

INSPECTION REPORT

BASSENTHWAITE PRIMARY SCHOOL

Keswick

LEA area: Cumbria

Unique reference number: 112128

Headteacher: Mrs J Terry

Lead inspector: Mr J J Peacock

Dates of inspection: 26th to 27th January 2004

Inspection number: 255445

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

© Crown copyright 2004

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:	Primary
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	4-11
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
Number on roll:	38
School address:	School Road Bassenthwaite Keswick Cumbria
Postcode:	CA12 4QH
Telephone number:	01768 776365
Fax number:	01768 776365
Appropriate authority:	The governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mrs D Binns
Date of previous inspection:	April 1998

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

This rural community school, situated on the outskirts of a picturesque Lake District village, is much smaller than the average primary school. It enjoys a good reputation locally and numbers have increased steadily since the previous inspection with about one third of the pupils travelling from out of the normal catchment area. There are 38 pupils on roll, 22 boys and 16 girls in two classes. The attainment of most children on entry to the school is above average although the full range of abilities is represented.

The number eligible for free school meals, 2.6 per cent, is well below the national average. The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs is in line with the national average with about 19 per cent on the register. The school provides for most from its own resources but additional help has been sought from specialists for a few pupils with moderate learning difficulties and social, emotional and behavioural problems. Although the number is small, the proportion with a statement of special educational needs is well above average. The mobility of pupils is a significant factor in this small school. Although only three pupils joined during term time and just one left last year, 10 of the 17 pupils in the current Year 6 started school after Year 1. Staffing is stable but there has been some disruption to the school's development caused by five periods of maternity leave since the previous inspection.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
25344	Mr J J Peacock	Lead inspector	Foundation Stage
			English as an additional language
			English
			Information and communication technology
			Art and design
			Design and technology
			Music
			Physical education
9511	Mrs A Longfield	Lay inspector	
22881	Mr G Halliday	Team inspector	Mathematics
			Science
			Geography
			History
			Modern language
			Religious education
			Special educational needs

The inspection contractor was:

Eclipse Education (UK) Limited
 14 Enterprise House
 Kingsway
 Team Valley
 Gateshead
 Tyne & Wear
 NE11 0SR

Any concerns or complaints about the inspection or the report should be made initially to the inspection contractor. The procedures are set out in the leaflet '*Complaining about Ofsted Inspections*', which is available from Ofsted Publications Centre (telephone 07002 637833) or Ofsted's website (www.ofsted.gov.uk).

REPORT CONTENTS

	Page
PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT	4
PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE MAIN INSPECTION FINDINGS	
STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS	7
Standards achieved in areas of learning, subjects and courses	
Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities	
QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL	9
Teaching and learning	
The curriculum	
Care, guidance and support	
Partnership with parents, other schools and the community	
LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT	13
PART C: THE QUALITY OF EDUCATION IN AREAS OF LEARNING AND SUBJECTS	16
AREAS OF LEARNING IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE	
SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 1 AND 2	
PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS	28

PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

OVERALL EVALUATION

This is an effective school. It is a very happy and friendly school and is providing a good education for all its pupils. As a result, all do well. The quality of provision for the Foundation Stage, which covers children in their reception year, is very good. Detailed records show that individual pupils make good progress throughout the school. The very small numbers and good quality of teaching ensures that pupils with special educational needs also make very good progress with most achieving the standards expected of them. The school has a good reputation in the area and many parents choose to send their children to it, even though it means travelling some distance. School development in areas such as procedures for assessing pupils' attainment and progress and evaluating provision have been slower than expected because of staff absences resulting from maternity leave. However, much has been achieved under the very capable leadership of the headteacher. All pupils enjoy coming to school and this is reflected in the well above average attendance figures. Even when the high costs are taken into account, the school is still providing good value for money.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- The popular headteacher has a clear vision of where the school is going and what needs to be done.
- The level of achievement for individual pupils by Year 6 is good with much of their work being well above average. Pupils with special educational needs do particularly well here.
- Children are given a very good start to school because of the very good quality of provision in the Foundation Stage. They also benefit from being with older pupils.
- The quality of the curriculum and added opportunities, which enrich pupils' learning experiences, are a credit to the dedication and commitment of staff in this very small school.
- Pupils have a very good attitude towards school, behave very well and enjoy a very close and supportive relationship with staff. Consequently, the ethos for learning is very positive.
- The partnership with parents and links with the community are strengths.
- Attendance is very good. The family atmosphere encourages pupils to want to attend.
- Procedures to assess pupils' attainment and progress in some subjects are unsatisfactory.
- Documented evidence of the school's assessment of its performance fails to show clearly strengths and areas for development. Governors need a bigger role in this process.
- The accommodation for physical education is unsatisfactory.

The level of improvement from the previous inspection has been good, considering all the long periods of staff absence in this very small school. It reflects the quality of leadership and management provided by the headteacher and governors. Challenging work is set in most lessons and the quality of curriculum planning is now very good. As a result, pupils are highly motivated and try very hard to produce good work. There are plenty of opportunities for pupils of all ages to take responsibility and to show initiative. The school has successfully improved staff expertise and raised standards in information and communication technology (ICT). The concerns about the inadequate accommodation for physical education remain but staff work hard to ensure the full curriculum is properly covered.

STANDARDS ACHIEVED

Results in National Curriculum tests at the end of Year 6, compared with:	all schools			similar schools
	2001	2002	2003	2003
English	C	E	B	C
mathematics	A	C	B	C
science	B	C	A*	A*

Key: A - very high; A - well above average; B - above average; C - average; D - below average; E - well below average
Similar schools are those with a similar percentage of pupils who are eligible for free school meals.*

Pupils throughout the school achieve well. In 2003, only five pupils took the national tests in Year 6 and just one pupil sat the tests in Year 2. Comparing the performance of so few pupils to that of pupils in other schools or similar schools is therefore not realistic. The level of achievement for individual pupils by Year 2 and Year 6 is good. In the Foundation Stage and for those pupils with special educational needs throughout, the level of achievement is very good. These judgements are based on school records for individual pupils. The very good quality of provision for the nine children in the reception class is partly due to the added influence of older pupils in the same class and the support of a skilled teaching assistant. It ensures that all children do very well to attain the early learning goals in all six areas of their curriculum by the end of their reception year. Inspection evidence confirms that the pupils currently in Year 6 and in Year 2 achieve well and much of their work is well above average in English and mathematics and above average in science. Pupils of all ages do well in ICT and standards are above those normally seen. In religious education, standards throughout are in line with the requirements of the Locally Agreed Syllabus. There was insufficient evidence to make judgements about other subjects.

Provision for pupils' personal development, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Most pupils have a good range of well-established personal and social skills from their home backgrounds. The school has good arrangements to capitalise on these and makes good provision to enhance pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. The curriculum, for example, provides pupils of all ages with good opportunities to work together, enhancing their social interaction. As a result, most are self-confident and enjoy trusting relationships with all adults.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION

The quality of education provided by the school is good. The overall quality of teaching and learning is also good. Assessment procedures are satisfactory, overall. The quality of teaching in the Foundation Stage has been improved from good to very good. Key strengths in teaching and learning throughout are; the good use made of full and part-time teachers with specific areas of expertise in music, ICT and English; the contribution of the extremely competent teaching assistants to pupils' learning; pupils' application and productivity and the insistence on very high standards of behaviour in class. Weaknesses are a lack of consistency in the assessment of pupils' progress in some subjects and, to a lesser extent, the variability in the quality of marking and insufficient time being allowed for summing up sessions at the end of lessons. The staff provide pupils with high levels of care, support and guidance.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Leadership and management are good. The leadership and management by the headteacher is very good. The quality of governance is good. Overall, management is effective. All statutory requirements are met. The very effective leadership of the headteacher is largely responsible for a good level of improvement that has been achieved since the previous inspection, despite the disruption caused by long periods of staff absence. Management structures have been carefully developed and implemented and good financial management underpins these. There are good procedures to monitor standards and the quality of teaching. However, documenting the results of monitoring visits is inadequate and governors are not sufficiently involved in the evaluation of all aspects of school life. This will involve the headteacher clearly defining their roles and delegating more responsibility to individual governors. The principles of best value are applied to all areas, ensuring resources are used wisely and efficiently.

PARENTS' AND PUPILS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

Parents and pupils have very positive views about the school. The only areas of concern for some parents were about pupils' behaviour, bullying and information about pupils' progress. Inspection evidence shows that pupils' behaviour is of a high standard and bullying is not a problem at the school. Parents are well informed about pupils' progress and have excellent access to teachers at

any time. Some pupils also had concerns over the behaviour of other children. Inspection evidence did not substantiate this. Apart from undue noise at lunchtime, pupils' behaviour is very good.

IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

The most important things the school should do to improve are:

- Develop and implement consistent procedures to assess pupils' attainment and progress in subjects other than English, mathematics, science and ICT.
- Document, in detail, the conclusions from monitoring and evaluating the effectiveness of the school's provision and involve governors more in the process.
- Continue to improve the accommodation for physical education and renew efforts to find a suitable playing field nearer to the school than the village green to save valuable curriculum time.

PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS

STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

Standards achieved in areas of learning and subjects

Overall, pupils' level of achievement is good. Most children enter the school with above average levels of attainment but the full range of abilities is present. All children achieve the learning targets set for them by the end of their reception year. By Year 6, school records show that all pupils have made good progress in relation to their prior attainment. Most of the work seen during the inspection was well above average in the core subjects of English and mathematics and above average in science.

Reliably comparing pupils overall performance in the national tests for Year 2 and Year 6 pupils with that of pupils in all other schools or in similar schools is difficult because of the very small numbers involved. Similarly, in the current Year 6, there are only two pupils and in Year 2, there are only five. This also makes it very difficult to judge the overall standards being achieved by all pupils in Year 2 and Year 6 and the trends over time.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children do well in their reception year because of the very good quality of provision for them in most areas.
- The provision for the few pupils with special educational needs is very good, helping most to achieve the levels expected by Year 6.
- The rate of progress is good for all pupils throughout because of the level of support and good quality of teaching.
- Standards in ICT have improved significantly since the previous inspection.
- The limited space indoors and lack of a playing field makes it difficult for teachers to raise standards in physical education. However, they compensate well for the deficiencies.

Commentary

1 The very good provision for the nine children in the Foundation Stage ensures that they quickly settle into school and make good progress. All are well on course to achieve the goals they are expected to reach in all six areas of learning, by the end of their reception year. The close relationships, which are possible because of the very small numbers, helps to give children confidence. As a result of this and the effect of having older pupils to rely on in the same class, all make particularly good progress in their personal, social and emotional development. The class teacher or the skilled teaching assistant, working separately from Year 1 and 2 pupils usually teaches literacy and numeracy to reception children. This arrangement helps children to build on their already advanced knowledge and to make very good progress in these two areas. Children's progress is good in all other areas, including their physical development. The playground adventure equipment and freedom to use physical education equipment such as bats, balls and hoops at playtimes helps to compensate for the limitations imposed by the accommodation. Children also have good access to a good variety of large toys such as bikes.

2 Pupils make good progress throughout, thanks largely to the consistently good and often very good quality of teaching. Additionally, all pupils have a very good attitude to their learning and most behave in a mature and sensible way in lessons. Every parent who responded to the questionnaire sent out prior to the inspection agreed that staff expect pupils to work hard. The small numbers, interesting curriculum and good resource levels are other factors which contribute significantly to the good progress pupils make.

3 Teachers plan literacy and numeracy sessions very well and provide pupils with challenging work. All pupils have individual targets for these two subjects, clearly displayed in the front of their exercise books. In Years 5 and 6, high standards in reading are achieved as pupils

discuss aspects of a book they are reading with a part-time English specialist. Pupils produce a lot of written work and it is mostly neatly presented. In science, insufficient emphasis is given to investigations and pupils need more opportunities to conduct experiments in order to raise standards further.

4 ICT was a key issue for the school in the previous inspection because of low standards and questions over teachers' subject expertise. A significant improvement has taken place. Standards are now above those normally seen throughout, due to the developing staff expertise and the efforts of the knowledgeable part-time teacher who also acts as the subject co-ordinator. Inspectors saw that computers were used effectively to support pupils' learning in most subjects. The school is waiting for a Broadband connection and additional new computers are ordered. In addition, there is a good range of equipment such as a digital camera and programmable toy. However, the school does need to provide some computer-linked sensors to support pupils' learning in subjects such as science.

5 In religious education, standards are in line with the requirements of the Locally Agreed Syllabus in both Year 2 and Year 6. Provision to teach pupils about other world religions has been significantly improved. As a result, pupils are knowledgeable about other faiths and show a good understanding of other cultures as well as their own.

6 The few pupils with special educational needs are supported very well and teachers ensure that they take a full part in all lessons. The quality of teachers' planning ensures that they have suitably challenging work and teaching assistants give them valuable support in many lessons. Care is taken to incorporate pupils' specific targets for learning in lesson planning. As a result, pupils' achievement is very good.

Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities

Attendance is very good and pupils are punctual. Pupils' attitudes and behaviour are very good. Bullying is not a concern at this school. The school makes good provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

- Very good attendance and punctuality have a strong impact on standards attained and on pupils' achievements.
- Very good attitudes to work and very good behaviour show that pupils value their educational opportunities
- There are particular strengths in the way the school promotes very good relationships, self-confidence and self-esteem.
- Pupils have a very mature attitude towards staff of the school, visitors and each other. This results from the attitudes and values they bring from their home background.
- On the occasions when there is no teaching staff in the canteen, the noise level can become unacceptably high and this is unsettling for the younger children.

Commentary

7 The very good attendance is a reflection on parents' determination that their child gets the most out of their educational opportunities. But it also reflects on pupils' eagerness and willingness to come to school. It is rare that pupils come to school late. Regular attendance and good punctuality are hallmarks of Bassenthwaite Primary School and significant factors in pupils' achievements. There have been no exclusions.

8 Pupils are keen to come to school and clearly take an interest in their work. Children in the Foundation Stage settle in quickly and make very good progress in their personal development due to the quality of provision and the support of older pupils in the mixed-age class. All pupils show an interest in school life and the range of activities provided, exemplified by the quality of the many displays around the school.

9 Pupils' behaviour in class and at breaks is very good. However, they need to learn to curb their excitement and loud voices at lunchtime and to make the period a more enjoyable occasion for everyone. The midday staff do not employ a range of techniques to gain pupils' attention and keep noise levels within acceptable limits. Pupils show very good levels of respect for the views of others and have a very good understanding of right and wrong. The school is free from bullying, racism and all forms of harassment. The school regularly seeks pupils' views through school council meetings and questionnaires. Recently, pupils requested a swimming pool at school and are currently busy re-designing their nature area.

10 Pupils bring to school a good range of well-established personal and social skills from their home backgrounds. The school has good arrangements to capitalise on these and makes good provision to enhance pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. There is a very well established code of conduct that gives pupils a clear insight into what is right and wrong and how to be good members of the school community. Carefully prepared daily acts of collective worship allow pupils to reflect on a range of issues. Some of the junior pupils sit with the infants, helping them with the hymns. The curriculum provides pupils of all ages with good opportunities to work together in pairs and teams, enhancing their social interaction. An example of the excellent team spirit that such a small school has built up was proved when they won the Outward Bound Challenge Cup. There are satisfactory opportunities for learning about their own culture and to respect ethnic beliefs and culture through religious education and other areas of the curriculum.

Attendance

Attendance in the latest complete reporting year (95.7%)

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
School data	4.3	School data	0.0
National data	5.4	National data	0.4

The table gives the percentage of half days (sessions) missed through absence for the latest complete reporting year.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

Children in the Foundation Stage are given a very good start to their education because of the very good quality of provision. Pupils of all ages, including those with special educational needs, benefit from the good quality of education provided by the school.

Teaching and learning

The quality of teaching and learning is good. In the Foundation Stage, it is very good. Assessment procedures are satisfactory, overall.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Parents have a high regard for the teaching staff.
- The consistently good and often very good teaching of the curriculum in the Foundation Stage ensures that children achieve their targets for learning before they leave the reception class.
- The provision for the few pupils with special educational needs is very good.
- Good use is made of teachers with specialist skills.
- Teachers are very well supported by extremely conscientious and knowledgeable teaching assistants.
- The insistence on high standards of behaviour and very effective level of encouragement and engagement of pupils ensures all apply themselves well in lessons and produce neat work.
- Assessment procedures are well established and effective in some subjects but unsatisfactory in others.
- Plenary sessions are often hurried and when this happens, they are not as effective as they could be in consolidating pupils' learning.

Commentary

11 The previous inspection in April 1998 described teaching as good throughout. Aspects of teaching have been improved since then. Provision for pupils with special educational needs, for example, has been improved significantly from satisfactory to very good and the quality of teaching in the Foundation Stage is now very good. Teacher expertise in ICT has been improved and, as a result, standards are now above those expected instead of below as they were in 1998. However, the progress the school was making on improving procedures for assessment has not been as rapid as expected. The amount of staff absence for maternity leave is one factor affecting the development of this aspect.

12 Parents, in their questionnaire responded very positively to questions relating to the quality of teaching. Every parent who replied agreed that teaching was good, staff expected pupils to work hard, they treated pupils fairly and encouraged them to become more mature. The partnership with parents is a strength and helps to create the very positive ethos for learning which exists in the school.

13 The nine children in the Foundation Stage benefit from the teaching of a talented and energetic teacher and skilled teaching assistant and a well-resourced classroom. Being with older Year 1 and 2 pupils also benefits the children in their reception year. Higher attaining children are able to work alongside older pupils in groups and all readily accept the help and support of others. All of the teaching seen in the reception class was either good or very good. Literacy and mathematical skills are particularly well promoted and the well-established routines and close contact with other pupils means that reception children make rapid gains in their personal and social skills. Good use is made of computers and computer controlled toys in this section of the school.

14 During this inspection, in 11 out of the 14 lessons seen, the quality of teaching was either good, very good or excellent. Pupils benefit from the good spread of expertise covering all the subjects of the national curriculum. The infant class teachers' expertise in music, for example, is used effectively as she teaches the subject to all pupils and the exceptional talents of an English specialist teacher gives older pupils the chance to develop an appreciation of literature in a weekly session. The class teachers work together very effectively to ensure that pupils' learning is a continuous process. The exceptionally close and trusting relationships pupils have with their teachers are a key factor in promoting a very good ethos for learning in the school. Pupils behave maturely and responsibly in lessons and can be allowed the freedom to work together in groups, often independently of their teacher. Teaching assistants support teachers well both in the classroom and when teaching groups. Teachers and pupils become so engrossed in their work that on occasions, little time is allowed at the end of lessons to evaluate progress and the extent of pupils' understanding of new work in lessons.

15 All teachers plan their lessons carefully, trying to match work to the ability level of individual pupils and at the same time providing sufficient challenge to maintain interest. Class teachers insist on high standards of behaviour and enjoy very good relationships with their pupils. Pupils work hard and inspectors were able to make judgements about standards in subjects such as science and religious education from the volume of neatly produced work. One aspect which requires attention is the quality of teachers' marking. On some pupils work, there was little evidence of evaluative marking, giving pupils clear guidance on how to further improve. A strong feature of teachers' planning is the way skills from other subjects are integrated into most lessons. In a geography topic on the River Derwent, pupils' literacy skills and scientific knowledge about wildlife and habitats were needed and in science, mathematical skills are often used as pupils collate the results from investigations or record temperatures and measurements. In the scrutiny of work, there was sufficient evidence to show that pupils are provided with satisfactory opportunities to use computers in most subjects.

16 Provision for pupils with special educational needs is very good. Teachers set the targets for the pupils in their class and these are checked carefully by the special needs co-ordinator to make sure they are relevant and sufficiently challenging. Care is taken to include these targets when planning pupils' work. This ensures that all pupils are fully included in lessons and that the

tasks they are set are matched to their ability level. As a result, most pupils with special educational needs achieve the standards expected for all pupils by Year 2 and Year 6.

17 Much time has been spent on establishing the good assessment procedures for the core subjects of English, mathematics and science. The part-time teacher with specialist ICT skills has recently introduced an effective assessment procedure for his subject but all staff have not yet had time to use it. There is no consistency in the way pupils' attainment and progress is assessed in most other subjects. The new procedures for ICT provide a worthwhile model for staff to adopt for the other subjects. The assessment of pupils' attainment and progress is undertaken regularly and in depth for the core subjects. Results of assessments made of progress in pupils' termly work and their performance in the national tests are carefully analysed. Assessment information is used to modify the planning for future work and to carefully track progress from year to year. In the non-core subjects, assessment procedures are mostly unsatisfactory and do not provide sufficient information to aid the planning of future work or give a clear picture of pupils' progress.

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 14 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
1	4	6	3	0	0	0

The table gives the number of lessons observed in each of the seven categories used to make judgements about lessons.

The curriculum

The curriculum is good. It meets statutory requirements to teach all subjects of the national curriculum and the requirements of the locally agreed syllabus. It is enriched very well through extra-curricular provision and support for learning outside the school day. Accommodation is satisfactory. The school has a good supply and range of resources.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- There is a very good match of teaching and support staff to the needs of the curriculum.
- Provision for pupils who have special educational needs is very good.
- Links across the curriculum are very good.
- Very good enrichment activities include a well-established and beneficial range of visits and visitors.
- The school prepares pupils very effectively for subsequent stages of their education.
- Accommodation for physical education is unsatisfactory.

Commentary

18 Planning for all subjects is based on national guidelines and this is an improvement since the previous inspection. As a result, teachers plan topics effectively in cycles to avoid repetition in the mixed age classes. A modern foreign language, French, is also taught to all pupils each week.

19 Teachers know pupils on the school's register for special educational needs in depth. They are very well placed to work closely with each other to develop individual education plans for these pupils, with clear targets to guide their progress. The targets are focussed well on each pupil's identified needs and adjusted in the light of assessments so that pupils make very good progress as their needs change. Very good care is taken to ensure that pupils who have statements of special educational needs receive their full entitlement of support. As a result of this very good provision pupils achieve very well in relation to their prior attainment.

20 Teachers place great emphasis on linking subjects across the curriculum. This gives continuity to pupils' learning and makes effective use of time. When pupils in the junior class learn

about river systems in geography lessons, they also learn about capacity in mathematics and the water cycle in science, for instance, filtering water in Chapel Beck and measuring its speed.

21 There is a very good programme of after school activities, and visits and visitors. All junior pupils are given the opportunity to take part in residential visits, which promote their personal and social skills as well as their academic progress. French is taught weekly to all junior pupils, who also have the opportunity to learn how to play stringed instruments if they wish. The school places great emphasis on linking up with other schools to take part in sporting activities. Links with the parish church are very good.

22 Although the school's accommodation is satisfactory overall, there is a weakness in its provision for physical education. This is because of the lack of suitable provision for outdoor sports in particular, but also for gymnastics and dance. The governing body continues to do its best to buy or rent adjacent land for a sports field, but without success. However, the forthcoming upgrading of the canteen is expected to provide suitable facilities for dance. There have been some good improvements since the previous inspection. An extension to the junior classroom provides good library provision. An extension to the infants' classroom helps staff to deliver an effective curriculum for children in the Foundation Stage and those in Years 1 and 2.

23 Staffing levels are very good. Teaching assistants play a significant role in supporting the work of teachers. Together they provide very good support for all pupils, including those who have special educational needs. Staffing includes a volunteer teacher who takes a weekly lesson to extend the literacy skills of pupils in Years 5 and 6.

Care, guidance and support

The provision for pupils' care, welfare, health and safety is very good. Advice, guidance and support are very good. The arrangements for seeking and acting on pupils' views are good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Relationships between teachers and pupils are very good.
- Induction and preparation for the next school are very good.
- Staff often listen to and act on the views of their pupils.

Commentary

24 Pupils are happy in school because of the family atmosphere that prevails. Pupils feel trusted, safe and valued because of the way they are treated and they are confident to ask for help at any time. The school provides very good support for pupils who have special educational needs. Those pupils who have statements of their special educational needs receive their full entitlement to support. The procedures for health, safety and child protection are very effectively undertaken and specialist agencies provide further relevant services to the school. First aid cover is good.

25 Induction arrangements enable pupils to settle very quickly and happily into school. Staff know their pupils very well and guide them with care as they progress through the school. They prepare pupils very well for transfer to secondary school through a combination of visits and curricular work that promotes awareness of expectations and continuity of learning into the next school.

26 There are formal strategies for listening to pupils' views in personal, social and health education lessons. Additionally teachers are very good at making informal occasions available to listen to pupils' interests, successes and concerns. This puts them in a very good position to make effective use of information about all pupils.

Partnership with parents, other schools and the community

There are strong links with parents. This is the case for links with other schools and the wider community, which are also very good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Parents get good information about what is happening in school and about the progress being made by their child. However, the quality of pupils' annual reports could be improved.
- Home and school links have a strong effect on the standards achieved, on pupils' progress in learning, and the development of their social skills.
- Good relationships are maintained with other educational establishments, especially the other primary schools in the area, and with the local community.

Commentary

27 A strong feature of the pre-inspection questionnaire and meeting for parents with the inspection team was the confidence and trust placed in the school by the vast majority of parents. A measure of parental confidence is the number of parents and other adults who help in the classroom, on educational visits, and with swimming. There is a very supportive parents association. Parents strongly believe that their children like school and are making good progress. A small number of parents feel that they lack sufficient information about their child's progress. Parents have regular opportunities to visit school informally to discuss their child's progress. The written reports are informative, but some are too vague in the area for future development 'Goals for the pupil' with no clear targets being communicated for English, mathematics or science.

28 The school does all within its power to ensure strong and helpful relationships with parents and because there is a strong and positive home and school link, pupils benefit a great deal. The school is quick to support family values; the home gives strong support to learning through taking a keen interest in it. The impact is strong on both academic progress and on the development of social and personal skills. Children come to school ready to learn and the school capitalises well on this. The inspectors saw no evidence of the bad behaviour that had concerned some parents. Behaviour is very good in the classroom and during breaks on the school playground. Pupils play very well together, sharing the wide range of games equipment available, sensibly. Staff are confident that the noise at lunchtime will improve when work is completed on the small canteen which at present echoes any noise, making it sound worse.

29 There are strong links with the other small primary schools in the area and with the local beacon secondary school. The pupils, for example, joined other schools for the Keswick Carol Concert. The Year 5 and 6 pupils have good opportunities to visit and have a good knowledge of the school before they start.

30 The school has strong links with the wider community and sees itself as being at the centre of village life. For example, the school sports day is held as a village event and pupils regularly go to special services in the nearby church.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Leadership and management are good. Leadership and management of the school by the headteacher are very good. The leadership of other key staff is good. Governance of the school is good. Management is effective. All statutory requirements are met by the school governors.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The experienced headteacher leads and manages the school very well.
- There is a strong commitment to inclusion and equality of opportunity.

- The headteacher and all staff provide very good role models for pupils.
- Governors are very supportive of the school. However, they could have a greater role in monitoring and evaluating the quality of learning.
- Monitoring visits are not recorded in sufficient detail.

Commentary

31 Leadership and management have been strengthened since the previous inspection thanks largely to the drive, determination and commitment of the headteacher. She has a clear vision of what needs to be done and where the school is going. Parents agree with everyone who responded to the pre-inspection questionnaire saying they thought the school was well led and managed and that they are comfortable about approaching the school. The headteacher's leadership of the curriculum is very good, ensuring that all pupils achieve well. The support provided for pupils with special educational needs is particularly effective and ensures that these pupils attain at the expected standard in English, mathematics and science in Year 2 and Year 6. There are a number of other significant aids to raising achievement, the chief one being the ethos for learning created by all staff who work at the school. Others include:

- The very good attitudes and behaviour of pupils
- The very good provision for children in the Foundation Stage giving them a good start to their education
- The enrichment of the curriculum
- The very good attendance and
- The high level of parental interest and support.

32 Barriers are few. Although there is significant mobility of pupils, the school is able to compensate for this because of the very small numbers and ensure that there is no adverse effect on any pupils' learning. All benefit from individual attention and staff make absolutely sure that all are treated equally and are fully included in all activities. The main barrier to learning is the lack of facilities for physical education. The school is able to use the village hall, which is a short walk away, for indoor sessions for physical education but pupils face an even longer walk to the village green to play on grass. This wastes a lot of valuable curriculum time. Despite the best efforts of governors so far, no field or part of a field has been found for pupils to use near the school.

33 Overall, the school's self-evaluation procedures are satisfactory. The full-time and part-time teachers share curriculum management responsibilities. Co-ordinators have audited curriculum provision and they all monitor planning well. All have the time to assess the quality of learning in their subject by visiting lessons. However, written evidence from these visits is very brief. Most of the feedback in this very small school is undertaken verbally and teachers collectively take responsibility for putting right any areas of weakness. Better written records need to be maintained, showing specific outcomes from monitoring visits and details included on how identified areas for development are to be tackled.

34 Governors are forward looking and regularly review performance data and attainment targets. All, including the four new governors are committed to school improvement and to maintaining the school's very good reputation locally. Committee structures are reviewed at least once a year to ensure that responsibilities are fully covered. There are good relationships between governors and the headteacher and all are very keen to support the school. However, they are insufficiently involved in evaluating aspects such as the quality of learning and how successfully the priorities in the School Improvement Plan are addressed. This would help ease some of the burden of headship and give governors a clearer picture of their school. Governors have the confidence and necessary knowledge to challenge and question the headteacher to effectively influence the strategic development of the school. Unfortunately, there was little written evidence of the outcome of monitoring visits by governors.

35 Management structures within the school are satisfactory. Data is analysed well by the headteacher looking at national test results in Years 2 and 6 and how well individual pupils are

progressing through Years 3 to 5 so that targets can be set for each pupil. The school secretary has a clearly identified role and responsibilities and the school is seeking to increase the amount of administration time to further ease the demands of this area on the busy headteacher's time. This would enable the headteacher to concentrate more on her class teaching role.

36 Governors monitor expenditure effectively and it is linked closely to the school's priorities as set out in the School Improvement Plan. They were advised that resources for ICT needed updating and have invested in more new computers and the latest white-board technology. All staff have benefited from the national training programme in ICT and governors have appointed a part-time teacher who has good skills and expertise in the subject.

Financial information

Financial information for the year April 2002 to March 2003

Income and expenditure (£)		Balances (£)	
Total income	127,103	Balance from previous year	3,427
Total expenditure	118,515	Balance carried forward to the next	8,588
Expenditure per pupil	3,950		

37 The school has a surplus budget, which is higher than average. This has been saved to help fund the improvements to the canteen and to purchase more equipment for ICT. Current spending is sustainable. The expenditure per pupil is very high compared to most schools but this is due to the effect of the very small number of pupils attending the school. Taking this into account along with the level of pupils' achievement, the quality of teaching and learning, the variety of curriculum opportunities and the effective leadership and management, the school gives good value for money.

PART C: THE QUALITY OF EDUCATION IN AREAS OF LEARNING AND SUBJECTS

AREAS OF LEARNING IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

Provision for children in reception is **very good** and is a strength of the school.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The quality of teaching and learning have improved since the previous inspection and are now very good. As a result, children are given a very good start to their education.
- Children achieve very well. All are well placed to attain the early learning goals before the end of their reception year in all six areas of learning.
- In some lessons, not enough opportunities are provided for children to use and develop their speaking skills.
- The support for children with special educational needs is very good.
- The Foundation Stage co-ordinator manages this key stage well and has a clear commitment to high quality care and high achievement for each child.
- Resource levels are good and the accommodation is satisfactory.

Commentary

38 The Foundation Stage covers the period when children are in the reception class. At the time of the inspection, there were only nine children in their reception year. These children share the classroom with pupils in Years 1 and 2. A benefit of this arrangement is that older pupils often help and support reception children and the more able can work alongside older pupils, accelerating their progress. The very favourable pupil to teacher ratio and added support of an extremely conscientious teaching assistant helps to ensure a high quality of provision for the reception children. As a result, all, including those with special educational needs make very good progress in their social skills and in their literacy and numeracy skills, achieving the targets set for them well before the end of their reception year. Their progress is good in other areas and all achieve their early learning targets before the end of their reception year in creative and physical development and in their knowledge and understanding of the world.

39 The children's attainment on entry to the school is above average although the full range of ability is represented. The enthusiastic teacher and teaching assistant work very effectively as a team, ensuring consistently, high quality provision. Each morning, reception children are taught together, sometimes by the class teacher and sometimes by the teaching assistant. Literacy and numeracy skills are promoted well in these group sessions. However, during the inspection, children were not always given sufficient opportunities to use and extend their speaking skills. The adults did most of the talking. The quality of teaching has improved since the previous inspection when it was described as good. The quality of teaching is very good with all the lessons seen during this inspection being either good or very good. All activities are closely supervised by adults. Planning is carefully structured and fully meets the learning needs of all children. Assessment procedures are satisfactory. Visits to the school are arranged for parents and children prior to admission, ensuring a good exchange of information about individual pupils. The teacher closely monitors the children's achievements and the information gathered is used satisfactorily to set the next targets for learning.

40 The inside accommodation is just about adequate for the number of children. The teacher provides regular access to things such as large play equipment outdoors and to sand and water play areas. Due to the limited space available indoors, sand and water areas are alternated, as there is no room for both at the same time. The outdoor area is used effectively and children are provided with exciting and interesting activities, which effectively support all the six areas of learning. Classroom resources and those for outdoors are good.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision in personal, social and emotional development is **very good**

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The teacher has a very good understanding of the needs and interests of young children and ensures that they feel important and valued.
- Adults and older pupils are very good role models for the children. As a result, their behaviour is invariably very good.
- Routines are well established and children know precisely what is expected of them. This gives them confidence.
- All children enjoy very good relationships with staff and other pupils.

Commentary

41 Children's personal development is very good because of the very good care and quality of teaching that they receive. Staff know the children well and respond to their needs very effectively.

42 The children are eager to learn and are attentive. They settle quickly and happily to the wide range of activities provided. They are extremely well behaved and many are mature in their relationships and attitudes. Most are willing to take on responsibilities and have the confidence to talk about what they are doing and ask and answer questions. However, staff, on occasions, too readily accept children's first answer and miss opportunities to further engage children in expanding upon or explaining their initial response. Independence skills are promoted well. Children are given the freedom to choose activities and most show a very good level of concentration. Children have no difficulty in sharing resources or in taking their turn.

COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY

Provision in communication, language and literacy is **very good**

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Many interesting activities are planned and provided for the children to speak, listen, read and write.
- Activities are exciting and stimulating and are planned very effectively to capture the children's interest.
- The systematic development of reading skills is carefully planned enabling children to achieve well in this area of learning.
- Children are provided with many opportunities to understand about writing as a method of communication and to develop their writing skills.
- Insufficient time is allowed for plenary sessions at the end of some lessons.

Commentary

43 Children quickly develop confident speaking skills due to the caring and supportive atmosphere created by the teacher and teaching assistant. Each child knows that he or she is special and has something important to say. Most have enough confidence to share their news with the rest of the class each morning. Plenary sessions at the end of the lesson offer very good opportunities for the children to explain what they have been doing and to help them to consolidate their learning. However, insufficient time is allowed at the end of some lessons for these sessions to effectively summarise what was expected or to give children the chance to show and explain what they achieved.

44 Reading skills are promoted very well through many opportunities to respond to stories and other written text. When the teacher begins the 'big book' story, it guarantees the full attention of everyone. Children enjoyed joining in with the story 'Handa's Surprise' as they became familiar with the repetitive pattern of words. In the reading area, children enjoy looking through books and most are able to 'tell' the story using clues from the pictures. Virtually all are able to give the phonic sound of the letters of the alphabet.

45 The large majority of children are already well on the way to achieving the early writing targets. Evidence from work completed so far confirms the good progress children are making. All writing activities are under the close supervision of the teacher and teaching assistant who encourage the use of the phonic sound of the letters as children write labels for fruit or sentences using simple words. Some higher attaining pupils are familiar with capital letters needed at the start of their name.

MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision in mathematical development is **very good**

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Mathematics is made purposeful through a wide range of enjoyable activities.
- Mathematical skills and language are systematically taught.

Commentary

46 Most children are on course to attain the learning goals in this area well before the end of reception. Most are already confident with numbers to 20. In one session seen, mathematics was based on using a mobile programmable toy called a turtle. Children were able to recognise geometric coloured shapes spread out on a line of numbers to 10 and programme the turtle to move to a given shape by counting the number squares accurately. Their excitement when the turtle went off course only distracted the rest of the class briefly. All concentrate very well on their work. In activity sessions, children enjoy playing dice games, using number ladders or jigsaws with numbers. Computers are frequently used to consolidate children's knowledge of numbers and vocabulary such as more or less.

KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE WORLD

47 No specific lessons were seen covering this area of learning and so there was insufficient evidence to make a reliable judgement about overall provision. Teacher's planning shows that children are provided with a wide range of carefully planned and stimulating activities, building effectively on their previous experiences. The development of technical language is carefully planned into activities through discussions and questioning. Computer skills are taught effectively and this enables the children to become more independent and confident as they use the mouse confidently to work through a range of programs. Good use is made of the space outdoors and of visits in the wider locality.

48 Cross curricular links are a strong feature in this area of learning. Children use their senses by carefully touching, smelling and tasting a range of fruits. They grow flowers from bulbs and join in with Year 1 and 2 pupils as they find out about Florence Nightingale. This involves using their literacy and creative skills as they draw and write simple sentences and learn historical or geographical facts associated with the topic.

PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

49 There was insufficient evidence to judge provision in this area of learning. Although space indoors is limited, there is a good range of resources available to children to promote their physical development. Skills, such as cutting out shapes and using pencils, crayons and glue brushes are

well developed. The outdoor area is spacious and resources for outdoors are plentiful and used effectively. Each playtime, for example, all children have good access to the adventure play equipment on the soft-fall surface in the playground and a wide range of physical education equipment. Older pupils often help and encourage their development of skills by coaching and playing with the reception children.

CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT

50 No sessions were observed so no judgement on the overall provision for this area of learning is possible. Teachers' planning and finished work on display shows that the children are provided with time to experiment, communicate, be imaginative and discover things for themselves. The use of the sand and water areas encourages children to relate well to one another as they develop language, imagination and practical skills.

51 All enjoy singing and joining in with the actions for songs. Resources for drawing and painting are good. Children enjoy using a variety of materials, for example, playdoh, clay and paint and proudly show their painted autumn leaves or printed designs on wrapping paper they made.

SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 1 and 2

ENGLISH AND A MODERN FOREIGN LANGUAGE

Provision in English is **good**

Main strengths and weaknesses

- All pupils, including those with special educational needs achieve well in English.
- Pupils take care with handwriting and presentation and show pride in their work.
- Pupils enjoy reading and are encouraged well by specialist teachers and their parents.
- Some plenary sessions are not used effectively to check learning.
- The library is very good for such a small school.

Commentary

52 Great care must be taken when analysing the school's test results and making comparisons with the results from schools nationally because of the very small numbers. In 2003, for example, only one pupil did the national tests for seven-year-olds and five did the tests for 11 year-olds. In 2004, there are only five pupils in Year 2 and just 2 in Year 6. Individual pupils' level of attainment is carefully assessed as they move through the school. Optional tests are used in Years 3 to 5 as a check on pupils' progress and school records show that all pupils make good gains in the standards they achieve by the end of Year 6. The small numbers and clear targets for improvement for pupils with special educational needs means that these pupils also make good progress and achieve well in relation to their prior level of attainment.

53 The quality of teaching and learning is very good throughout. Teaching assistants are effectively deployed by teachers and have a very good relationship with their pupils. Teachers' planning follows national guidance and the literacy hour format is used well. Lessons have clear objectives for teaching and learning and teachers ensure that pupils understand what they are going to learn and how this links with previous work. Teachers use a good range of questions to challenge pupils' thinking skills. However, insufficient time is allowed for some plenary sessions in order to check pupils' learning against the lesson objectives.

54 There are good procedures in place to teach reading and spelling. Most pupils enjoy reading and are enthusiastic about it. In a Year 5 and 6 group session with a highly skilled specialist English teacher, advanced reading skills were promoted most effectively as pupils read and discussed the novel *Starseeker* by Tim Bowler. Younger pupils use a good range of strategies to decipher unknown words and can make simple predictions about the story. Pupils use the new

library well and have access to a good range of fiction and non-fiction books. Most pupils locate factual information efficiently in the non-fiction section. Home – school reading diaries are used well by parents and teachers to support pupils' learning with detailed comments being made in them.

55 The development of writing skills is being given high priority particularly to extend the skills of higher attaining pupils and this is beginning to have a positive impact on standards. The neat presentation of pupils' work and the quality of their handwriting shows teachers have high expectations and pupils respond by taking pride in their work. Book reviews and displayed work on autobiography's by Year 6 pupils shows the standard of work to be well above that usually seen for this age group. Computers are sometimes used to enable pupils to word process their work and practice spelling. Pupils are given good opportunities across the curriculum to develop their speaking and listening skills and most of them speak clearly and confidently.

56 Assessment procedures are good for English and the information gathered at the end of each term is used well to plan future work. Pupils' progress is also monitored well through tests and regular marking of work. Individual targets are set each term to challenge pupils and these are clearly displayed at the front of pupils' exercise books. All pupils make good progress in meeting their targets including those who have special educational needs. Teachers mark written work regularly and their comments ensure that pupils know what they have done well and how their work might be improved.

57 The subject is being well led and managed. The latest national guidance has been adopted by the school and teachers' detailed planning takes account of the mixed age classes. The headteacher regularly monitors the quality of teaching and learning. However, conclusions from monitoring visits are communicated verbally rather than being recorded and other staff and governors are not sufficiently involved in the process. Resources for English are good.

English across the curriculum

58 Pupils are generally given good opportunities to develop their speaking and listening skills and most of them speak clearly and confidently. Working in groups challenges pupils to co-operate and listen to each other. Opportunities to read and write occur in most subjects and are used particularly well in history, geography and science. Pupils write factual accounts, for example, about wildlife on the River Derwent or about their plans for improving the school grounds. Computers are used well for word processing completed writing such as poems about winter and making labels for displays.

FRENCH

59 Although no French lessons were seen, a scrutiny of teachers' planning shows that the subject is taught to pupils of all ages in the infant and junior classes for one half hour session each week. Pupils enjoy learning French and occasionally respond to registration in French. They know a good selection of French songs. Junior pupils confidently tell the time, know the colours in French and can ask for food items.

MATHEMATICS

Provision in mathematics is **good**

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Most teaching is good.
- Provision for more able pupils is good and very good for those who have special educational needs.
- Curricular links with other subjects are good.
- Leadership and management of the subject are good.
- Marking is an area for improvement.

- Learning objectives occasionally do not have a clear focus for all pupils.

60 It is difficult to make a judgement on standards because of the small number of pupils. However, in relation to pupils' prior attainment their achievement is good. Much work seen was well above average.

61 The school's provision for mathematics has improved since the previous inspection. This is because of the focus on driving up standards by targeting areas for improvement. A big step forward has been to raise the level of challenge for more able and gifted pupils. This ensures they fulfil their potential. They thrive on the more demanding work and reach the higher levels. Another strength is the school's commitment to helping pupils who have special educational needs to do well. Staff do all they can to help them and pupils know they are respected and cared for. This makes a big impact on the behaviour of pupils who have problems and ensures they and other pupils work in a very positive atmosphere. For instance, in a lesson in the junior class the teaching assistant's close attention to their needs helped them to learn quickly how to write number sentences. This showed a satisfactory understanding of "inverse operations," such as $5 \times 6 = 30$ and $6 \times 5 = 30$. The teacher, as a result, was able to maintain direction and total control of the lesson, checking on those pupils and others in Years 3 and 4, while taking Years 5 and 6 pupils to higher areas of learning about polygons.

62 The quality of teaching and learning is good. The emphasis on a practical approach lifts pupils' interest to a very high level and aids their understanding. For instance, in a lesson in the infants' class, pupils enthusiastically joined in the introduction, buying priced items from the teacher with coins. This gave them the motivation to work hard at their task of buying items. Consequently, they learned effectively how to use coins to equivalent values, such as two fives and a penny for eleven pence.

63 Good organisation and planning enables teachers to teach mixed-age classes effectively. For instance, in the infants' class the teacher usually introduces the lesson for all pupils from reception to Year 2. The teaching assistant then carries out the set tasks effectively with reception children while the teacher concentrates on Years 1 and 2, with activities set suitably for their age and ability. Pupils enjoy coming back together to share their learning at the end of the lesson and are keen to take part.

64 Teachers generally assess pupils' understanding well in lessons and are careful to ensure pupils' understand the nature of a task before attempting it. For instance, in a lesson in the junior class the teacher asked pupils if they were confident about what they had to do. Taking a cue from one pupil who was not sure, she went over it in another way so all pupils then got on with their work successfully. Occasionally, however, groups of pupils are given tasks without a sharp focus and when this happens their rate of learning slows. An example of this was seen when the teacher was engaged with Year 1 pupils while those in Year 2 worked by themselves through a few examples of number sequences from a text book. They worked slowly without much interest for fifteen minutes. So while most of the class did well, those in Year 2 made little headway for that period of the lesson.

65 Teachers mark pupils' work regularly and discuss it with them while they work. However, they do not make constructive written comments on pupils' work to show them how to improve or to give them an insight into their level of understanding.

66 The subject is led and managed well. Priorities for development have been identified and improvements continue to come through. For instance, better procedures are now in place for tracking pupils' progress through the school.

Mathematics across the curriculum

67 Teachers make good opportunities to develop pupils' mathematical skills across the curriculum, especially in ICT and science. For pupils in Years 5 and 6, the teacher made good use of new technology to demonstrate how to use a protractor to estimate and measure angles. This

enabled them to use the technology for themselves before going on to construct a polygon within a circle.

SCIENCE

Provision in science is **good**

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Most teaching is good.
- Teachers show pupils how to investigate and record in a scientific way. However, teachers do not provide enough opportunities for pupils to learn for themselves.
- Pupils who have special educational needs are supported well.
- Leadership and management are good.
- There is a strong emphasis on environmental science.
- Teachers do not mark pupils' work well enough.
- Teachers make good links with other subjects.

Commentary

68 It is difficult to give a firm judgement of standards because of the small number of pupils. However, in relation to pupils' prior attainment their level of achievement is good. Much work seen was of a high standard.

69 Teachers start lessons with clear and informative explanations and use resources well to raise pupils' interest to a high level. Occasionally there is too much "teacher talk" with insufficient questioning to make pupils think and speak scientifically. In the best lessons teachers give pupils opportunities to learn for themselves. For instance, in a lesson in Years 1 and 2, pupils predicted which spheres of various materials would float or sink. When one pupil commented with disappointment that his predictions were incorrect, "I got them all wrong," the teacher pointed out that the nature of the exercise was to learn by experience. By the end of the lesson, the same pupil knew that for a fair test, the next step was to change only one factor. This is a high standard of learning for pupils aged seven. A good programme of environmental science for infant pupils helps them to focus on pattern, texture, shape and colour and to develop observational skills and build concentration. In a good lesson, pupils in Years 5 and 6 were given opportunities to learn for themselves when they designed and made electrical circuits. A significant proportion of these pupils are working at higher levels than average. Some make observations and measurements with precision and draw conclusions consistent with the evidence. However, pupils' books show that too much work is directed by teachers, when pupils have little independence in investigating and recording. This slows down their rate of learning.

70 Teachers make good links with other subjects. For instance, there is a strong emphasis on environmental education. The school is aware of the need to develop the use of computers for science lessons and plans for this are in hand.

71 Staff work hard to ensure that pupils who have special educational needs achieve well. As a result, they take a full part in lessons and make good progress. For instance, a pupil in the Years 3 and 4 group was kept thoroughly engaged making an electrical circuit and was delighted when it worked, talked about it and asked questions to clarify his thinking.

72 The subject leader has identified priorities to develop the subject further and has implemented a new and coherent scheme of work since the last inspection. Other areas for development are:

- To give pupil more opportunities to learn independently.
- To ensure that teachers incorporate comments into their marking, that show how well pupils have done and what they need to improve further.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

Provision in information and communication technology (ICT) is **good**

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Resources are plentiful for the small number of pupils and used effectively. As a result, pupils' level of achievement in ICT is good throughout.
- Good use is made of a part-time teacher with specialist knowledge. Overall, teaching is satisfactory.
- Assessment procedures are effective.
- ICT is being used well to support teaching and learning in other areas of the curriculum.
- Pupils really enjoy using computers and are keen to learn.

Commentary

73 In the previous inspection in 1998, inspectors were critical of provision and standards in ICT. Much has been improved since then and this has had a marked effect on the standards which pupils' achieve. Their progress is good throughout the school and pupils of all ages attain standards, which are better than those normally seen. All pupils have their own record of work on their individual disks and talk enthusiastically about what they have recorded. Most have computers at home and this adds significantly to their skills and knowledge.

74 Pupils in the infant class quickly and effortlessly type stories using the class computer and even the youngest in reception are able to programme a mobile toy called a turtle. Junior pupils input data such as the temperature in various cities around the world and personal data of suspects in order to help them solve a crime by interrogating their database. All have a good knowledge of the various functions available on the computer and use these well when preparing multi-media presentations on various topics.

75 The development in the subject is on-going and staff are waiting for a Broadband connection to make links with other local schools more effective. Additional modern computers are on order which will further improve the already very good ratio of pupils to each computer. The school is also getting one of the new interactive computer-linked whiteboards shortly. In addition, the school needs to provide some computer-linked sensors for pupils to use in science, as none are available at present. These will be made available once the broadband link with other local schools is established. A small ICT suite is available in a corner of the junior classroom and this is used well to introduce new skills.

76 Computers in both classrooms are used effectively to support pupils' learning in most lessons, particularly in English and mathematics and this enables pupils to extend and consolidate their knowledge and skills. In the infant class, pupils demonstrate word processing skills confidently as they write out a brief version of the story they heard at the beginning of the lesson. Spelling is accurate and the sentences are punctuated correctly. Junior pupils research facts about world rivers such as the Mississippi in geography and find information about Mesopotamia from the British Museum website for a history topic. When studying fairgrounds as part of their topic on the Victorians, pupils make computer controlled models.

77 Teaching and learning is satisfactory, overall. All teachers and support staff have completed the national training programme, which has enhanced their individual skills. All teachers have an ICT focus as part of their ongoing performance management which keeps staff expertise firmly on the agenda. The specialist skills of the part-time teacher are used effectively to extend pupils' learning opportunities and support staff training. Lesson plans have clear intentions for teaching and learning which can only have positive benefits for pupils. In lessons, all pupils, including those with special educational needs show interest and enthusiasm and they co-operate well together giving each other good support. The support for pupils with special educational needs

is very good. They often benefit from individual attention from adults and other pupils readily work alongside them to offer their help.

78 Planning is based on national guidance for ICT and this ensures a good progression of skills and a wide variety of experiences offered to pupils. Statutory requirements are met. ICT is a key priority for the school and the subject is led and managed well by the co-ordinator. The procedures for assessing pupils' knowledge and understanding each term are particularly effective. The school does not take advantage of the good model provided in this subject to assess pupils' progress in most other subject areas.

Information and communication technology across the curriculum

79 ICT is used effectively to support teaching and learning in other areas of the curriculum. Examples of work seen in other subjects are word processing in English, testing numeracy skills in mathematics, databases in science and research in history and geography. Teachers also use ICT to support their own work, for example, to produce worksheets and print labels for class displays. They make very good use of the school's digital camera to record visits and school activities.

HUMANITIES

80 Provision in geography and history was sampled. Not enough evidence was available to enable secure judgements to be made on standards or the quality of teaching.

81 One lesson was seen in **geography** in the infants' class. Teaching was good and most pupils achieved well. Pupils enjoyed the practical nature of the lesson and were interested throughout. The good use of resources, sorting clothing suitable for destinations in hot and cold climates raised pupils' interest to a high level and encouraged them to discuss reasons for their choices.

82 A strength of teaching is the emphasis on fieldwork. This is the basis for pupils' learning. Through exploring their own environment they learn to make comparisons with the wider world. For instance, after fieldwork to discover the source of the River Derwent, pupils in the junior class compared its features with the Mississippi. A weakness is that teachers do not take sufficient advantage of this good work to promote pupils' skills to record their findings in a geographical way.

83 One lesson was seen in **history** in the junior class. The sound quality of teaching helped pupils gain an understanding of the importance of evidence in interpreting history. A strong feature was the good use of new technology to enable pupils to find out about the burial practices of the ancient Sumerian civilisation. This raised pupils' interest to a high level and the teacher ensured they learnt and used technical vocabulary such as amulet, bier and lapis lazuli. A weakness was that the task set did not fully stretch more able pupils, so they did not achieve as well as they could.

84 A strength of teaching is the emphasis on learning from first-hand experience. For instance, pupils in the junior class undertook a study of Roman soldiers and their families when they made a residential visit to Hadrian's Wall. Visits to important sites such as Vindolanda and a visit from a "Roman legionary" gave pupils valuable experiences in developing their historical knowledge. A weakness is that teachers do not exploit fully the good opportunities they give pupils. They could do more to promote pupils' skills in communicating their findings in a variety of ways.

85 Procedures for assessing the attainment and progress of pupils in both subjects are inconsistent between the two classes. Both subjects make a good contribution to pupils' cultural development.

Religious education

Provision in religious education is **satisfactory**

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching is at least satisfactory and sometimes good.
- The school has plenty of resources to help teachers make lessons interesting.
- There are good links with the local church.
- Assessment systems are not fully in place.

Commentary

86 Standards are average and pupils' achievement is satisfactory. This is a similar picture to that seen in the previous inspection.

87 The main focus is on learning about the Christian tradition, and other faiths such as Judaism and Islam, as set out in the locally agreed syllabus. A strong feature of teaching is the value placed on other faiths. Similarities and differences are examined and explained. This was seen in a lesson in the junior class when the focus was on Islam, but with comparative references made to Christianity, for instance, the reverence given to the Quran and the Bible. The school seeks out places of worship for pupils to visit so they can compare features, festivals and ceremonies of different faiths. The parish vicar takes assemblies and talks to pupils in the classroom. A visit to Carlisle Cathedral is designed to promote spiritual awareness as well as knowledge of the Christian tradition. The school celebrates Christian festivals in school such as harvest and Christmas.

88 An imaginative lesson in the infants' class got a very positive response from pupils. The setting out of a Jewish Shabbat meal and the enactment of the family ceremony held pupils' interest at a very high level and led to good discussions. As a result pupils achieved well.

89 The school is aware of areas in need of development and has plans for their improvement:

- Assessment systems do not give teachers good enough information to set work which gives all pupils a good challenge.
- Insufficient opportunities are planned for pupils to use computers for research in this subject.

CREATIVE, AESTHETIC, PRACTICAL AND PHYSICAL SUBJECTS

90 Provision in all the following subjects was sampled, as not enough evidence was available to make a secure judgement about the overall quality of provision in any.

91 Only one **art and design** lesson was seen. It was a very good lesson where pupils were using clay to create a three-dimensional model from their designs for the new garden area. All were totally engrossed in the task and confidently tried various surface markings and elaborate features. They knew any mistakes could very easily be smoothed over. One boy inventively used a garlic press to squeeze clay and produce vine-like strands to decorate an arch! The multi-cultural aspects of art and design are exploited satisfactorily throughout the year. Examples of art from different cultures are used to stimulate pupils' imagination and feelings. Aztec dream-catcher headsets were made, for example, from brightly dyed feathers.

92 Teachers' planning is good, ensuring full coverage of the national curriculum. Pupils in the infant class have good access to a wide range of art materials in the new classroom extension and their completed work showed they often paint, used modelling materials and print using paint. Junior pupils recently studied six pictures by the famous artist Paul Klee before taking digital photographs of local houses and trying to reproduce them by painting in his style. Good links with other subjects is a strong feature in art and design. The topic on the garden design involved design

skills, science, as pupils discussed plants and habitats, and literacy skills as they described details from their plans. However, the assessment and recording of pupils' progress is a weak element in this subject and needs to be improved. The school has already identified this as a priority in the current School Improvement Plan.

93 In **design and technology**, no lessons were observed and only a small sample of work was available for analysis. Teachers' planning is based on the latest national guidance for design and technology and units are adapted to take account of mixed age classes. The required content is covered satisfactorily. However, procedures to assess pupils' progress and knowledge have not been standardised for each year group. At present, information about how individual pupils respond to their tasks each term is unsatisfactory and this makes it difficult to plan future work effectively.

94 Good links are made with other subjects. This term's theme of torches and alarms, for example, links with the science topic on electricity and light. Last term the link was with the history topic on the Aztecs and pupils prepared Mexican food such as Salsa and Tortilla wraps as part of their food technology work. Next term, following a trip to the Victorian museum at Beamish, pupils will design and make fairground models and try to make them computer controlled. The two activities for junior pupils involved weaving skills as they made baskets, and design skills as they prepared designs for their outdoor garden area.

95 The school encourages the active participation and enjoyment of **music** by all pupils, regardless of ability, and resources to facilitate this are good. Pupils have a wide range of musical experiences and teachers' planning shows that all statutory requirements are covered well. The specialist musical skills of the infant class teacher are used effectively as she teaches music competently to the junior class pupils as well as her own class. In a very good lesson seen, pupils in Years 3 to 6 listened carefully to music from South-East Asia and tried to describe the instruments used, the characteristics of the music and the rhythm. All concentrated exceptionally well, counting the number of beats to determine the musical pattern. Standards in this lesson were above those normally seen. The teaching programme takes good account of the mixed age classes and ensures that learning is not repeated unnecessarily. Pupils are given good opportunities to sing and play un-tuned instruments. There is a choir with both infant and junior pupils and the school has had additional funds to provide yet more musical instruments. A set of hand bells is being considered. All pupils have an opportunity to learn to play an instrument and some pupils do very well, being able to play the violin and read music competently by Year 6.

96 Teachers check what pupils are achieving in lessons well but there is no consistent system to assess and record pupils' progress as they move through the school. The system for assessing and recording pupils' progress is currently unsatisfactory.

97 The quality of provision in **physical education** was a concern for some parents at their meeting with inspectors before the inspection. No lessons were timetabled during the inspection period. However, discussions with staff and pupils and an analysis of teachers' planning shows that the school staff work hard to successfully overcome the lack of facilities.

98 Both teachers have undertaken recent training for sports and gymnastics and there is a strong determination to provide a wide range of additional sporting activities for pupils to take part in. All work hard to achieve gymnastic awards, for example, under the British Amateur Gymnastic Awards, awards scheme. The full physical education curriculum is adequately covered by using the village hall for dance and gymnastics and the village green for games and sports. During the initial visit, pupils in the infant class walked the short distance to the hall for their physical education session. Road safety is a major concern on the narrow country lanes and the school is hoping to use the small canteen instead for some dance sessions, after it is renovated. All attempts by governors to acquire space in one of the fields near the school for pupils to use have failed.

99 Swimming provision is good. Although there is no public pool within easy travelling distance, all the pupils travel to use the public swimming pool in Cocker mouth for ten sessions in the autumn term and ten sessions in the spring term each year. This ensures that all have time to gain

the required standards. The school reports that all pupils attain the expected level of competence before they leave in Year 6.

100 The playground is adequate for the small numbers and pupils of all ages enjoy using the adventure climbing equipment on the special soft-fall surface. In addition, resources have been improved and pupils have good access to a wide variety of physical education equipment from an outside store which they use each playtime. Infant pupils show confidence and advanced skills when using bats and balls and pupils of all ages play exceptionally well together.

101 The range and quality of extra-curricular sporting activities is good for such a small school. All junior pupils have the chance to represent the school in competitive events such as netball and football matches. There is also the opportunity for Year 5 and 6 pupils to take part in a residential experience with adventurous activities such as orienteering, horse riding, canoeing and using a climbing wall.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP

102 Religious education lessons and assemblies make a significant contribution to the provision for pupils' **personal, social and health education and citizenship (PSHCE)**. Teachers and all staff are very good role models for pupils and the close and caring relationship which exists between staff and pupils aids discussion.

103 No specific lesson was seen so an overall judgement about provision is not possible. In the two religious education lessons with each of the classes, pupils had the opportunity to develop an understanding of the Muslim faith and to appreciate the customs associated with other religions. Moreover, assembly themes encourage pupils' thinking about other people, helping them to be more aware of people's feelings and to be more tolerant. The quality of provision is enhanced by the very good attitudes of pupils and the close and trusting relationships they enjoy with staff.

104 The development of the provision for PSHCE is having a significant impact on pupils' behaviour and their attitudes to school in general and towards one another in particular. Pupils behave in a mature and responsible way in school and this helps to create the very good ethos for learning seen in most lessons. Pupils' views are regularly sought and pupils of all ages are elected to serve on the school pupil council and this effectively promotes their sense of responsibility.

PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

<i>Inspection judgement</i>	<i>Grade</i>
The overall effectiveness of the school	3
How inclusive the school is	2
How the school's effectiveness has changed since its last inspection	3
Value for money provided by the school	3
Overall standards achieved	2
Pupils' achievement	3
Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities	2
Attendance	2
Attitudes	2
Behaviour, including the extent of exclusions	2
Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	3
The quality of education provided by the school	3
The quality of teaching	3
How well pupils learn	3
The quality of assessment	4
How well the curriculum meets pupils needs	3
Enrichment of the curriculum, including out-of-school activities	2
Accommodation and resources	4
Pupils' care, welfare, health and safety	2
Support, advice and guidance for pupils	2
How well the school seeks and acts on pupils' views	3
The effectiveness of the school's links with parents	2
The quality of the school's links with the community	2
The school's links with other schools and colleges	2
The leadership and management of the school	3
The governance of the school	3
The leadership of the headteacher	2
The leadership of other key staff	8
The effectiveness of management	3

Inspectors make judgements on a scale: excellent (grade 1); very good (2); good (3); satisfactory (4); unsatisfactory (5); poor (6); very poor (7); does not apply to this school (8).