain the standards expected for their age. The curriculum is substantially enhanced by the good links with other schools. Many pupils travel to and from school by bus, which makes the provision for extra-curricular activities difficult. Staff are also very aware that, in a very small school, pupils have few opportunities to meet other pupils or to take part in a range of sports activities. Parents are very pleased that the school arranges many opportunities for pupils to visit other schools for a wide range of games activities, where they learn ball skills, and have opportunities to practise and play in formal games such as football, rounders, and netball. A wide range of activities is available for junior pupils and they have opportunities to achieve success when working as members of larger teams in the schools they visit. The pupils apply these skills well to improving their performance in lessons and when participating in the sporting events arranged between the schools. The school ensures pupils in Years 5 and 6 have opportunities for outdoor adventurous activities during their annual residential visit and pupils develop stamina through a good range of outdoor activities.

126 During the year pupils in both classes are taught by the full-time junior teacher for physical education and make sound progress in gymnastics, dance, athletics and games. All pupils have opportunities to learn to swim and by the age of 11, many swim at least 25 metres and many swim beyond this distance. In a well-taught lesson, junior age pupils practised a range of swimming strokes and concentrated on refining their breaststroke. The teacher intervened well to make good teaching points that improved pupils' leg movements. His good subject knowledge enabled him to enable pupils to practise their strokes and to recognise faults and refine their performance. The lesson was managed well and enabled all pupils, whatever their swimming prowess, to achieve well and make good progress. The pupils enjoy swimming and respond well to staff because of the very good relationships established in the school.

127 The subject is managed well and makes good use of the interest and expertise of staff. The work is planned to take account of national guidance and although planning is brief and assessment is

often informal, the teacher knows the pupils very well and builds on their strengths and supports any who lack confidence. Resources are barely adequate for gymnastics since much of the large apparatus is old and the school's budget in recent years has not enabled any spending on replacements. However, the school makes best use of what it has.

## RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

128 By the end of Year 2, pupils' attainment matches the expectations identified in the syllabus taught in the local authority's schools. Pupils' attainment by the end of Year 6 is well below these expectations. In the junior class, the school is not meeting the statutory requirements for religious education.

129 Standards have dropped since the last inspection. There are several reasons why standards are too low and why statutory requirements are not being met. There are yawning gaps between the two classes in the quality of teaching and learning, planning and the assessment of the progress pupils make. These are all good in the infant class, and poor in the junior class. The curriculum overview for pupils in this class identifies Christianity, Hinduism and Islam as the faiths to be taught. However, pupils' scant amount of recorded work over these four-year groups indicates that only a few aspects of Christianity and Buddhism have been taught.

130 By the end of Year 2, pupils know some important events in the life of Jesus, and they know about some important religious ceremonies such as Christian baptism. They have rewritten the story of Noah using the style of writing in the story 'Chicken Licken', and they have written a letter from King Herod. They are learning to use the correct religious terms related to both Christianity and Judaism. Following a visit to the local church, pupils correctly named the pulpit and font, and they know how they are used. They shared with each other their own ideas about things that are special to them, such as my 'golden coin'. They also suggested how they would like their special things to be treated. For example 'I'd be cross if someone grabbed it'. Pupils are learning well about the Jewish faith. They explain the Torah as a 'very special scroll for Jews' and know the 'Yad is a pointer used to read the Torah'. Two pupils knew that 'Jesus was a Jewish person'.

131 In comparison, by the end of Year 6, pupils' knowledge and understanding is very limited. They have written copied sentences about Buddhism. When writing about the Nativity story, one pupil wrote 'Mary and Joseph went to a cottage'. There is only one piece of recorded work this year. Pupils have drawn pictures of the creation, the Garden of Eden, Cain and Abel, and Saul. These pictures have no writing to accompany them, and some pictures are drawn using a pencil, some using a pen. When talking about their work, pupils in Year 6 say 'We haven't done much religious education, have we?' They are confused about Judaism; they recognise that Jews worship in a synagogue, but think they worship on Sundays. They think that Buddhists believe in Allah and that Jews do not believe in the same God as Christians.

132 Teaching is poor overall. It is good in the infant class where the teacher uses her good subject knowledge well to promote pupils' learning. For example, pupils are learning to use the correct religious terms. Lessons are planned well, and the teacher very effectively compensates for the lack of resources by producing her own to help pupils' learning. She had made a Torah scroll and had taken pictures from the Internet to show to the pupils. Teaching is poor in the class with the older pupils. The teacher's subject knowledge is weak and is reflected in the lack of planning to support the teaching and learning in lessons. There are very low expectations of what pupils can do. Pupils' written work is of a poor quality. Marking is unsatisfactory and some work is unmarked.

133 Resources for religious education are unsatisfactory. There are no artefacts to support teaching about Judaism, and there are few books which support teaching the expectations of the Agreed Syllabus. Management of religious education is unsatisfactory and this is evident in the huge difference in standards by the end of Years 2 and 6.