

INSPECTION REPORT

BLACK COMBE JUNIOR SCHOOL

Millom, Cumbria

LEA area: Cumbria

Unique reference number: 112160

Headteacher: Mr G E Whitfield

Reporting inspector: Mr G Brown
21060

Dates of inspection: 2 – 5 June 2003

Inspection number: 254797

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

© Crown copyright 2003

This report may be reproduced in whole or in part for non-commercial educational purposes, provided that all extracts quoted are reproduced verbatim without adaptation and on condition that the source and date thereof are stated.

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school. Under the School Inspections Act 1996, the school must provide a copy of this report and/or its summary free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the full cost of reproduction may be made for any other copies supplied.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Junior
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	7 to 11 years
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Moor Road Millom
Postcode:	LA18 5DT
Telephone number:	01229 772862
Fax number:	01229 771308
Appropriate authority:	The governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr Andrew Haberfield
Date of previous inspection:	30 June 1997

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members			Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
21060	George Brown	Registered inspector	Educational inclusion English as an additional language Science Art and design Music Physical education	What sort of school is it? How high are standards? a) The school's results and achievements How well is the school led and managed? What should the school do to improve further?
11468	Judith Menes	Lay inspector		How high are standards? b) 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?
30724	Delia Hiscock	Team inspector	English Geography History Information and communication technology	How well are pupils taught?
32180	David Sleightholme	Team inspector	Special educational needs Mathematics Design and technology Religious education	How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils?

The inspection contractor was:

Cambridge Education Associates Ltd

Demeter House
Station Road
Cambridge
CB1 2RS

Any concerns or complaints about the inspection or the report should be raised with the inspection contractor. Complaints that are not satisfactorily resolved by the contractor should be raised with OFSTED by writing to:

The Complaints Manager
Inspection Quality Division
The Office for Standards in Education
Alexandra House
33 Kingsway
London WC2B 6SE

REPORT CONTENTS

	Page
PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT	7
Information about the school	
How good the school is	
What the school does well	
What could be improved	
How the school has improved since its last inspection	
Standards	
Pupils' attitudes and values	
Teaching and learning	
Other aspects of the school	
How well the school is led and managed	
Parents' and carers' views of the school	
PART B: COMMENTARY	
HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?	11
The school's results and pupils' achievements	
Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development	
HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?	13
HOW GOOD ARE THE CURRICULAR AND OTHER OPPORTUNITIES OFFERED TO PUPILS?	15
HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?	17
HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?	19
HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?	19
WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?	21
PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS	23
PART D: THE STANDARDS AND QUALITY OF TEACHING IN AREAS OF THE CURRICULUM, SUBJECTS AND COURSES	27

PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

The school is situated in the town of Millom, a small ex-mining iron and steel community in south-west Cumbria on the edge of the Lake District National Park. The school has 188 pupils aged 7 to 11 who are drawn from a variety of social and housing backgrounds. The majority come from the Holborn Hill and Newtown Wards of the town, areas characterised by some degree of deprivation including above average unemployment. A broadly average number of pupils are entitled to free school meals. The numbers on roll have been falling for some time. In 2002 the school was considered for possible amalgamation with the nearby infant school, a proposal that has been set aside for the time being although some staffing redundancies followed. A significant number of pupils enter school with below average attainment, particularly in relation to reading and writing. A well above average number of pupils (40 per cent of the total roll) have special educational needs; many of them have moderate learning needs or emotional and behavioural difficulties. Eleven pupils have statements of special educational need. Pupils are drawn almost entirely from white British backgrounds and no pupil speaks English as an additional language. The school aims to develop the maximum potential of all its pupils through a programme of first hand experiences and the creation of a stimulating and secure working environment.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

Black Combe is a sound, hard working school that serves the heart of the Millom community well. Although many pupils attain below average standards in English, mathematics and science, most achieve satisfactorily and make sound progress over time. Teaching and learning are both satisfactory and the school is soundly led by the headteacher, senior staff and governors. Given pupils' below average attainment on entry and the standards they reach by the end of Year 6, the school gives satisfactory value for money.

What the school does well

- Standards in art, information and communication technology and physical education are good.
- Pupils with special educational needs are well provided for and make good progress.
- Pupils enjoy school and are enthusiastic about their learning. They are helpful, relate well to each other and behaviour is good.
- The curriculum provides well for the pupils' moral and social development.
- A wide range of extra-curricular activities broadens pupils' experiences and learning.
- Effective procedures exist to ensure the safety, care and welfare of the pupils.

What could be improved

- By the end of Year 6, pupils' standards are below average in English, mathematics and science.
- The quality of teaching could be more effective in order to help pupils achieve more.
- The procedures for assessing pupils' progress are unsatisfactory and do not result in challenging targets that would help extend their learning.

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 satisfactory progress since it was inspected in June 1997. The new headteacher has developed a sound management structure in which more staff and governors can make their own contributions to school life. The school development plan is now a more effective tool for future improvement. The relationship between school and parents has improved greatly. The behaviour of pupils is good, the result of a whole-school approach that is now applied consistently and effectively. Whilst pupils' attainment in English and mathematics remains below average overall, improvements in standards, for example in information and communication technology, have risen gradually since the previous inspection. Standards in science have fallen slightly but pupils' reading has improved. The school has also adopted major national initiatives to at least a satisfactory standard including staff appraisal schemes and the development of English and mathematics through the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies.

STANDARDS

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

Performance in:	Compared with			
	all schools			Similar schools
	2000	2001	2002	2002
English	E	E	E	E
Mathematics	E	C	E	E
Science	E	E	E	E

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

Many pupils enter the school with below average standards. By the end of Year 6, standards remain below average in the core subjects of English, mathematics and science. This trend is also illustrated by the school's annual performance in national tests when pupils score frequently well below the national average in relation to all schools and those drawn from similar settings. It should be remembered that some 40 per cent of pupils have special educational needs and this impacts heavily on what they achieve, particularly at the higher level. Indicative results from the 2003 national tests suggest that standards continue to rise, albeit slowly. The trend in the school's average National Curriculum points score is broadly in line with the national trend. Pupils achieve satisfactorily in literacy and numeracy over time although the results of inspection indicate that some could achieve more with improved teaching and learning. Pupils with special educational needs achieve well because they are carefully provided for and make progress in small, meaningful steps. The most able pupils could achieve more if their particular needs were targeted better. By the end of Year 6, pupils achieve well in art, information and communication technology and physical education and satisfactorily in all other subjects. Standards in information and communication technology have risen rapidly and are now above the level expected for Year 6 pupils. The school's targets are on course to demonstrate further improvement and are now providing realistic, yet challenging levels.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Good. Pupils enjoy their work, try hard and have positive attitudes to their learning.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Good. Pupils follow the school's code of conduct and are reliable and generally sensible in and out of the classrooms.
Personal development and relationships	Satisfactory progress is made in personal development although more could be asked of the pupils' own initiative. Relationships are good.
Attendance	Satisfactory. Pupils are punctual and lessons begin on time.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils in:	Years 3 to 6
Quality of teaching	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.

Whilst teaching is satisfactory overall, approximately half of all lessons seen were good. In the most effective lessons, good learning was promoted by an emphasis on high expectations and on the pupils learning important skills. The management and organisation of the pupils are teaching strengths and help meets their varied and individual needs. However, some teaching is not particularly flexible or well focused in this respect. Whilst most lessons are planned satisfactorily, the needs of higher attaining pupils are not always well met, particularly when the work set is not challenging enough. In contrast, the work prepared for pupils with special educational needs is more effective. Educational resources are plentiful and used well, as is the experience offered by learning support assistants. Learning in most lessons is usually brisk and purposeful but some are marred by a drop off in pace and focus. Teachers assess pupils' progress in several ways but the results of these tests are not used particularly well to set new and challenging targets for future learning. The teaching of all subjects, including literacy and numeracy, is at least satisfactory overall and history and information and communication technology are taught particularly well. Pupils learn satisfactorily in most areas of the curriculum and contribute much by their own positive attitudes and endeavours. However, too little emphasis is placed on the pupils learning through their own initiative and informed choices. The use made of homework is satisfactory.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Satisfactory. The opportunities for learning are suitably varied and statutory requirements are met in all subjects. A wide range of extra-curricular activities is planned to extend and enhance pupils' learning.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Good. The progress of pupils is carefully monitored and well provided for. Individual educational plans are of good quality and tasks well chosen.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Satisfactory overall but with good provision for the pupils' moral and social development. Cultural development is satisfactory and pupils become aware of the need for racial harmony and life in a multicultural society. The provision for the spiritual development of pupils is barely satisfactory and improvements could be made.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Very good. Staff are caring and committed and pupils' safety and welfare are prime concerns. Very good procedures exist for child protection and the promotion of good behaviour and attendance. The procedures for assessing pupils' everyday academic performance, particularly in mathematics, are unsatisfactory overall, as is the use made of test results to set new targets for learning.

The parents' views of the school are very positive and many make a sound contribution to their children's learning at home and school. The partnership between home and school continues to grow effectively.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Satisfactory. The school has clear aims and the recent emphasis on trying to raise pupils' work standards is appropriate. There is a good team approach towards daily administration and longer term goals. The headteacher provides clear educational direction and delegates management tasks in a responsible way.

How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Governors are well informed and are effective in their role. They meet their statutory responsibilities and are currently doing well in helping to shape the future of the school.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Satisfactory although some weaknesses persist. More data is now available as to the school's past performance, but the results have yet to be used effectively. The monitoring of standards and of the quality of teaching and learning in particular, is not robust enough.
The strategic use of resources	Good. The school makes good use of its annual finance and other grants to ensure that pupils get the best value from what is available to them. Resources are well directed to help the school achieve its declared priorities. Financial and budgetary control are good and learning resources are plentiful and used well in the classroom. Staffing levels are good and support staff make an effective contribution towards pupils' learning. The accommodation is attractive and used well to support learning.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Children like school and make good progress. • Teachers are very approachable and parents are kept well informed about how their children are getting on. • The quality of teaching is good. • The school is very caring and expects all children to work hard and do their best. • Behaviour is good and the school is helping children to mature and accept responsibilities. • The school is well led and managed and parents are welcomed as partners in their child's learning. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Some parents feel that the homework given to their children is not always appropriate for their needs. • Others feel the school could provide a greater range of activities for the pupils outside of lesson times.

Parents view the school in a very positive light and their supportive comments far outweigh their concerns. The inspection bears out many of the comments made in support of the school and its procedures. Management structures are now more clearly defined and parents have a clearer picture as to how the school is run and the progress their children make. Although much of the teaching is good, it could be improved in those areas defined in this report. Homework is typical of that given to pupils of junior age and most children benefit from the work that is currently set. The school actually provides very well in relation to visits and extra-curricular activities and these are used effectively to expand pupils' enjoyment and their range of learning experiences.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and pupils' achievements

1. Most pupils enter the school with below average standards for their age and frequently well below average standards in reading and writing. Most pupils make satisfactory progress during their four years in the junior school and reach a satisfactory level of achievement set against their previous learning. There is little difference between the standards achieved by girls and boys overall. However, significant numbers still transfer to the high school with below average standards in English, mathematics and science. This is borne out by the recent inspection as well as by the pattern in the school's National Curriculum results over time. For example, in the 2002 tests for pupils at the end of Year 6, pupils at Black Combe scored well below average in English, mathematics and science, both in relation to all primary schools and also similar schools. It is most often the relatively small number of pupils who achieve the higher levels for their age that keeps the school's average scores down. It must also be remembered that the school has a very high proportion of pupils (currently 40 per cent) with special educational needs and this has a marked impact on overall attainment. The indicative results of the 2003 tests suggest a slight rise in attainment as the school comes to grips with more accurate target setting and the nature of challenging work that needs to be offered to more able pupils in particular. The trend in the school's average National Curriculum points score in relation to all core subjects, is broadly in line with the national trend. Standards have risen slowly in most areas since the previous inspection.
2. There are some fundamental areas of weakness in English that the school has identified correctly and is now attempting to rectify. The results of inspection also confirm the need for certain areas to be strengthened. Whilst pupils are keen to participate in learning, their contributions during oral work are often limited to a few words and even older pupils struggle to explain their reasoning and to expand on their answers with reasonable clarity. Teachers do not always provide suitable settings for pupils to talk and debate more freely and productively. Listening skills are stronger and, for most pupils, levels of attentiveness are broadly at the level expected for the age of the pupils.
3. It is in reading that many pupils have struggled in the past and even by the end of Year 6 significant numbers find it difficult to read for sustained periods of time. The introduction of 'The Reading Passport Scheme' is helping many pupils to build up more of the essential reading skills required of eleven year olds. Whilst some pupils read fluently and can comment sensibly about various texts and authors, others still find it difficult to use inferential and deductive skills to show they fully understand the author's intentions. The school has placed a lot of financial and time investment into improving pupils' reading and the results of inspection indicate that this is now paying off with reading competence in general undoubtedly rising.
4. The pupils' scores in the national tests also reflect some weaknesses in writing, although by the end of Year 6 many pupils have made satisfactory progress from a low or very low beginning. Some pupils write clearly for different purposes and with reasonable clarity and accuracy. Others do not develop a close link between reading and writing and their stories and accounts lack imagination and interesting vocabulary. Narrative writing is one of the weaker areas identified across all age groups. Even by the end of Year 6, there are also wide variations in the correct use of punctuation, spelling and grammar. Whilst many pupils develop an acceptable and legible form of handwriting, others are weaker in this respect with teachers not always placing sufficient demands on neatness and presentation.
5. Pupils' attainment in mathematics is largely better than it is in English but there are still relative inconsistencies between the average Year 6 scores achieved year by year. Whilst more pupils are likely to attain the higher levels for their age, some actually underachieve, and teachers' expectations and planning have to improve in this respect. By the end of Year 6, many pupils have a satisfactory grasp and understanding of the number system and can add, subtract,

multiply and divide with reasonable speed and accuracy. Their standards in shape and measurement are relatively strong and present few difficulties. It is in the use and application of mathematical skills and understanding that significant numbers of pupils continue to struggle. The development of pupils' thinking skills to support problem solving (what the school calls mathematical stamina) remains an area for considerable development. Even more able pupils find it difficult to use their inference skills in reading to make decisions about mathematical problems when set out in word form. The interpretation of data presents considerable difficulty to many pupils. Although the school now has a clearer picture of those areas that present particular difficulties to its pupils, their learning in numeracy and other lessons needs to be raised by more focused teaching and the better use of assessment data and results.

6. Pupils' attainment in science is below average overall. However, the inspection found that standards are now set to rise as teachers become more aware of the gaps in pupils' knowledge and also the skills that need further development. By the end of Year 6, many pupils have an appropriate knowledge base for their age and understand a range of science concepts. However, as in mathematics, significant numbers can not apply their previous knowledge to new situations and there are some specific weaknesses in aspects such as understanding scientific data and vocabulary. The school has rightly detected the lack of a link between scientific thought and carrying out science investigations. By the time they transfer to the high school, significant numbers of pupils have not developed an effective approach towards scientific enquiries, including the use of prediction, the application of a fair test, close observation and a full evaluation of their results. Pupils' exercise books indicate that their explanations as to why investigations turn out as they have need to improve.
7. Attainment and progress in information and communication technology (ICT) have been improving rapidly and, by the end of Year 6, pupils' standards now exceed those expected for their age. Pupils also achieve well because of the quality of teaching and learning now being offered, combined with the use of exciting resources.
8. By the end of Year 6, pupils' standards are above those expected for their age in several aspects of both physical education and art. Older pupils in particular achieve well in most elements of competitive sport as can be seen by the trophies won and the range of events they attend. The presence and influence of the art and design co-ordinator in Year 6 help pupils reach above average standards in drawing, use of colour and a knowledge of how best their work can improve.
9. Standards are broadly in line with those expected for pupils by the end of Year 6 in all other National Curriculum subjects and religious education. A lack of more advanced reading and writing skills has an adverse impact on pupils' recorded work in subjects such as history, geography and religious education. However, the knowledge pupils' display is relatively secure and also reflects adequate understanding of various topics for their age. Pupils therefore achieve relatively well in such subjects given the low starting point acknowledged for many. In music, the work undertaken by the school's specialist teacher, combined with that of visiting staff, ensure that pupils reach the standards expected for their age. Several pupils actually do better than this, achieving very well with their chosen instruments under careful instruction.
10. Pupils with special educational needs make mainly good progress and achieve well set against their individual learning targets. They make particularly good progress in literacy and numeracy often owing to the support offered either as individuals or in small withdrawal groups where their individual needs are targeted well. The quality of individual education plans is also good and pupils make good progress in small, well-defined stages. Pupils' work is also monitored closely and assessed regularly in order to ensure their needs are being fully met.
11. The achievements and progress of the gifted and more able pupils are rightly under review as some of these pupils could perform to a higher level. On occasions, the teaching and tasks set do not best fit their particular needs and some pupils spend too much time consolidating existing knowledge and methods rather than being challenged by more useful and extended work. Although progress for these pupils is satisfactory overall, improved target setting and more robust methods will help to raise their standards further and the school's performance as a whole. The

more effective work currently being attempted in Year 4, and particularly in Year 3, reflects a better understanding of pupils' needs and what can be achieved by the support offered by a wider range of adults.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

12. Pupils like school and are enthusiastic about the opportunities it offers, particularly the wide variety of sports such as cricket and gymnastics. They are also proud of their home town and take a great interest in lessons that investigate its history or enable them to write and speak about it. Pupils usually listen carefully and concentrate well in lessons. Where teaching is good, pupils respond very well to the demands made on them, work hard and enjoy a sense of achievement. In a few lessons where teaching has less pace and expectations are lower, pupils can be easily distracted and, although usually compliant, their learning is passive and lacking in interest. Pupils work well together in class, co-operating successfully in pairs or groups, for example in discussions and sharing resources. Those with special educational needs are integrated well into school life. When they are withdrawn from the classroom for more specialised support, pupils work hard and value the help they are given.
13. Behaviour in class is usually good and has improved since the previous inspection. Pupils behave very well when they are fully engaged and interested in the lesson. Pupils move around the school sensibly and quietly and usually behave well outside in the playground where they are very active, participating in games and making good use of the equipment provided. Parents consider that behaviour in the school is good. Pupils are friendly and polite and get on well with each other. The head teacher provides a good example of kindness and respect for others which is then evident throughout the school.
14. Positive relationships with staff help pupils to grow in confidence and learn to treat others with respect. Pupils understand the system of rewards and sanctions and think that it is fair, accepting that older pupils have to work harder to earn house points than younger ones. The school takes bullying seriously and it is effectively dealt with. Incidents of poor behaviour occur occasionally but these are appropriately dealt with by the school. No pupils were excluded last year but a number of short-term exclusions involving five pupils have been implemented in the current year for various misdemeanours.
15. Some pupils are involved in daily routines such as helping with the shop at break time and manning the telephone and reception desk at breaks and lunchtimes. Pupils are willing to take on responsibilities and are operating the school council effectively with a chairman and secretary running the meetings. The council has several successes behind it such as running a disco which raised funds for charity and a Blue Peter bring and buy sale. The council is currently involved in plans for the development of the school grounds and provides a channel through which all pupils can have an input into aspects of school life. Some of the teaching and learning are very much teacher directed and where this occurs, pupils have less chance to act under their own initiative and make informed choices about their learning.
16. Pupils arrive at school promptly and levels of attendance are in line with the national average. Parents are aware of the need to inform the school of the reason for their child's absence. With the support of the education welfare officer, the school has largely been successful in reducing unauthorised absence to its current very low level.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?

17. The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory overall. Just over half of the lessons seen were good or better and included a small amount of very good but no excellent teaching. The balance of other lessons was largely satisfactory but with a very small amount of unsatisfactory teaching. Some improvement in the quality of teaching has occurred since the previous inspection, particularly in the reduction of unsatisfactory lessons.

18. Teaching and learning in English and mathematics are satisfactory. Early skills of literacy and number work are central to the work of the school and, generally, teachers have an adequate understanding of the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies. The occasions of good lessons in both of these important aspects of pupils' learning are somewhat tempered by the

uneven nature of teaching across classes in the majority of year groups. The exception to this is in Year 3 where there is close teamwork between the teachers and where thoughtful self-reflection by individual teachers helps to pinpoint what has been successful in their lessons.

19. The overall quality of teaching and learning in both literacy and numeracy has been subject to regular checks by management but significant improvement has been somewhat laboured despite the importance in the school's declared expectations. For example, lessons in literacy and numeracy reflect the organisation of the National Strategies but do not accelerate pupils' continuous achievement enough in order to lift attainment in the school. Pleasingly, where teachers have worked collectively they are successfully raising achievement in reading, though there is some way still to go. There are several key reasons for the lull in achievement in literacy and numeracy overall. Feedback to teachers on the relative effectiveness of their teaching is not incisive enough. This results, in some instances, in teaching methods not being ideally matched to learning needs. Good teaching is only found in pockets and effective features are not shared enough. There is also too little day-to-day link between what pupils achieve in lessons and the next phase in teaching plans.
20. Teachers are very committed to the pupils in their care. The climate in which pupils learn assures that they feel secure and work and play harmoniously. Behaviour is well managed. The needs of pupils with behavioural difficulties are met effectively and sensitively. This is reflected also in the good teaching for pupils with additional or different learning difficulties. In lessons for these pupils, the pace of learning often accelerates where there is additional support designed specifically to meet their needs. For this group of pupils, the school aims are well represented. However, a common flaw in teaching plans is that activities neither challenge those pupils who attain more, nor support those with the ability to achieve more. This is because in English, mathematics and science in particular, the expectations of how much these pupils can achieve are relatively low. Where lessons are informative and stimulating, teachers' plans are better suited to the different groups of abilities and attainment. For example, in the small number of very good lessons, there is an energy and pace that increases learning for all the pupils. This is good inclusion in action. Where teaching and learning are no better than satisfactory, it is often because the teacher does much of the talking and over-directs the learning. This usually results in a slow pace and pupils having too little opportunity to take an active part in discussions, particularly with each other.
21. Classroom assistants give good support. They focus pupils on the task in hand and move them on towards their individual targets for learning. Where targets are set for pupils other than those in need of additional support, they are often not specific enough. Most pupils find it hard to gauge how much they have achieved because they do not know what they are expected to learn. This borders on unsatisfactory. In the best practice, targets are set, reviewed and used as a powerful goal for pupils in teachers' marking. Learning is transformed. This happens most effectively in a Year 6 class. However, the basis on which most teachers plan the next steps in learning is not of this quality.
22. Although the purposes of lessons are displayed and sometimes shared with pupils at the start of lessons, too often these are not in language that pupils can readily understand. Therefore, not enough pupils understand what they are expected to learn during each session. Where lessons are drawn together at the end by a crisp and well-designed summary of what has been learned, pupils grasp the essence of the lessons far better because they 'own' their learning. In many lessons this does not happen. The school has just begun to identify pupils who are gifted and talented but no additional arrangements for their teaching are yet in place.

23. The quality of teaching for pupils with special educational needs is good both in the classroom and in the small withdrawal groups where pupils receive extra support. The withdrawal groups are created so that pupils' skills and confidence are given a boost, ensuring that they have access to a full range of curriculum opportunities. For example, in a small group literacy lesson involving six pupils, the special individual tutor continued the work started in the class lesson on 'persuasive text'. Through intensive teaching she increased their understanding of alliteration and connectives to a level where they would be actively able to participate in the next whole-class lesson.
24. Learning is satisfactory. These hard working pupils are kind towards each other and often go out of their way to support others, showing a positive and thoughtful side to their nature when learning alongside others. They are interested in their studies though rather reliant on their teachers giving them information and instructions. This is because many teachers over-direct activities for learning, often reducing the opportunities for pupils to organise their thoughts for themselves when they do have the skills. Where teachers free pupils to explore and use their skills creatively, as they do in ICT, pupils learn well and sometimes very well. Learning is hampered also for higher attaining pupils when the activities planned narrowly prescribe what could be learned in the same amount of time. This results in pupils having little chance to think for themselves and apply their new knowledge and skills.
25. Apart from history and information and communication technology, where teaching is good, the quality of teaching and learning in all other subjects, including English and mathematics, is satisfactory. In ICT, pupils grasp basic skills from the earliest opportunity when in Year 3, then start to use these skills in other subjects. Teachers use a powerful range of technology for teaching. This includes video, audio and shared computer work. This strong multi-media dimension supports teaching and learning well and is mirrored by the ease and fluency with which pupils in Years 5 and 6 manipulate a substantial amount of web-based material. This enlivens subjects such as history, geography, religious education and builds up skills for life-long learning. Added to the great interest in the history of the local area that lessons generate, pupils gain a keen sense of the past and an understanding of the legacy it builds. Generally, teachers use resources well to support their explanations and to make it easier for pupils to understand new ideas.
26. Pupils have a sound understanding of scientific ideas and vocabulary although some deficiencies exist. The examples of good teaching and some opportunities for practical investigations in science clearly interest the pupils. Almost half the proportion of good lessons was seen in subjects other than English, mathematics and science. Teaching in art, design technology, physical education and history and geography is characterised by slightly better teacher confidence, knowledge and understanding of the subjects. Despite specialist teaching in music and strong enrichment for physical education, teaching reflects a satisfactory level of teachers' knowledge. Similarly, teaching of religious education is satisfactory. The quality of planning in several subjects is patchy and inconsistent in quality. Homework is satisfactory overall but particularly good in the early stages of learning to read where the use of "Reading Passports" contributes to the growing skills of pupils and positive attitudes to books.

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

27. The learning opportunities offered to pupils (the curriculum) are satisfactory overall and the school has ensured that an appropriate and statutory curriculum is in place. Changes in the curriculum, since the previous inspection, have been integrated satisfactorily. There is currently a broad and balanced curriculum covering all subjects that meets the requirements of the National Curriculum and religious education through the locally agreed syllabus. Most subjects receive at least a satisfactory time allocation, except for science which is a little below the recommended time. Additionally, personal, social and health education (PSHE) is not yet formally integrated into the curriculum and timetabling arrangements limit opportunities, even where aspects are covered as

part of religious education. In addition, there is some confusion between acts of collective worship held in the classroom and the time set aside for PHSE. By teaching PSHE during collective worship neither activity may receive its appropriate emphasis. Despite these anomalies, provision for pupils' social and health education is satisfactory overall and includes aspects of sex education and a drugs awareness programme. The curriculum has remained satisfactory since the previous inspection and has improved with the number of subject specific policies that now support learning.

28. The school is implementing the government's recommended National Literacy Strategy satisfactorily. It has recently introduced good strategies to improve children's reading skills. These are beginning to have an impact on pupils' reading standards and their use of reading skills in other areas of the curriculum. For example, in a very good religious education lesson in Year 3, pupils visited a local church where they completed reading worksheets in order to gather information. The strategies for teaching writing have been less successful because insufficient time has been allocated for pupils' extended writing. Progress is limited by teachers' planning, which is not always well-matched to pupils' abilities, particularly that of higher attaining children.
29. The National Numeracy Strategy is being implemented satisfactorily. All teachers are using a three-part lesson, which includes an oral and mental starter, main teaching activity and a summary session to consolidate learning at the end. Where teachers are modifying lesson planning to suit the needs of pupils this results in effective learning. In lessons where teachers follow the National Numeracy Strategy plans too closely, pupils make less progress than they are capable of because activities may not be appropriate to their stage of learning. Some teachers place too little emphasis in their planning on problem-solving activities, and this is inhibiting pupils' progress over time.
30. Other subjects are planned for at least satisfactorily and in physical education, art and information and communication technology, there are some strong features. A few teachers plan particularly effectively across the curriculum, linking subjects productively wherever possible. There is a good curriculum for PE in relation to sporting and extra-curricular activities, or when expertise is brought in from elsewhere, as in music.
31. The school has satisfactory procedures to ensure that there is equality of access and opportunity for pupils, especially in its provision for pupils with special educational needs. The monitoring of groups withdrawn from lessons ensures that pupils have access to all curricular activities. The school curriculum is therefore, good in including all its pupils in active, everyday learning within the wide range of opportunities it offers.
32. The curricular provision for pupils with special educational needs is particularly good in literacy and numeracy. In most lessons, teachers and learning support assistants ensure that work is appropriately adapted to meet pupils' needs. The school has good links with the specialist support services of the local education authority, and uses them well to maximise support for pupils, and advice for staff. For example, the school is able to provide drama therapy classes for pupils in Year 6 through a link with a behaviour modification specialist.
33. There is very good provision for extra-curricular activities. The school offers a number of clubs, some of which operate seasonally. In the last year the school has provided cricket, netball, orienteering, tennis hockey, drama and rugby coaching. These activities are typical of the many on offer. There is a very strong tradition of cricket in the school, supported well by teaching staff, and the school's cleaner-in-charge. The school's KWIK Cricket Team reached the national final in 2001. The school believes strongly in curricular enrichment by taking pupils into the local environment, and beyond. There have been opportunities for pupils to take part in a residential visit and go to Hardknott Roman Fort, for example, or even watch tennis at Wimbledon.
34. The school works closely with local schools to ensure smooth transition for pupils, and to share resources. For example, a learning support assistant from the feeder infant school visits the school to work in the literacy centre, based in Black Combe, each week. A small number of pupils attend the homework club after school, and the school's special educational needs co-

ordinator and special individual tutor are available to offer help and advice. The growing use of ICT across the curriculum is a welcome support to pupils' learning including those with special educational needs.

35. The school has good links with its partner institutions, including the local infants' school, Millom High School and a Roman Catholic primary school that has been awarded 'Beacon' status in recognition of its good practice. It also has effective links with a local teacher training college and several students are placed in the school each year. Good links have been established with local industry, especially those that support the school's work in science or technology-for example, British Nuclear Fuels.
36. The community is making a good contribution to pupils' learning and a number of individuals and groups are actively involved with the school each year. For example, the police are involved in cycling proficiency training; coaches offer sporting skills in football and rugby; a local theatre group visits and a small number of adults help in school with a variety of activities. A food co-operative has recently started in partnership with the 'Health Action Zone' and this valuable activity supports the school's healthy eating initiative.
37. The provision for the pupils' personal development is satisfactory overall. Some aspects of personal development are however, not promoted by policy statements in subject areas or planned for specifically in everyday lessons. Wall displays make a satisfactory contribution to personal development in that they help celebrate what pupils have achieved.
38. The provision for pupils' spiritual development is satisfactory overall, although this aspect has not improved sufficiently since the previous inspection. Assemblies provide satisfactory opportunities to consider and experience spiritual aspects of life. Some opportunities for reflection are missed on those occasions when there is no music playing as pupils leave the hall, or when staff taking assemblies do not allow enough time to pause for reflection. Pupils are introduced to a wide range of religious beliefs during religious education and a visit to a local church made a very good contribution to pupils' spiritual development in Year 3. Such a moment occurred as pupils entered the church and gasped as they saw the stained glass windows. In areas such as art and literacy, staff give little thought as to how spiritual development can ensue.
39. Moral development is promoted well. Pupils have a clear understanding of rules, through the school's expectations of behaviour, and clearly recognise the difference between right and wrong. Discussions with pupils enable them to reflect on their actions and the headteacher gives good support and guidance to pupils to help them understand the impact of their actions. All staff provide good role models in relation to respect and trust. Consideration for others is promoted effectively, resulting in good relationships among all members of the school community.
40. The school makes good provision for pupils' social development. Teachers value pupils' contributions in lessons and often use partner and group work to contribute to their social development. The School Council helps pupils to understand how democracy gives each one of them an opportunity to have a voice in influencing what happens in their school community. Pupils are polite to teachers, to each other and to visitors to the school. Boys and girls work and play together well, for example when taking part in supervised lunchtime activities or sporting activities. A number of pupils have jobs within classrooms, helping the teacher and other pupils, whilst others look after the reception area and answer the telephone at lunchtimes and breaks. The very good range of extra-curricular activities is also making a significant contribution to pupils' social development.
41. Provision for pupils' cultural development is satisfactory. School displays do not promote other races particularly well and, overall, insufficient emphasis is given in the curriculum to recognising and valuing the experiences of cultures from different times and places, as well as their own. There is however, sound emphasis on racial harmony and promoting life in a diverse society. The school is aware of the need to improve its multicultural provision in particular and actively promotes visits and visitors that will raise pupils' awareness. For example, an African Dance Troupe visited the school recently, and theatre visits in Millom and Barrow have broadened the

pupils' cultural perspective. There was a good contribution to pupils' cultural development in a music lesson with Year 4 pupils when they learned a song about the Settle to Carlisle railway and the Ribble Viaduct, in a song about navvies. The school's subject policies and teachers' planning documents do not identify opportunities that will readily develop cultural provision and this aspect of school life needs further thought and development.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

42. The school makes very good provision for pupils' welfare and this aspect has improved since the previous inspection. There is a very strong ethos of care evident in the school and every effort is made to include all pupils in all aspects of school life. Links with parents and other agencies help staff to have a good knowledge of individual pupils, which enables them to provide effective support and guidance. Pupils' personal development is monitored informally through observation and discussion amongst staff but no formal records are kept. The school has established close links with both the infant school and the local secondary school so that pupils are well supported when joining the school in Year 3 and when transferring to the next stage of their education. There are very good arrangements to ensure child protection and pupils' health and safety at school and on educational visits. The building and grounds are inspected regularly, with governors being fully involved in the procedures. Procedures in case of accidents are well established, including recording of incidents, and there are regular checks on the safety of equipment.
43. The school has provided at break time fruit for sale in addition to biscuits, to enable pupils to make choices in accordance with teaching on healthy eating. The weekly sale of fruit and vegetables in school to parents and the community further supports this message. Provision of water coolers for pupils' use is another indication of the importance the school places on pupils' comfort, health and welfare.
44. The school monitors attendance very thoroughly, making full use of computer software to regularly gather information on the attendance of individuals and groups. This ensures that patterns of absence and low attendance can be identified quickly and followed up. The school works well in partnership with the education welfare officer to improve pupils' attendance and reduce unauthorised absence. The school actively promotes good attendance through communication with parents and rewards to pupils.
45. There are very good procedures to promote good behaviour and eliminate bullying that have been effective in improving pupils' behaviour in school since the previous inspection. The school has worked hard to apply its chosen policies consistently and keeps records of incidents and concerns which are monitored carefully. Parents understand and support the behaviour policy and are consulted and involved when their children behave inappropriately.
46. Pupils with special educational needs are well integrated into the caring environment of the school. The school has very good procedures in place for identifying pupils who may need support in order to have access to the full curriculum as well as extra-curricular activities. When a concern is first raised, either by the parent or the class teacher, the pupil is monitored closely. If necessary, the pupil is placed on the appropriate stage of the school's special needs register. Pupils requiring specialist help have the necessary support and guidance provided. The school also supports parents well by discussing ways in which they can work in partnership with the school to support their child. Pupils' progress is reviewed regularly, and teachers and learning support assistants support pupils in line with the specialist guidance to meet the needs of pupils' statements of special educational needs, individual education plans or pastoral support plans. As a result these pupils make good progress and gain in confidence.
47. The procedures for checking the progress that pupils make are unsatisfactory overall. Statutory assessments are carried out satisfactorily and non-statutory tests are given to pupils at other critical times. However, assessments made of pupils' everyday work as to what they know, understand and can do are not used well enough to raise standards in English and science and, particularly in mathematics, where such arrangements are minimal. Despite the range of tests

that pupils undertake in reading and spelling, the information gained does not link well enough to teaching plans to help raise the pace of learning beyond the ordinary. This is because the school does not expect teachers to assess rigorously enough the progress that pupils make and use the information gained as a powerful tool in teaching and learning. For many pupils, other than those with additional or different learning needs, this is not good enough.

48. To the school's credit, it has started to deal with many of these shortcomings in assessment procedures. The common learning needs in early reading skills have now been identified and action has been relevant and effective. In other areas such as mathematics, basic skills and writing, insufficient rigour and consistency have been applied when a lack of progress among pupils has been identified. Previous shortcomings remain because they have not been tackled well enough to make a difference to pupils' achievement. For example, the common learning needs of those who could achieve more and at a faster pace are not translated into cohesive teaching plans. Too few targets are set for pupils that are measurable enough to move pupils on. In addition, for teachers to plan work that deepens understanding, teachers must expect more of their pupils.
49. There are few consistent arrangements for checking progress in subjects other than English, mathematics and science and this adversely affects achievement in subjects such as design technology, physical education and music, where skills play an important part in learning. In addition, pupils have limited understanding of their own learning, because in many lessons pupils are not expected to know what they have learned, what they can do and what they will learn next. The marking of pupils' work is flawed in this respect. Where teachers use the marking policy well, this acts as a valuable tool for teachers not only to assess how much pupils have learned but also to give them more responsibility for their own learning.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

50. Parents are very pleased with the school and the education their children receive and feel that it has improved since the previous inspection. Their positive views about the school are supported in several areas by the most recent inspection findings. The school emphasises the value it places upon its partnership with parents, including a sharing of information, and quickly involves them when problems arise with their child's behaviour or progress. Parents feel that they are welcome to come into school to consult staff if they have a problem or query. The school provides good information and opportunities for visits by parents of pupils about to enter Year 3 and communicates appropriately with them at the time Year 6 pupils transfer to high school. It also gives parents a formal opportunity to consult staff about their children's progress each term and produces a useful written report at the end of the year that shows good understanding of pupils' strengths and weaknesses and indicates what they need to do to improve.
51. Parents of pupils with special educational needs are welcomed into the school for formal and informal discussions. The special educational needs co-ordinator, special individual tutor and headteacher are all available for consultations with parents and statutory reviews are held regularly. The school also operates an 'open door' policy for any parent who wants to call in to discuss any issue relating to their child's development.
52. Overall, the school has established good links with parents so that they have opportunities to come into school for assemblies and meetings and are kept well informed of school events through a wide range of newsletters. The school seeks and responds to parents' views, for example over school uniform and the recent proposed amalgamation. The school responded to parents' concerns about their children's diet by selling fruit at break time as well as biscuits, and parents quickly became involved with a community initiative to promote healthy eating locally, by helping to sell fruit and vegetables cheaply from the community room in school. Parents sometimes help with visits and residential trips and are willing to offer particular skills such as help in the library. They have made a significant contribution to the recent improvement in pupils' reading by attending a meeting to learn about the school's approach and how they can best support their children. Several also help by regularly listening to their children read at home.

Although no formal parent/teachers' association exists, parents show their interest by supporting fundraising and other school-based events when they can.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

53. This is a school that is soundly led and managed by an experienced headteacher and other senior staff and has good support offered from its governing body. The resulting teamwork has been effective in moving the school forward on several fronts although weaknesses still exist in achieving higher standards among the pupils and improving the quality of teaching and learning. Overall, there is a commitment to meeting the school's aims and raising standards in general, including making the school totally inclusive and fully meeting the needs of all its pupils. The leadership and management of the school have made satisfactory progress since the previous inspection.
54. In his school improvement plan and daily practice, the headteacher has established a clear philosophy for growth and combined this with sound educational vision and direction. The administration of the school is good, with daily procedures being well supported by a competent and experienced school secretary. Considerable strides have been made in respect of forming effective management systems and procedures, facets of management that were relatively weak at the time of the previous inspection. Many useful policies and whole-school approaches have been initiated that have been well received and now make a clear impact on the education of the pupils and on school life in general. The policy regarding pupils' behaviour is now followed more consistently and little learning time is lost in this respect. The management of special educational needs has improved from an already secure basis to now be a strength of the school.
55. Such provision is well organised by the co-ordinator, special individual tutor and learning support assistants. All are committed to ensuring that pupils are supported well and included successfully in the full range of school activities. Learning assistants are particularly well trained and provide quality support to pupils with special educational needs as well as contributing richly to many aspects of school life. The management of the more able pupils is an example of less effective policy in practice and clearly needs to be improved. The headteacher helps to create a friendly, open school which is appreciated by pupils, staff and parents alike. The working ethos is good and many of the school's published aims are securely met.
56. The role of the subject leaders (co-ordinators) is satisfactory overall, although there is clear room for improvement. The leadership of literacy and numeracy has been given a relatively high profile in recent years. Although pupils achieve below average standards in these subjects, leadership and management remain satisfactory but with some good features. The contribution made by the Literacy and Numeracy Strategies has been satisfactory, although there are elements of these, for example the need for greater flexibility, that should be improved. In some other areas of the curriculum, there has been relatively little opportunity for subject leaders to influence standards in their subjects and there remains an overall weakness in the monitoring and evaluation of actual practice in subjects such as science, design and technology and religious education. Most co-ordinators, however, show an adequate grasp of the priorities that should be followed in their own subjects and resource their subjects well. Most have up-to-date policies that reflect current practice.
57. The governing body is good and has grown considerably in stature and influence since the previous inspection. Several governors are regular visitors into school and are able to report back to other governors on an informed basis. A significant improvement has been made not only in their working patterns, but in a closer understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses and its priorities for growth and development. As a governing body, it still has room for greater involvement in the basics of school development and in helping with the monitoring of overall performance. The committees that meet regularly are efficient and help governors to meet clearly their statutory responsibilities. The school prospectus and annual report to parents about the life of the school also meet requirements. A considerable strength is the governors' involvement with financial matters and the monitoring of the school budget in particular. Effective use is made in

this and other areas of the experience and interests of individual governors. Good quality teamwork is evident as are the high levels of enthusiasm and commitment to the cause of the school. These qualities were also evident in the management of recent amalgamation proposals.

58. All those who hold management responsibilities help in the monitoring and evaluation of the school's past and present performance. Thanks to the efforts of a particularly skilled governor, more good quality data about pupils' standards and achievements is now available for analysis. Although the school is becoming gradually more self-evaluative and this aspect of its work is satisfactory overall, there is clear scope for determining what action to take following such self-analysis and for making greater use of available data to help identify pointers for improvement. The monitoring of teaching and learning, carried out mainly by the headteacher, is rather piecemeal and lacks the rigour and pointers for development to ensure that improvements will occur. The contribution of a well-documented school improvement plan has however, become more central to school practices and activities.
59. The school has good financial procedures and exercises effective budgetary control. There are, for example, clear links between spending and declared educational priorities. Grants are used well to sharpen teachers' knowledge and to increase pupils' experiences. Financial planning is good and the school makes effective use of the technology available to become effective and efficient in the procedures it adopts. The school runs a statutory budget and spends today's money on today's children. The balance accrued reflects finance that must be spent on capital projects, an area that was temporarily suspended during amalgamation proposals. The school gives sound value for money in terms of the education it provides, the standards reached and the cost incurred. It is well aware of the need to give best value and seeks to be competitive and to compare and challenge its practice to good effect. For example, it is using a nearby beacon school to strengthen its own educational practices. The action taken to meet its targets for growth and improvement has been satisfactory to date. However, considerably more emphasis has to be placed on raising pupils' standards and the quality of teaching and learning overall. Some of its work on new teacher appraisal schemes is helping in this respect.
60. The school has a mainly experienced staff and this is used to good effect in developing specialisms and supporting the work of other colleagues. There is a satisfactory match of teachers to the demands of the curriculum and a school strength in the numbers and quality of learning support staff employed throughout the school. Particularly good examples were seen of this work in Year 3, which are helping to keep the pupil-teacher ratio small and leading to more consistent progress in reading in particular. The role of classroom staff in supporting pupils with special educational needs is particularly effective and goes a long way to securing the school's declared policy on educational inclusion.
61. The accommodation and level of learning resources are both good. The main building is bright and well maintained and there are several specialist areas such as the library and new ICT suite that are used very effectively. Accommodation that was originally built to accommodate far more than its current number of pupils, inevitably creates more space and opportunities for the children of today. The displays of pupils' work encourages others to reach for even higher standards. The school grounds are also spacious and well used although problems clearly occur with field drainage. Learning resources are generally plentiful and are of good quality. Those for English, mathematics, ICT, music and physical education are particularly good and well used to increase the interest and involvement of the pupils.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

62. In order to continue the improvements underway in pupils' standards, together with the quality of education provided by the school, the governors, headteacher and staff should:

(1) Raise standards across the school in key areas.

In English by:

- developing a wide, well-structured programme of opportunities for pupils to talk more effectively across the curriculum;
- ensuring that pupils use a wider range of reading skills that will help deepen their understanding of the books they read;
- ensuring that the basic skills of spelling, grammar, punctuation and good presentation are developed thoroughly across the school;
- developing a closer link between reading and writing so that pupils use expressive language more effectively in their writing;
- increasing the opportunities for pupils to write widely and more imaginatively across the curriculum with particular emphasis on setting work that has greater challenge for the more able pupil.

(Paragraphs 2,3,4,11,18,19,20,21,25, 28 and 63-73)

In mathematics by

- extending the opportunities for pupils to apply their knowledge and skills in helping to solve everyday problems in mathematics;
- giving more opportunities for pupils to develop their ability to read and interpret data;
- creating more stimulating and challenging work that targets accurately the needs of higher attaining pupils;

- establishing an assessment system that will guide teachers' daily planning by identifying pupils' strengths and weaknesses so that teaching and learning may be targeted more effectively.
(Paragraphs 5, 11, 18, 19, 22, 25, 29 and 74-82)

In science by:

- ensuring a wide range of topics is taught to pupils, but particularly, more investigative work designed to encourage better understanding of scientific principles;
- increasing the pupils' abilities to use a wide range of subject-specific language that will help them to record their science work more accurately;
- giving more opportunities for pupils to read and interpret data in science and to use their inferential skills more effectively;
- encouraging pupils to record their science work in a more systematic manner; to be more evaluative as to the accuracy of what they have been doing, and to say why things happen in science as they do.
(Paragraphs 6, 11, 24 and 83-94)

(2) Improve the quality of teaching and learning by:

- ensuring that the work and activities given to pupils closely match their different learning needs, particularly those of the higher-attaining pupils;
- raising teachers' expectations as to the standards pupils could and should achieve in the core subjects;
- ensuring that progress in lessons is gauged and evaluated by both teachers and pupils and that the process is used rigorously by teachers to plan the next steps in pupils' learning;
- disseminating more good practice in teaching across the school and making teachers more widely aware of their own strengths and weaknesses. The school should, as necessary, develop more flexible styles of teaching that are best suited to the learning needs of pupils of different abilities;
- improving the use made by teachers of the assessment of pupils' work. The school should ensure that marking is rigorous, follows an agreed school pattern and that it clearly shows pupils what they have to do next in order to improve their work.
(Paragraphs 11, 17-26, 58, 71, 78-79, 85, 92, 93 and 109)

(3) Improve assessment procedures by:

- Developing more consistent and systematic procedures to assess pupils' work in mathematics and the foundation subjects and ensuring that the chosen whole-school approach enables teachers to gain a clear overview of pupils' standards and progress in these subjects as they move through the school;
- ensuring that the assessment of pupils' work leads to meaningful learning targets that are shared carefully and regularly with the pupils themselves and are designed to meet clearly their changing individual needs;
- developing a more consistent whole-school approach to the marking of pupils' work. Ensure that the guidance given to pupils makes it clear as to the standards expected by the teacher and what the pupils must do next in order to improve.
(Paragraphs 47-49, 93, 109, 113 and 135)

As well as the above, the school should consider adding to its post-inspection plan the following area for development

- provision for the spiritual development of the pupils both in worship and across the curriculum.
(Paragraph 38)

Note: the school is already aware of the need to improve its position and procedures in the areas indicated above and has already begun the process of development including staff involvement in major new courses.

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	51
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	21

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Number	0	2	24	24	1	0	0
Percentage	0	4	47	47	2	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 approximately two percentage points.

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll	Y3 – Y6
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	188
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	34

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs	Y3 – Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	12
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	76

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

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	6
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	5

Attendance

Authorised absence

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	5.5
National comparative data	5.4

	%
School data	0.2
National comparative data	0.5

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

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

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2002	28	23	51

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	16	17	21
	Girls	11	12	17
	Total	27	29	38
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	53 (63)	57 (64)	75 (81)
	National	75 (75)	73 (71)	86 (87)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	15	18	19
	Girls	17	14	18
	Total	32	32	37
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	63 (63)	63 (75)	73 (76)
	National	73 (72)	74 (74)	82 (82)

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

Ethnic background of pupils

Categories used in the Annual School Census
White – British
White – Irish
White – any other White background
Mixed – White and Black Caribbean
Mixed – White and Black African
Mixed – White and Asian
Mixed – any other mixed background
Asian or Asian British - Indian
Asian or Asian British - Pakistani
Asian or Asian British – Bangladeshi
Asian or Asian British – any other Asian background
Black or Black British – Caribbean
Black or Black British – African
Black or Black British – any other Black background
Chinese
Any other ethnic group

Exclusions in the last school year

No of pupils on roll	Number of fixed period exclusions	Number of permanent exclusions
184	8	0
0	0	0
1	0	0
1	0	0
0	0	0
1	0	0
0	0	0
0	0	0
0	0	0
0	0	0
0	0	0
0	0	0
0	0	0
0	0	0
0	0	0

No ethnic group recorded

1

0

0

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

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers and classes: Y3 – Y6

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	8
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	18.4
Average class size	23.5

Education support staff: Y3 – Y6

Total number of education support staff	5
Total aggregate hours worked per week	76

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Financial information

Financial year	2001/2
	£
Total income	529,303
Total expenditure	519,856
Expenditure per pupil	2,599
Balance brought forward from previous year	72,840
Balance carried forward to next year	82,287

Recruitment of teachers

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	3
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
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	188
Number of questionnaires returned	94

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	50	45	2	1	2
My child is making good progress in school.	46	53	1	0	0
Behaviour in the school is good.	37	55	4	0	3
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	38	49	11	0	2
The teaching is good.	62	37	0	0	1
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	46	48	5	0	1
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	77	22	1	0	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	69	30	0	0	1
The school works closely with parents.	38	53	5	0	3
The school is well led and managed.	65	35	0	0	0
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	57	40	1	0	1
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	34	50	9	2	5

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

ENGLISH

63. Standards of work by the end of Year 6 are below those seen nationally. There are no significant differences between the attainment of boys and girls. Achievement in reading and writing is broadly satisfactory. The recent results of National Curriculum tests for pupils at the end of Year 6 show that standards are below and sometimes well below average for their age. A relatively small number of pupils reach the higher levels anticipated for some eleven year-olds. The indicative results from 2003 suggest that standards are set to rise over those of some previous years. Pupils with learning difficulties or special educational needs achieve well overall. Satisfactory progress has been maintained in the subject since the previous inspection.
64. Standards in speaking are below average overall. Those pupils with the confidence to speak in front of a known audience are able to shine because they have the opportunity to do so. For example, Year 6 pupils presented information about Mount Everest using multi-media electronic resources in a school assembly. Most pupils make steady progress in their listening and speaking skills throughout the school. They achieving better when discussions during lessons are encouraged and where pupils have the chance to rehearse what they might say with a partner. Many use an adequate vocabulary for their age. Some teachers extend pupils' understanding of technical words in other subjects such as science and design technology, but there are too few opportunities to discuss the ideas they are learning. This reduces the rate of progress that pupils make. Listening skills are broadly typical, though better when lessons catch their attention.
65. Reading standards are below average. The school's focus on basic reading skills and the vastly improved range and quality of books now available have helped to bridge the gaps needed to tackle unfamiliar reading material. Pupils are enthusiastic about the stories they encounter. Many of them share these eagerly with adults from the community. They take books go home and parents and members of the family give good support. This is seen in pupils' well used 'Reading Passports'. The school has developed reading for pleasure quite successfully. Of particular note is the level of reflection that pupils show when asked about characters and events in they stories they share. Where teachers read with pupils, these sessions are usually good because they provide a good level of challenge for most pupils and fire their imagination. This work has also fuelled the very positive attitudes that pupils now have towards their books. Most pupils know how to find information in a range of non-fiction books and understand the function of the contents and index pages. They also use the library well.
66. Higher attaining pupils tend to read aloud with expression and pleasure, although their skills in reading overall are nearer to those of average readers for their age. Some of the extensive and rich texts used are beginning to develop pupils' reading for understanding. Year 6 pupils have started to learn how an author uses words and phrases to create effects, for example in ghostly and scary story settings. Whilst pupils can describe these in 'story recipes', there has been too little time for them to benefit fully from this improved provision. Where teaching is good or better, pupils are beginning to gauge the intentions of an author by examining the effect that key words and phrases have on the reader. The high proportion of Year 6 pupils (approximately two out of every five) who remain significantly hampered by poor basic reading skills means that pupils are unlikely to meet national expectations in statutory tests.
67. The school uses a range of additional 'catch-up' activities effectively to deal with the pupils' limited skills in literacy as they enter Year 3. These measures support pupils with significant gaps in their knowledge of letter sounds, book knowledge and punctuation. However, there is not enough challenge in lessons for those pupils who can or have the potential to read at a deeper level and so these pupils are not able to attain more highly for their age.
68. Writing standards are below average although many pupils achieve satisfactorily over time given their below average beginnings. The notable development in writing is the good diet of high quality

books and extracts used to teach key features of writing imaginatively and for information. This has yet to reap benefits in terms of attainment but already has raised pupils' enjoyment of different authors, a vital step in learning to write. The school is aware of some of the factors that limit pupils' attainment. These include the inconsistent nature of pupils' punctuation of simple sentences and below average spelling skills. Pupils know how to write about some forms of information and show this in the reports and diaries they write. These are satisfactory. With the exception of Year 3, there are too few opportunities for pupils to write imaginatively in poems and stories so achievement is limited. Where pupils write at length, in another subject or use computers to copy out their writing, the impact is variable and sometimes weak in some classes in Years 4, 5 and 6.

69. There is still much to be done to tackle the inconsistencies in pupils' writing. Standards in handwriting and presentation are uneven across the classes. Pupils' writing is developed well in some history lessons where pupils react to historical events with sensitivity. Pupils use literacy skills in other subjects but there is no systematic plan to cover the range of writing style that pupils need to practise.
70. The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory overall. In lessons seen, the range included some good lessons. Lessons are based clearly on the Literacy Strategy format. Teachers' weekly teaching plans vary in quality some do not challenge higher attaining pupils with the potential to achieve more. Most pupils however are taught well enough to achieve satisfactorily over time. Pupils with additional or different learning needs are well supported by adults who ensure that pupils know clearly what they are learning and link activities to pupils' targets for learning in their individual learning plans. This helps pupils a great deal and they achieve all the more.
71. Teachers have sound subject knowledge and have made good efforts to tackle some of the pupils' underachievement in reading. In general, they devise interesting activities and make efforts to motivate their pupils. They use technology very well to enhance the quality of teaching and learning, often using overhead projectors and web-based resources for learning. In one notable example, Year 5 pupils used video footage of an exciting school incident and produced interesting reports. However, many pupils do not use word processing skills enough to draft and re-draft their work as a means of improving their writing. There remains some way to go to develop a unified approach to the teaching of basic literacy skills. These critical skills are one of the main reasons that standards in English are too low. A few teachers need to reflect more on their own approaches, so that revised teaching methods will lead to improved standards in literacy. The quality of marking is uneven. Where marking is at its best, pupils have detailed notes that help them to deal with their own misconceptions and move on. They are expected to revisit their work and they do so very well. Classroom assistants contribute good support to the literacy lessons and also to the valuable additional sessions they lead for small groups of pupils.
72. In the most effective lessons, learning is brisk and teachers feel confident in their knowledge. All pupils are purposely challenged and not simply expected to work on the same activity. Too often the needs of higher attaining pupils or those with the potential to achieve more are not set challenging work.
73. Leadership and management of English are sound. The deputy headteacher has recently taken responsibility for the subject. She has worked hard with others and with determination. She knows the priorities, many of which are in the school's improvement plan. There is a satisfactory range of information about the progress that pupils make in English. However, the results of assessment are not always used well enough by teachers to plan the next steps in learning for average and higher attaining pupils and there is no special provision for pupils who are gifted or talented. The monitoring of English could also be improved. Where the quality of teaching is better, professional self-reflection is evident and teachers have sought to work together to improve resources and their teaching skills. Learning resources are good and include a well-established library which is an attractive area at the heart of the school.

MATHEMATICS

74. Pupils enter the school with below average attainment, and, as a result of mainly satisfactory teaching, they make sound progress throughout the school. However, for many pupils, attainment remains below average by the end of Year 6. There is no significant difference in the attainment of boys and girls. The results of recent statutory assessments confirm that pupils' standards in mathematics are below average with relatively few pupils reaching the higher levels. Early indications from the 2003 tests are that pupils' standards are set to rise although there are still too many variations in pupils' standards year on year. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress because of the quality of the additional support they receive and through tasks that are well-matched to their abilities. The good quality provision for pupils with special educational needs is contributing to raising the school's standards of attainment over time but, because of the pupils' low starting point, this is not significantly affecting standards at the end of Year 6 at present. The school has addressed a key issue from the previous inspection by placing the National Numeracy Strategy at the heart of much that it does. There has been satisfactory improvement overall since the previous inspection.
75. Pupils in Year 3 demonstrate a satisfactory understanding of the vocabulary associated with adding and subtracting; for example, most give the correct answer of 13 when asked to decrease 15 by 2. They understand how to use appropriate written methods in addition and subtraction when presented with questions such as, 'There are 16 people on a bus and 5 more get on, how many are there altogether?' Some write this down as $16+5=21$, others set it out in columns. Pupils in Year 4 are developing a good understanding of fractions and, for example, confidently explain the relationship between 750 ml and $\frac{3}{4}$ litre. However, they are less secure in their understanding of what 750 ml looks like. With support, some pupils are beginning to convert fractions of quantities into millilitres.
76. Pupils in Year 5 have a satisfactory understanding of the language of chance and likelihood, and most distinguish between 'likely' and 'certain' in sentences they have related to the weather. They are less confident when talking about 'even chance', 'impossible' and 'unlikely'. Most pupils have a satisfactory understanding of how to represent data in tables and graphs, although they sometimes struggle when devising a scale, and mix up the horizontal and vertical axes. They also struggle in the interpretation of some data in table or graphic forms. Pupils are familiar with the term 'mode', describing it as the most frequently occurring number, but they are less secure at identifying it when handling data.
77. By the end of Year 6, pupils have covered most of the suggested activities in the National Numeracy Strategy. For example, they often handle data well and most have a good understanding of the four rules of number. They use these in column addition and subtraction of numbers, involving decimals. Most are confident in multiplying and dividing decimals by 10, 100 and 1000. Pupils also have a good understanding of how to calculate the area and perimeter of shapes and use a protractor to measure acute and obtuse angles to the nearest degree. Pupils are less confident about dealing with questions about ratio and proportion because they have had few opportunities to practice these parts of the curriculum.
78. The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory although some weaknesses clearly exist. Teaching has to be more focused and effective if standards of attainment are to rise significantly. Some lessons lack pace and pupils are not challenged sufficiently. For example, in a Year 5 lesson about the language of probability, the pace of learning was far too comfortable during the slot for mental mathematics. Some pupils struggled to provide the answers quickly because they found the questions difficult, whilst others were not challenged to contribute sufficiently. Consequently, the pace of this activity flagged and some learning opportunities were lost. In the same lesson, higher attaining pupils were given the same tasks as the rest of the class, when they were clearly capable of tackling a more demanding activity that would have extended their learning. Additional practice and meaning in mathematics could be gained by more reference to the subject in other areas of the curriculum.

79. All teachers use the recommended three-part lesson of the National Numeracy Strategy but some are allowing too little time for consolidating learning in the summary session at the end of the lesson. For example, in a Year 5 lesson pupils had collected data and were using tally marks to record it. They started to represent this in simple column graphs. The summary session at the end of the lesson was very short and left insufficient time to reflect on the learning that had taken place or to identify the next steps. Therefore pupils had an incomplete picture of learning that had taken place during the lesson.
80. Some pupils are not making the expected progress in lessons because teachers fail to set them targets and do not always make it clear what they need to do to improve. Consequently, pupils' expectations are not high as they should be, and many do not strive to raise their achievement. Most teachers share the aims of their lessons with pupils at the onset, but these are too often expressed in a complicated style that pupils find difficulty in relating to. As a result, pupils are sometimes unclear about the purpose of the lesson and are unable to self-evaluate how well they have met the lesson objectives.
81. Some areas of the Numeracy Strategy are also covered superficially, creating gaps in pupils' knowledge and understanding. For example, many pupils are not secure in using appropriate operations to solve problems involving words and in explaining their method and reasoning. This is because not enough emphasis is given to this kind of activity in some classes. The quality of marking is variable because some teachers do not identify what pupils do well and help them with the next steps in learning. They mark pupils' books with a tick only. There are some occasions when pupils' work is not marked and, because they have not received any feedback on this work, they may continue to repeat the same mistakes.
82. The leadership and management of the subject are good. The co-ordinator has undertaken classroom observations and her recommendations have been included in the school improvement plan. However, developments in classroom practice are not always monitored rigorously enough. The co-ordinator has analysed test information and identified pupils, strengths and weaknesses. In training sessions held with staff she has given good guidance on how to secure improvements in the areas of weakness. There is, however, no system for assessing pupils' progress or guiding teachers' curricular planning and this is unsatisfactory. The use of information and communication technology is good because, in classrooms, teachers use laptops linked to projectors and pupils complete graphs, tables and charts on computers. There are also satisfactory links with other subjects when pupils use measuring skills in design technology and data handling in geography. The subject makes a satisfactory contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

SCIENCE

83. By the end of Year 6, pupils' standards are below average although most make sound progress and achieve satisfactorily over time when compared to their previous learning. There are no significant differences between the standards attained by girls and boys. Pupils with special educational needs make satisfactory progress in relation to their individual targets, although this becomes good when additional adult support is available. Although the subject has become more structured and is taught currently to a sound level, progress in science has been unsatisfactory since the previous inspection in that the pupils' performance in the National Curriculum tests has been inconsistent over time and their standards have fallen overall. The latest complete assessments in science (2002) indicate that pupils' standards were well below average in relation to those of many other schools including those in similar social settings. Although indicative results from 2003 suggest that improvements are now occurring, the inspection bears out the below average attainment depicted by tests scores over several years.
84. By the time they transfer to the high school, pupils reach the required standard for their age in terms of their basic scientific knowledge and understanding of topics such as magnetism, good health, electricity, animals and food chains. However, there are significant weaknesses in relation to pupils' work, some of them directly related to shortcomings in teaching and learning.

85. Among the most important are:-
- Pupils not drawing on previous knowledge and applying it successfully in new situations.
 - A lack of confidence in the use of subject-specific vocabulary.
 - Rather too much emphasis on the learning of theoretical knowledge and less on applying science knowledge and principles to solving problems.
 - Weaknesses in handling data.
 - Difficulties with science method including the organisation and reporting of investigations.
86. Although some pupils are quite adept in some or several of these areas, significant numbers are clearly not secure and have struggled when faced with the need to make sense of their everyday work in science and particularly in their external assessment tests.
87. Pupils enter Year 3 with mainly below average standards in science. Although they cover an appropriate range of topics in reasonable depth such as a study of building materials, how light travels, studies of day and night and healthy diets, what results is very knowledge driven and there are too few opportunities for pupils to investigate and test hypotheses for themselves. As much of their recorded work is completed on worksheets, pupils have too few opportunities to use predictions and to record their work in such a way that they begin to learn about science method and how results should be expressed. In a lesson where they were asked to comment on the differences in soil samples, very few showed the ability to make a clear analysis of their findings, including comparisons. The resulting attainment was below average overall.
88. In Year 4, pupils showed only rudimentary knowledge of food chains and the dependability of animal types on others. In this year group there is a lack of scientific vocabulary that pupils are able to use with regularity and increasing confidence. The pupils' use of diagrams, graphs and tables of information could all be used more effectively. Some of the best work was undertaken during studies of the human skeleton and the varying length of pupils' legs!
89. In Year 5, pupils showed broadly average understanding of the main functions of the heart and understood the important differences between veins and arteries. When supported, they were able to measure pulse rate as a reflection of their heart beats. Under the care of the science co-ordinator and with above average planning, this year group have reached broadly average standards in relation to their work on sound, evaporation and reversible and irreversible changes. They can also give simple explanations as to how the seasons are created.
90. By the end of Year 6, some of the weaknesses indicated above have begun to take effect and pupils struggle to explain important science principles using the right language and building on previous knowledge and understanding. Although their work with data helps to make sense of the use of mathematics across the curriculum, many fail to draw the right conclusions and substantiate their results with hard evidence.
91. There is quite a wide discrepancy in the work undertaken by some pupils in the two classes and progress is at its best when the teaching and learning is undertaken in different groups containing only pupils of roughly equal ability. As the work becomes more difficult, several pupils struggle to make sense of the right approach and clearly need to think, plan, do and report their work more scientifically. How best to conduct a genuine science enquiry is not fundamental knowledge for many pupils. The standards reached in topics on gravity, forces, micro-organisms and the measurements of objects in air and water were mainly below average, with few pupils attaining the higher levels for their age.
92. The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory across the school although there are some significant areas for improvement. Whilst planning is securely rooted in the agreed range of topics for each year group, it often emphasises the mere knowledge to be gained and not the skills to be rehearsed. A further weakness is that insufficient attention is given in all year groups as to how best to interest and challenge higher attaining pupils. The activities given to these pupils is frequently too similar to that given to the less able. Sometimes merely giving pupils greater

freedom to experiment for themselves and less direction from the teacher, would be enough to raise aspects of their attainment. In some lessons, for example during a Year 6 session on conducting a science enquiry using a simple paper propeller, technical language was used very appropriately. In other lessons, such vocabulary is not adequately stressed or modelled by the teacher and pupils do not adopt its use as a matter of course.

93. Two other areas of teaching are also not strong enough. Pupils need more guidance on science method, including how best to set up a fair test and how to evaluate their experiments following simple predictions. Second, the quality and use made of teachers' marking vary significantly across the school. In a very few instances some work remains unmarked and not assessed, whilst in others the marking is not particularly helpful to the pupil and does not make it clear what they should do next to improve their work. Although statutory assessments are carried out satisfactorily and pupils' knowledge is tested mainly at the end of each topic, the whole issue of assessment and its use has to be more carefully analysed. In all classrooms, the teachers manage the pupils well and very little time is lost through inappropriate behaviour or pupils not understanding what is expected of them. The good response of pupils towards science learning contributes significantly to the progress they make.
94. The subject is led and managed satisfactorily, although the co-ordinator for science has too little influence on pupils' standards and the quality of teaching and learning, much of which remains unmonitored. He exercises greater influence on what is taught and when, and has carried out a useful and accurate audit as to strengths and weaknesses in science and what needs to be targeted next. The most recent science policy is well written and states very clearly the stance taken by the school in the subject. The subject meets statutory requirements. Resources for science are satisfactory, although more use could be made of ICT to help interrogate data and to aid the pupils' own research.

ART AND DESIGN

95. Standards in art and design are generally good and by the end of Year 6 significant numbers of pupils show an above average flair for the subject. Much of their completed work shows maturity and self-expression to a standard higher than is typical for many of their age. Most pupils achieve well in art and make good progress using a wide range of media. Boys and girls approach the subject with equal enthusiasm and reach broadly similar standards. Many pupils with special educational needs find they can do well in this 'non-academic' subject, particularly when they are encouraged and have extra support. Those with additional talent in art are also well supported. The subject meets statutory requirements and is a good example of the school's growing policy on inclusion whereby the strengths of individual pupils are recognised and supported. The subject has improved satisfactorily since the previous inspection, when it was also a relative strength of the curriculum.
96. Pupils are told there is little to fear in art and that there are only differing and individual styles and approaches. This gives pupils the confidence 'to have a go' and experiment with colour, pattern and form. In Year 3, pupils were able to express their ideas freely in the form of coloured clowns that depicted happiness and laughter. As with all year groups, Year 3 use art well to support their learning in other subjects. Their efforts to draw miners to illustrate a history topic were completed well, as were their various ideas to portray a Treasure Island. Pupils in Years 3 and 4 combined art and local history by weaving designs that depicted the local environment.
97. Pupils work is eye-catching partly because of the range and variety of work undertaken. This was illustrated well in Year 5 when pupils completed pieces of their own work in the style of the artist Rousseau. Most pupils were able to adapt their ideas very well, working their pictures from the top downwards. The same year group completed some good work on silhouettes but combined it with a study on perspective and scale, limiting themselves effectively to mainly one colour.
98. By the end of Year 6, pupils have very much a style and approach of their own and show themselves capable of calling on previous experiences and then experimenting with new

techniques. During one such lesson, the pupils were inspired by photographic evidence to create their own bird masks in an exotic style. The results were well above average as pupils allowed their imaginations to take over and completed the masks using special paint or various bright materials. At all stages, older pupils are asked to assess their work set against how they had first envisaged it and to improve on the finished piece as they were able. By way of contrast, the same pupils show their flair for the abstract, creating their own art gallery based on aboriginal paintings.

99. Although a limited amount of art teaching was available for direct observation, planning and pupils' work on display suggest that teaching is at least sound across the school and good in Year 6, where the art co-ordinator has a major input into teaching and learning. Teachers have sound subject knowledge, and across the school, there is a strong emphasis on the teaching and learning of many basic skills and techniques in art that are practised and developed in subsequent years. The use made of resources and support staff is also a strong feature of the teaching programme. Expectations of the pupils are satisfactory overall, but high in Year 6, where self-expression is encouraged and where the interest, curiosity and enthusiasm of the pupils are developed well. The aim of providing pupils with opportunities to experience and investigate different media and then apply their knowledge to successful art works well. Some pupils are very self-motivated when it comes to their work and regularly bring in related artwork completed at home.
100. The subject is well led by an experienced co-ordinator who exerts considerable influence on standards and projects an enthusiasm for art that other staff learn from. She puts forward an effective art and design curriculum ensuring that the subject is viewed as a subject in its own right. However, art is also used very effectively to support the rest of the curriculum, including history, geography and multicultural education. The school has a tradition of entering art competitions and usually does well. House competitions are often art based and many pupils take part. ICT is used satisfactorily but more could be done with computer software to develop particular art forms. Although some forms of informal assessments are carried out, there is no whole-school approach and this is rightly a priority for the future. Resources are of good quality and used well to add curiosity, imagination and celebration to the school environment. Art could be used more effectively to promote the spiritual aspects of pupils' personal development.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

101. By the end of Year 6 pupils attain the standards broadly expected for their age and most make satisfactory progress in design and technology skills. Pupils with special educational needs make progress at a similar rate to their peers and there is no significant difference between the attainment of girls and boys. There has been satisfactory improvement in the subject since the previous inspection and standards are broadly similar to those found at that time.
102. The school has largely adopted the nationally recognised schemes of work and has effectively adapted these to a progressive plan of skill activities which is devised so that each activity builds on pupils' prior learning. For example, in Years 4 and 5, pupils make moving pictures. However, the expectations are different for each age group, as older pupils apply the skills of working in two dimensions from Year 4 to three-dimensional work in Year 5. By the end of Year 5, pupils use syringes and plastic tubing to make a simple hydraulic system, and use pneumatics when they blow up balloons to create movement in their 'Snappy Monsters'. By the end of Year 6, pupils use science skills well to power electric motors in cars. They use materials imaginatively when constructing the car body, such as cotton bobbins, bottle top lids, pipe cleaners and card. Elastic bands are used to connect the motor to the axle, and because pupils know how to join materials effectively, the car's chassis is stable and secure.
103. The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory, overall. Four lessons were observed and of these, teaching was good in two and satisfactory in the others. In a good Year 5 lesson pupils were expected to work in three dimensions, creating a moving picture using linear motion. The teacher introduced the activity well, using an exemplar model to discuss processes pupils should

consider in design and construction. There was a good exchange of questions between teacher and pupils which clarified the task. Pupils' developing work demonstrated good use of the skills covered earlier. As in other lessons, the teacher circulated well, checking pupils' progress and stopping the class occasionally to address any misunderstanding. Towards the end of the lesson pupils carried out a joint evaluation, identifying what had worked well and what could be improved next time. In some lessons this important part of the learning process is missing. A strength in most sessions is the positive attitudes and behaviour of the pupils which contributes well to their own learning. In those lessons where teaching was less effective, the pace tended to drop and this impacted adversely on the rate of progress pupils made. In other lessons, the teaching was a little too directed, inhibiting pupils' decisions and choices.

104. The leadership and management of the subject are satisfactory. However, there has been no monitoring and evaluation of teaching recently nor checking of teachers' planning, and this is unsatisfactory. Some teachers assess pupils' work at the end of topics, but there is no school assessment system for identifying pupils' strengths and weaknesses and guiding teachers' curriculum planning, and this is unsatisfactory. Information and communication technology is used well; for example a camera was set up in a Year 5 food technology lesson to give an overhead view of kneading bread. The subject is adequately resourced, and pupils regularly bring materials from home to use in construction. There are satisfactory links with other subjects; for example, pupils use literacy skills when writing evaluations, or make instruments such as 'rainmakers' which they use in music lessons. The subject makes a satisfactory contribution to pupils' spiritual, social and cultural development.

GEOGRAPHY

105. Inspection evidence indicates that attainment matches that expected nationally by the end of Year 6. Achievement is sound overall. Pupils' knowledge of the geography of the local area is strong. Literacy skills are fostered through a range of reading and writing tasks but the standards pupils attain in writing information hinders their recorded work. There are no differences in the attainment of girls and boys. Pupils with special educational needs achieve a little better than most because of the good support offered by classroom assistants. The subject has made satisfactory progress since the previous inspection.
106. Pupils achieve soundly in the themes they study. The topics that Year 6 pupils study include mountains and rivers. In an interview with pupils in Year 6, they show some knowledge of these features and can broadly explain the route a river takes. They have limited knowledge of key geographical terms such as *erosion and deposition* but do know that rivers can change their course over time. They have good knowledge of local environmental issues and overall have an adequate knowledge of places in the world. Many of the pupils have a good understanding of the geographical features of the area. They can quickly describe the changes and impact that humans have on the landscape because there is first hand geographical material around them in the land use and the area's heritage. They can explain the damage caused to the environment and their views show a keen sense of moral duty. Some of this knowledge they bring with them to school. Good use of computers is enhancing the subjects. Year 5 pupils use web pages readily to inform their work. This they do well.
107. Learning is promoted well through the regular trips taken locally. The residential visit made annually by Year 5 pupils supports many elements of the subject as does the good range of visits the pupils make as part of the curriculum. These help to forge an understanding of local geographical features compared with the streets, towns and cities (including London) that some pupils have visited. Planning focuses pupils on finding and using information but as yet pupils do not organise these things enough for themselves.
108. The quality of teaching and learning is sound. Some of the teaching fosters interest in the subject where there are imaginative ways for pupils to understand ideas, mainly using ICT. However there is a tendency to over-direct pupils in activities and this does not always move the learning on. Evidence from pupils' work indicates that some planned activities do not always

challenge higher attaining pupils or those who could achieve more. This weakness apart, most lessons are planned well and include good resources and ideas for development. Several staff show good subject knowledge, particularly of the immediate area, and use this to good effect during field work.

109. Subject leadership and management is sound. There has been little opportunity for her to assess and monitor the quality of teaching and learning in the subject but the work of the school is set to be reviewed as outlined in the school's plans for development. Since the previous inspection, she has informed staff about new topics and resources, and ensured that the subject has maintained its buoyancy, given the background of other school priorities. The curriculum is soundly balanced and relevant to pupils' lives but there are no systems in place to assure that pupils make consistent progress. The co-ordinator is aware of the need to ensure that pupils develop geographical skills, such as mapping, on a regular basis. There is a good range of resources to support the search for information. These include CD ROMS, books, photographs and sources that open up questions about cultures other than their own. There is currently no provision for gifted and talented pupils in the subject.

HISTORY

110. Inspection evidence indicates that attainment is broadly average by the end of Year 6. When pupils discuss local history they show a remarkable interest in and empathy with the past legacy of the industrial landscape and objects from this era. There is no difference in the attainment of girls and boys and pupils achieve well overall. The subject has made sound progress since the previous inspection.
111. Year 6 pupils show a clear understanding of the passage of time. They respond well to stories, information and particularly to the memories of grandparents and older people in the community. Pupils' literacy skills limit their attainment overall but teachers use a broad range of resources, including computers, to enhance learning. Pupils are drawn into a deeper understanding of the past because teachers develop their skills of thinking and questioning better in this subject than in many others. Pupils are primed to search the Internet, use books and photographs, objects as well as places of historical significance. They understand how the past is represented, how bias might affect facts and particularly how lives are changed by events. In an interview with Year 6 pupils, two of them explained the impact of events in World War Two on the local area. They demonstrated an understanding of and allegiance to the community rarely seen in pupils this age.
112. Good teaching and learning provokes this level of interest and compassion. This is seen in the work of pupils in Year 3 who delve into the history of the iron ore mines of Millom. They are not well able to record their thoughts and feelings as would most pupils this age. Teachers compensate by using a wealth of objects and resources and by fostering personal research at a simple level. Research is a growing strength in the subject. However, there is an uneven level of challenge for higher attaining pupils. Activities planned for pupils to record their findings sometimes limit their written responses because the worksheets are too easy when compared to pupils' historical understanding. Teachers make efforts to ensure that the subject is lively and thought provoking. It is evident from work on display that pupils with additional or different learning needs achieve as well as other pupils, given support. They too benefit from objects from the past that invite questions. More challenging areas could be given to higher attaining pupils for them to explore independently of the teacher.
113. Good leadership and management bring the spirit of this subject to life. The co-ordinator provides good support for other staff and checks that pupils continue to gain from the subject almost as well as they did at the time of the previous inspection. She has helped to develop relevant links with information technology by identifying useful Internet sites in which to browse. There are no formal assessment arrangements in place to check what pupils have learned. These are written into the co-ordinator's plan of action for the subject.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

114. By the end of Year 6, pupils' standards in information and communication technology are above those expected nationally. Pupils achieve well and particularly so in Year 6, where standards are rising all the time. Pupils make good progress during lessons and over time, including those who have additional or different learning needs. There are no differences in the attainment levels of girls and boys. The subject has made rapid strides since the previous inspection and is on course to be a curricular strength of the school.
115. Year 6 pupils can log onto the computer and find the route through to their own folder with ease. They communicate with other schools, including an international school, via email safely, search web pages with electronic fluency and manipulate information, graphics and text into multi-media presentations with considerable flair. Word processing and computer skills, are developing well in all year groups. The breadth of using ICT is at its greatest in Year 6 where pupils have benefited from an increasing use of their skills in other subjects. Pupils with additional or different learning needs work enthusiastically and cope as well as other pupils with the activities because instructions are clear and they are guided by knowledgeable support staff

who have been trained in ICT. They gain much from the specialised software and dedicated equipment. Learning this way gives these pupils pleasure and makes new and catch-up work interesting.

116. Pupils in Year 3 get off to a flying start in understanding how computers can be used to search for and transmit information. They too learn how to use email and start to exchange messages with nearby schools. Teachers' increased knowledge, supported by an able subject leader, has raised confidence in the technology and enabled teachers to enhance their resources for teaching and learning. This is increasing the momentum of pupils' learning in the subject and starting to enrich other subjects. The full breadth of National Curriculum provision is embedded in teaching plans and this ensures that pupils are now achieving a streamlined series of new skills.
117. Developments in teaching and learning are demonstrated in the work that pupils undertake. For example Year 4 pupils use data-logging to keep a running check on the noise levels at key points around the school. Their findings posed more questions and fuelled ideas about simple scientific reasons as well as increasing their understanding of patterns in graphs. In this subject, higher attaining pupils and those with the potential to achieve more, do so.
118. The quality of teaching and learning is good. Interestingly, much of the evidence of pupils' achievement is stored electronically. Not enough of it is used thoughtfully so that pupils might see their own progress and learn from it. The school has some arrangements in place to check pupils' progress but as skills accelerate for all pupils, these arrangements are not systematic enough to ensure that the needs of all groups of pupils are suitably met. In one very good lesson seen, the skill, flair and knowledge of the teacher and subject leader stepped up the pace of learning through an exciting challenge to produce a spiral using "logo" - simple software to control an on-screen device.
119. Leadership is good. The subject leader has brought the impetus to teaching and learning through ICT in the school. He hides his expertise and allows the pupils to shine as they demonstrate their own skills. Sound safety precautions exist regarding child access to the Internet. Collectively, the subject leader, teamwork and a whole-school effort have brought substantial improvements in the subject since the previous inspection. These include a more central, larger room for the computer suite, which is now light and airy. Staff expertise and training have improved to meet increasing national expectations. All pupils use ICT in the well-equipped computer suite and this is linked to most classrooms so that resources from the Internet and files can be used in lessons by teachers and pupils.

MUSIC

120. By the end of Year 6, pupils' standards are broadly at the level anticipated for their age. Most achieve satisfactorily in the subject and there are no significant differences between the attainment of girls and boys. Pupils with special educational needs often excel in music and regularly taste success, which helps to raise self-esteem. It is also a subject where some pupils can express their talents and interests through an individual instrument. Although standards have remained similar to those of the previous inspection, curricular provision has been strengthened, a greater range of experiences is now available to the pupils and resources have improved over what they were.
121. All pupils receive up to an hour of music per week and, over time, they experience all the statutory strands of the National Curriculum including composition, appraising music and singing and performing. Pupils in Years 3 and 4 enjoy the benefit of a visiting specialist who undertakes work in singing and the use of simple accompaniments. During the inspection, pupils in these year groups sang satisfactorily a range of traditional and more modern songs and were able to demonstrate simple rhythms by their use of familiar percussion instruments and drums.

122. In Years 5 and 6 pupils are taught by their own teachers and good lessons were observed in these year groups as pupils developed their own compositions and accompaniments. In Year 5, the two classes developed their own birthday song from verses written by separate groups. Many pupils showed satisfactory knowledge and understanding as to which instruments could be used most effectively to pick out a melody or to provide various rhythms. In Year 6, pupils performed during worship a piece about climbing Mount Everest that combined beautifully a fixed, almost rap like beat, with the story of the climb itself.
123. The quality of teaching is satisfactory overall but there are pockets of good practice that can occur across all age-groups. Some of the work undertaken in Year 5 is particularly good because of the influence and work of the subject co-ordinator. Although planning is a little diverse and needs more structure, pupils' skills are developed well enough. Good use is made of the time available. Lessons proceed with a good pace but with some time built in for reflection and for pupils to consider how best to improve their contributions. Good use is also made of available staff including, not only specialist help but the support of additional adults who help raise pupils' enthusiasm and levels of concentration. Pupils contribute to their learning through their own good response and creative effort. Assessment is unsatisfactory in that no agreed whole-school approach is in evidence and only very loose records are passed on between classes.
124. The subject is led and managed satisfactorily by an enthusiastic teacher who has improved considerably the range of resources and experiences available to the pupils. Three visiting music teachers provide extra tuition in brass, clarinet, flute, guitar, keyboard and recorders. The co-ordinator also provides tuition in brass to a lunchtime group. All these experiences undoubtedly help enrich the basic music curriculum and ensure that individual talents are developed. Many pupils progress to take graded examinations or represent the school at festivals. In addition, all pupils are given the opportunity to perform either with the local small school's music group or in concerts given as part of the school's good links with the community. Apart from the use of tape recorders, the potential use of ICT has not been explored or utilised fully. The subject encourages multicultural links through well-received visits such as an Indian music ensemble and an African dance group. Resources are good and include a wide range of instruments that are in very good condition and which are used effectively by all year groups.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

125. By the end of Year 6, pupils' standards are above average in some of the strands within the PE curriculum and most pupils achieve well in this high profile subject as they move through the school. Pupils with particular talents are well provided for. Pupils with special educational needs also progress well, often seeing PE as a subject in which learning difficulties are easily set aside and a 'feel good factor' can emerge. The subject has improved considerably in its range and organisation since the previous inspection and standards have been strengthened in several areas.
126. Although only a limited number of activities were available for direct observation, lesson plans and curriculum organisation indicates strongly that all elements of the PE curriculum are covered during the year and that statutory requirements are met. The school achieved the Activemark award in 2001 in recognition of both the curricular and extra-curricular activities it offers to the pupils. During the inspection, quite specific skills and activities were undertaken by the pupils and, in all lessons, the pupils reached at least broadly average standards. In Year 6, some higher than average standards were reached.
127. In Years 3 and 4, pupils experiment with jumps involving different styles and landings and were able to adapt these to their own sense of challenge and comfort. Some improved their sprinting techniques as they practised forms of shuttle relay using a beanbag. Those in Year 3 performed well during country dancing, showing good levels of knowledge and execution as they worked through a series of circle and paired dances.

128. Pupils in Years 5 and 6 practise their throwing and bowling skills, developing good levels of accuracy and knowledge of how best these skills can be used in minor games such as Kwik Cricket. Almost all Year 6 pupils took part in their Cycling Proficiency and many showed good levels of skill by the time their instruction was complete. Available evidence gives a strong indication that, by the end of Year 6, standards within several competitive sports are above the level expected for a majority of pupils of this age. This is reflected in the school's success in regional rugby, athletics, tennis, football and cricket. In some of these sports, pupils represent the school to county level, visiting several famous venues as they do so. Records show that all pupils have the opportunity to swim during either a one-or-two year period and that a high proportion attain 25 metres or more. No gymnastics was available for observation, making it difficult to ascertain pupils' levels within this strand of the curriculum.
129. The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory overall but good in the upper school. Teachers have secure knowledge of the skills they intend to develop and, although written planning is not consistently good between classes, it nevertheless results in well-structured lessons that give a sound blend of different activities and which stretch the pupils and make learning active and fun. Pupils add much to their own learning by their enthusiasm and physical efforts. Teachers provide much enthusiasm to the learning process, although some need to ensure they dress appropriately themselves for activities where pupil safety could be a factor. The pupils are usually prompt out of the classrooms and change appropriately for the lessons. Teachers give appropriate attention to 'warm up and cool down' activities and use pupils well to demonstrate good practice. In all observed lessons, teachers laid good emphasis on the teaching of techniques as well as learning should be fun and self-evaluating.
130. The curriculum for PE provides a good and wide ranging series of experiences for the pupils. As well as the statutory strands, the curriculum is enhanced by extra-curricular clubs and adventurous activities undertaken during a residential period in the Lake District. There is also good emphasis on pupils observing at first hand the skills of those who have achieved excellence in their chosen sports. Pupils regularly attend Wimbledon with the school and go to Sheffield to watch international netball. The school regularly receives positive feedback from parents about the sporting opportunities offered to their children and the benefit and pleasure they bring. Links with the community are strong and productive, with the school making use of many sports development officers who work with the pupils in several sport-specific areas. The subject also provides well for the moral, social and cultural development of many pupils. PE is very well led and managed by an experienced co-ordinator who has done much to maintain the high profile of the subject over the recent past. Her commitment to the subject is obvious and she contributes much by her own knowledge and enthusiasm. Resources are good and well used across the school although the use of ICT has not been fully established as an additional learning tool. The accommodation supports learning well with a well appointed hall and spacious yards and grassed areas.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

131. By the end of Year 6, pupils' attainment is in line with the expectations of the locally agreed syllabus for religious education. There is no significant difference in the attainment of girls and boys. All pupils, including those with special educational needs, make satisfactory progress throughout the school. There has been satisfactory improvement in the subject since the previous inspection, when there were insufficient artefacts to support teaching. This weakness has now been rectified.
132. The school follows guidance within the locally agreed syllabus, and the national schemes of work. By the end of Year 6, pupils develop a satisfactory understanding of world religions by making links between religious symbols and the stories, beliefs or ideas that underlie them. For example, pupils in Year 3 understand the significance of the Bible to Christians and have a satisfactory knowledge of the life and teaching of Jesus. Pupils in Year 4 are developing an understanding of festivals and celebrations and the importance of Diwali to Hindus. Pupils in Year 5 have a good understanding of the differences between a Buddhist Temple and a Christian

Church, mainly as a result of their visit to a Buddhist Temple in Ulverston. By the end of Year 6, pupils have a satisfactory understanding of the Qur'an and talk confidently about the significance of the Five Pillars of Islam to Muslims.

133. The quality of teaching is satisfactory overall. In a very good Year 3 lesson pupils visited a local church to find out about signs and symbols in religion and also the role of Christianity as a religion in the neighbourhood. As they entered the church, pupils stared in awe at the stained glass windows, commenting on their beauty. They were stunned to discover the church had been there for nine hundred years. The lesson developed pupils' knowledge and understanding very well because they had to search for information, rather than merely being told it by an adult. Visiting staff had very good subject knowledge and the opportunity to experience a place of worship at first hand brought classroom learning to life. Pupils' excellent attitudes and behaviour contributed to their own very good progress. The visit made a very good contribution to pupils' spiritual development.
134. In a satisfactory lesson, pupils in Year 4 looked at religions in their neighbourhood and compared these to those found in Durham. They used text books and a classroom display to establish there was a greater number of denominations and religions in Durham than there was in their home town of Millom. Most pupils were unable to explain why this should be the case, mainly because they had an insufficiently developed understanding of the relationship between population movement, settlement, and the spread of religious activity over time. Therefore, pupils' progress was satisfactory rather than good, if only because some of the learning required them to use knowledge and skills that they had not yet acquired in other areas of the curriculum.
135. The leadership and management of the subject are satisfactory. The co-ordinator has not monitored and evaluated teaching, nor devised a system for assessing pupils' progress, as she has only accepted responsibility for the area very recently. The subject policy is out of date and will be reviewed, along with the long-term plan, in the near future. There are satisfactory links with other curriculum areas, especially personal, social, health and citizenship education, where pupils take part in 'circle time' to promote their self-esteem and develop confidence. Information and communication technology is used when pupils search for information about religions on the Internet. A member of the local clergy visits school, but no other faith visitors lead collective worship on a regular basis. There are sufficient resources to support the curriculum, including video recordings, artefacts and books. The subject makes a satisfactory contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.