

INSPECTION REPORT

CATON COMMUNITY PRIMARY SCHOOL

Caton, Lancaster

LEA area: Lancashire

Unique reference number: 119322

Headteacher: Mr John Rigby

Lead inspector: Mrs Margaret Britton

Dates of inspection: 8 – 10 December 2003

Inspection number: 255739

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Caton Community Primary School
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	4-11
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
Number on roll:	125
School address:	Broadacre Caton Lancaster
Postcode:	LA2 9NH
Telephone number:	01524 770104
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Appropriate authority:	Governing body
Name of chair of governors:	John Gosling
Date of previous inspection:	April 1998

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

This smaller than average school has 125 pupils on roll aged between four and 11 years old. The number on roll has increased by about 30 pupils since the last inspection in 1998. Three out of four pupils are drawn from the local area and live in a mixture of privately owned and rented local authority housing. The remaining pupils come from Lancaster, many from socially challenged areas. Although census data for 2001 shows that the area has a well above average social context, the population of the school is more mixed and presents a broadly average picture. When the children start school in the reception class, standards are average overall.

Twenty-three pupils (18 percent) are identified by the school as having special educational needs; this is average. However, seven pupils (six percent) have statements of special educational needs which is well above the national average. The percentage of pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds (under two percent) is well below the national average. There are no pupils who speak English as an additional language. Twenty-five pupils (20 percent) are eligible for free school meals, which is a little above average.

The school has a relatively high rate of pupil mobility. For example, of the Year 6 class assessed in 2003, only four out of ten started in the school's reception class. Half the class joined the school between Year 3 and Year 6 and of these, half came to the school in the last five terms before they were assessed. Of the current Year 6 class, 7 out of ten pupils joined the school in the reception class. This high rate of mobility is similar in other classes throughout the school.

The school has a large and attractive site with well developed areas for sport, adventurous play and environmental studies. The school building has been much improved and extended over recent years and although it provides a stimulating learning environment, it remains small. The hall is particularly small and its size is a barrier to improvement in some areas of the school's work. For the last two years, the school has received School Achievement Awards for the standards it has attained in national tests and assessments.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
17678	Margaret Britton	Lead inspector	Foundation Stage, mathematics; science; art and design; design and technology; music
12682	Jim Griffin	Lay inspector	
30439	Malcolm Heyes	Team inspector	English; information and communication technology; geography; history; physical education; religious education; special educational needs

The inspection contractor was:

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

OVERALL EVALUATION

This is a very good school that gives good value for money. The school has a very caring ethos in which pupils' personal and academic needs are very well supported. Pupils achieve well throughout the school. The quality of teaching and learning is good throughout the school. The headteacher, senior teacher and governors provide very good leadership and management is very efficient and effective.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- The outstanding way in which meeting the needs of all pupils is central to the work of the school.
- The headteacher's very good leadership and management.
- The very good teamwork of all staff makes a very good contribution to the school's very caring ethos.
- The governors know the school very well and provide very good leadership.
- The good quality of teaching and learning throughout the school enables pupils to achieve well.
- The school makes very good provision for pupils with special educational needs.
- Pupils' very good attitudes, behaviour and personal development.
- Very good links with parents and with other schools.
- Very good provision for children in the reception year gets them off to a flying start.
- The teaching assistants and learning support assistants make an outstanding contribution to pupils' achievements in lessons.
- The results of tests and assessments are used well to focus the teaching on the learning needs of pupils but teachers are not sufficiently involved in the analysis and interpretation of the data.
- Despite imaginative improvements to the building, the limited space is still a barrier to school improvement in, for example, the development of pupils' skills in physical education and in enriching links with parents and the community.

The school responded well to the key issues in the last inspection report and improvement is good. There has been very good improvement in the provision for children in the reception year. There have been good improvements in the curriculum for science and the book stock in the library and standards in reading. Daily planning is now very well matched to the needs of different groups of pupils including the most able. There have also been good improvements in:

- achievement in English, mathematics and science by Year 6;
- the quality of teaching and of the curriculum;
- the quality of leadership and management provided by the headteacher and governors;
- the provision for information and communication technology;
- the care, guidance and support for pupils;
- the quality of pupils' annual reports to parents;
- the accommodation and school environment.

STANDARDS ACHIEVED

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

*Key: A - well above average; B – above average; C – average; D – below average; E – well below average
Similar schools are those whose pupils attained similarly at the end of Year 2.*

Pupils, including those with special educational needs, achieve well throughout the school.

Test results compared to all schools should be interpreted with care because the small numbers of pupils in each year group mean that the overall picture varies from year to year. However, when compared to the results of pupils in similar schools, pupils' progress in Years 3 to 6 was much better than average in English and mathematics and average in science. When children start school in the reception class assessments show that they reach average standards. In the national end of Year 2 tests and assessments in 2003, standards were average in reading and mathematics but below average in writing. One in four pupils in this year group were identified as having special educational needs, which means that comparisons with other schools do not show the results favourably. In the current Year 2 class, all the pupils are on track to reach at least the levels expected nationally in reading, writing and mathematics by the end of the year. About half the pupils are likely to reach higher than expected levels in reading and mathematics. Of the current pupils in Reception, indications are that they will all reach at least the levels expected nationally by the end of the reception year.

Pupils' personal qualities, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, are very good. Pupils' very good attitudes, behaviour and attendance make a positive contribution to their good achievement. Their excellent relationships with one another make an outstanding contribution to the caring ethos of the school.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION

The quality of education is good. The quality of teaching, learning and assessment is good overall. The curriculum for pupils in Years 1 to 6 is well planned to provide them with a variety of interesting activities in all subjects. The quality of education for children in the reception class is very good; the curriculum is rich and stimulating, the teaching imaginative and children are very well supported in developing very positive attitudes to learning. The care, guidance and support provided for all pupils and their involvement in the life of the school are very good. The school has very good and productive partnerships with parents and with other schools. Links with the community are good.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

The leadership and management of the school are very good. The headteacher has high aspirations for the school and provides very good leadership. His commitment to ensuring that individual pupils achieve as well as they can is outstanding. The headteacher and senior teacher provide excellent leadership of the curriculum and teaching and have worked very well together to build a very effective team of teachers, support staff and governors. The governing body has a very good understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the school and takes a major part in shaping school improvements. All statutory requirements are met.

PARENTS' AND PUPILS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

Parents are very satisfied with the school. They are pleased that their children like school, are well taught and are expected to work hard and do their best. They appreciate the care given to their children when they start school. About one in five parents responding to the inspectors' questionnaire thought that the school did not provide enough guidance for them on helping their children at home. The inspectors found that they are provided with good guidance on how to support their children. The school provides a very good range of information about the school and about pupils' standards and progress. The views of parents are sought regularly and their ideas are incorporated in the school's plans for development.

Pupils are also very happy with the school. They like the way teachers listen to their ideas, show them how to improve their work and help them if they are worried. They are pleased that they find out new things in lessons. They like the school and they are proud of it.

IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

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

- Involve the teachers in using the results of tests and assessments to focus on the learning needs of pupils in their classes.
- Fully explore all options to increase the available accommodation.

PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS

STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

STANDARDS ACHIEVED IN AREAS OF LEARNING AND SUBJECTS

Achievement is good overall. Last year, standards were well above average by the time pupils left the school. Current Year 6 standards are average. Pupils with special educational needs and those identified as being gifted and talented achieve well throughout the school. There has been a trend of improvement since the last inspection.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils achieve well throughout the school because of the good quality of the teaching and their very positive attitudes to learning.
- Standards are above those expected nationally in English, mathematics and science by the time pupils leave the school. This is despite the well above average number of pupils with statements of special educational needs.
- Assessment results are used very well to plan the teaching so that every pupil reaches the highest level they can.
- Pupils with special educational needs achieve well because of the very good, sustained support they are given.

Commentary

1. When children start school in the reception class, the results of assessments show that there is a wide range of ability in all six areas of learning. At the end of the first term, almost all have reached average standards and, because they are achieving well, early indications are that they will all reach at least the levels expected nationally by the end of the reception year. About one out of every three children is on course to reach higher levels, particularly in communication, language and literacy and in mathematical development.

The tables below show the average points scores for pupils. Each level in the National Curriculum is given a number of points. Pupils are expected to move on one point every term, so if a school's scores are one point above the national, their pupils are typically a term ahead.

Standards in national tests at the end of Year 2 – average point scores in 2003

Standards in:	School results	National results
reading	15.8 (15.4)	15.7 (15.8)
writing	13.9 (13.8)	14.6 (14.4)
mathematics	16.5 (15.4)	16.3 (16.5)

There were 20 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year

2. Although there were 20 pupils in Year 2, only 16 were assessed because the remaining four were absent from school. This had a negative effect on the results. Of the pupils assessed, three were identified as having special educational needs and four were newcomers to the school. There was little time to work with those new to the school and generally their results were below average. Standards in reading and in mathematics were average but in writing, standards were below average. However, the percentage of pupils reaching the higher level (Level 3) was well above average in mathematics, above average in writing and average in reading and in science.

- Current standards in Year 2 are average overall. Pupils are achieving well, many from a low starting point, and are on track to achieve at least the expected levels in reading, writing and mathematics by the end of the school year. The school predicts that about half the pupils will reach Level 3 in reading and in mathematics. The good achievement reflects the good teaching and positive attitudes to learning in Years 1 and 2. Standards in all other subjects are average overall.

Standards in national tests at the end of Year 6 – average point scores in 2003

Standards in:	School results	National results
English	29.6 (29.0)	26.8 (27.0)
mathematics	29.6 (31.0)	26.8 (26.7)
science	30.0 (29.0)	28.6 (28.3)

There were 14 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year

- In 2003, standards were well above average in English, mathematics and science. A very high proportion of pupils reached the higher level (Level 5) in English and mathematics, and a well above average number in science. This is a very good improvement since the last inspection when standards were average in English and science and above average in mathematics.
- The trend of improvement in English, mathematics and science since 1999 was broadly in line with the national trend. When compared to the results of pupils in schools with a similar proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals, standards were well above average in English and science and very high in mathematics. The percentage of pupils reaching Level 5 was very high in English and mathematics and well above average in science. From the end of Year 2 to the end of Year 6, pupils made well above average progress in English and mathematics and average progress in science.
- The current standards in Year 6 are average. The pupils achieve well in lessons and over time but the high proportion of pupils with special educational needs means that standards overall are average. Higher attaining pupils achieve well and are on course to reach Level 5 in English, mathematics and science by the end of the school year. In all other subjects inspected in full, standards are average.
- One of the factors that affect standards and achievement in both Years 2 and 6 is the higher than average rate at which pupils move in and out of the school. On average about three out of every ten pupils leave or join the school at times other than starting school in the reception class. In some year groups the proportion is much higher. This means that a significant number of pupils are assessed after only a few terms in the school. Many of the pupils joining the school have special educational needs or attain standards below those expected for their age. The higher proportion of pupils with statements of special educational needs also causes results to dip in some years. The school's attention to identifying each pupil's learning needs and the provision of carefully planned support for those joining the school and those with special educational needs ensures that each pupil is able to achieve well.
- The school makes very good use of its analysis of the results of tests and assessments in the core subjects of English, mathematics and science to match the learning targets to the needs of individual pupils and to provide them with a good level of support and challenge. This enables all the pupils to achieve well in lessons and over time. The use of target setting for each year group and for individual pupils is used well to raise standards and to ensure that pupils do as well as possible. Much of the analysis of results upon which these targets are based is carried out by the headteacher and senior teacher. Although this is effective, teachers now need to be more involved and take greater responsibility for the implications of the data for their plans for teaching if standards are to be raised further.

Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities

Pupils show very good attitudes towards school and their work, behave very well, form excellent relationships and their personal development is very good. Pupils' attendance and punctuality are very good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils' attitudes towards school and their work are very good.
- Pupils' very good behaviour makes a significant contribution to the progress they make.
- Pupils show care and respect for one another and relationships are excellent.
- Pupils' personal qualities are very well developed, with particularly strong features in their moral and social development.
- The rate of attendance is very high and there was no unauthorised absence last year.

Commentary

9. Most pupils are proud of their school and enjoy attending. School plays an important part in pupils' lives. For example, a group of pupils in Year 6 ranked school ahead of hobbies, level with friends and only behind family in a list of the important things in their lives. Pupils are very positive about their teachers, who they justifiably hold in very high regard. They enjoy most of their lessons, the after-school clubs and the opportunities to have their views considered in the school council. In lessons, pupils' attitudes towards their work are very good. In most lessons, pupils listen very well and show very good levels of interest, concentration and determination to complete set tasks. Pupils respond particularly well when expectations are high, lesson tasks are demanding and they are able to engage in a variety of practical activities. Their enthusiasm for practical activities was clearly evident in science, design and technology, art and design and physical education lessons.
10. Behaviour in classrooms, during lunchtime and playtimes is very good. The very good and reliable behaviour of nearly all pupils is an important element in the prevailing very positive atmosphere for learning. Staff apply class and school rules in a very consistent way. This is the key feature behind the very positive behaviour, as a few pupils in most classes need careful management. A strikingly calm, social atmosphere prevails in the dining hall. There is no sign of any bullying or other anti-social behaviour. Parents fully support this very positive picture. Parents and pupils confirm that rare incidents of bullying and other anti-social behaviour are resolved effectively. There has been just one fixed term exclusion, and no permanent exclusions, in the past decade. There were no exclusions in the last school year.
11. Exceptionally harmonious relationships among pupils, irrespective of background or learning competency level, are a very positive feature. Teachers value pupils' work and effectively praise effort and good work. As a result, in lessons most pupils are very comfortable expressing views and asking questions of their teachers. This assists their learning.
12. Almost all children achieve the early learning goals for their personal, social and emotional development by the end of reception class. Reception children's self-esteem and confidence are strikingly positive features. Pupils throughout the school have a well developed sense of right and wrong. They hold the rewards system in high regard and fully support the school's sanctions, where needed. The well established personal, social, citizenship and health education programme is central to the pupils' very good social development. Pupils justifiably talk of the confidence they get from teachers, who treat them as more grown up as they get older and who believe in their potential and expect them to achieve well. Almost all pupils show respect and care for others. For example, they hold doors open for adults in corridors and are kind to peers who are feeling unwell or left out. They exercise responsibility for themselves and others in a sensible way. For example, nearly all pupils routinely complete and return their homework. Older pupils 'buddy' younger pupils by, for example, helping them form friendships with others. When questioned in a group, pupils in Year 6 listened calmly and with respect to

different views expressed by others. A significant minority of these pupils are strikingly articulate and capable of expressing clear and rational views on complex issues.

13. Pupils' spiritual development is enriched by the opportunities provided for them to experience the natural world in the school's woodland area. Stories and discussion are used well to help the pupils develop an awareness of the needs of others and to develop a set of values and beliefs. Respect for others is central to the school's aims and is woven in to all their work with the children, parents and community. These principles are evident in the pupils' behaviour and attitudes to one another and their teachers. Collective worship is of good quality and makes a good contribution to pupils' spiritual development. It helps the pupils to understand their emotions and the feelings of others.
14. Music, art and the French lessons in Year 5 are important contributors to pupils' good cultural development. Pupils have the opportunity to learn to play a good range of musical instruments and to hear others play. They learn to value music and art from a variety of cultures and traditions. Good attention is given to raising pupils' awareness of and respect for members of other cultures; the pupils show respect for their values and traditions. Pupils' involvement in village life and with the local environment are key features in their very good understanding of local culture.
15. For several years, attendance has been consistently well above the national average. Unauthorised absence is consistently below the national average. The table below provides absence data for the latest complete reporting year, when the attendance was very high in comparison with other schools.

Attendance in the latest complete reporting year (%)

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
School data:	3.3	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 (2002/3).

16. Nearly all parents take their responsibilities seriously in relation to ensuring pupils routinely attend school and contact school in the event of absence. This is reflected in very good attendance and minimal level of unauthorised absence. Pupils' punctuality is also very good.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

The quality of education provided by the school is good. Teaching is a particular strength and is well supported by assessment systems. The quality of the contribution made by teaching assistants is outstanding. The provision for pupils with special educational needs is very good as is the care given to all children.

Teaching and learning

Teaching, learning and assessment are good overall. The overall quality of teaching and use of assessment in the reception class are particular strengths.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Lessons are very well planned to provide pupils with interesting and well matched learning opportunities.
- The teachers encourage the pupils by giving them praise and clear guidance on how to improve their work.
- The involvement and contribution of teaching assistants are excellent.
- Pupils concentrate and work hard in lessons and this contributes to their good achievement.
- Assessment procedures are very thorough and are used well to respond to the needs of individual pupils.

Commentary

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 28 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
1 (4%)	4 (14 %)	22 (78 %)	1 (4 %)	0	0	0

The table gives the number of lessons observed in each of the seven categories used to make judgements about lessons; figures in brackets show percentages where 30 or more lessons are seen.

17. Teaching has improved significantly since the last inspection, when four out of ten lessons were satisfactory. The strengths of the teaching, which are in the management and organisation of learning, particularly the use of time and resources, have been sustained and further improved. For example, there has been very good improvement towards the key issue from the last inspection to improve the daily plans for teaching. The plans now provide a very good match of work for pupils of different ages and abilities in each class. The needs of higher attaining pupils are now met very well by the planned opportunities for them to develop independent learning skills, enquiry and research. The feedback to teachers following observations of lessons by the headteacher and other senior staff has had a positive effect on the quality of teaching. Good practice associated with the national strategies for literacy and numeracy is also evident in much of the teaching.
18. The teacher's lesson plans make very clear what is to be taught and what the pupils will learn. Pupils are usually told what they will learn in the lesson, and at the end there is an opportunity to share successes and to take the learning further. The tasks for pupils are well matched to their learning needs so that, even in classes where there are two year groups, pupils are able to achieve well. This is a good improvement since the last inspection. The teachers make very good use of interactive activities and practical investigations to engage and maintain pupils' interest in the lessons. For example, in a good mathematics lesson in Year 5, pupils were engaged from the start by the teacher's lively use of well-pitched questions about negative numbers. The teaching assistant provided very good support for a group of lower attaining pupils so that by the end of the lesson, all the pupils had achieved well. The lesson moved at a good pace; the pupils were fully involved throughout and this used their time very well and helped them to concentrate.
19. The school identifies pupils who are gifted and talented and teachers take care to plan activities that challenge these pupils at an appropriate level. Pupils with special educational needs are also very well catered for. Sometimes they are taught with the whole class group but are given adapted tasks to enable them to make progress towards the targets in their individual education plans. On other occasions, they are given additional support by a teaching assistant or are withdrawn to a quiet area for direct teaching. This well planned provision helps these pupils to achieve well.
20. The teachers and teaching assistants make very good use of praise and encouragement to spur the pupils on to even greater efforts. The praise is always linked to the learning objective

for the lesson and helps the pupils to understand what they have done well. Similarly, pupils are told clearly what they need to do to improve their work. Pupils' work is marked regularly and they are often given written praise or guidance on how to improve their work. These comments are often related to their personal targets for improvement and are an important factor in raising standards and in giving pupils a good understanding of how they can improve. Because the teaching is lively and interesting, pupils concentrate, work hard and take pride in their work. They co-operate well when they work in pairs or in small groups, sharing equipment and listening to one another's ideas.

21. Throughout the school, the teaching assistants make an excellent contribution to the quality of teaching and learning. A programme of training has been used well to enhance their skills, which are very well matched to the roles delegated to them. The teachers include them in planning and evaluating teaching and in assessing pupils' achievements. They are very well prepared for each session, which means that they can take a full part in teaching and assessing the pupils. The teamwork between teachers and teaching assistants is of a very high quality and this has very good benefits for the pupils. The teachers value their contributions highly and make very good use of their time and skills.
22. Assessment procedures in English, mathematics and science are thorough and are used very well to match the learning to the needs of individual pupils. This has a positive effect on the progress that pupils make. Although pupils' work in other subjects is assessed and used to identify strengths and weaknesses in teaching and learning, the procedures are not so well developed and are not consistent across all the subjects. Nevertheless, they are often good and never less than satisfactory. For example, good use is made of samples of work to judge standards and to adjust the curriculum. Staff are beginning to make more detailed assessments each half term.

The curriculum

The curriculum for children in the reception class provides a very good and stimulating range of learning opportunities. The curriculum for Years 1 to 6 is good and provides a wide ranging and well balanced curriculum. Pupils enjoy and benefit from a good range of enrichment activities. These are good improvements since the last inspection. The accommodation and resources are satisfactory overall.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Very good provision is made for pupils with special educational needs.
- There are very good strategies for educational inclusion. All staff ensure that all pupils are able to access every part of the curriculum.
- All pupils benefit from a good range of after-school clubs and educational visits.
- Teaching assistants provide excellent support in all learning activities, which enriches the curriculum and makes it accessible to all pupils.
- The hall is too small and this limits pupils' achievements in physical education.

Commentary

23. The curriculum includes all National Curriculum subjects, religious education and personal, social, health and citizenship education. All the issues from the previous inspection have been addressed, and there are now very good opportunities for pupils to undertake investigative work in science and reading schemes and reference books have been updated. Teachers are increasingly making links between pupils' learning in different subjects and this is having a positive effect on pupils' attitudes and achievement.
24. The curriculum for pupils with special educational needs is very good. Work is carefully matched to pupils' learning, emotional or behavioural needs and enables them to experience a stimulating, relevant and inclusive curriculum. Support is provided through targeted group withdrawal sessions, adult support in lessons or carefully planned tasks designed to challenge

each pupil at just the right level. Teaching assistants are well trained and provide very effective support when they work with pupils in withdrawal groups and in class lessons. For example, in a Year 6 mathematics lesson, two pupils received very effective support from a teaching assistant when using computers to reinforce their understanding of money. The good links with the local secondary schools help pupils to make a smooth transition to the next stage of education.

25. There is a good range of extra-curricular activities for all pupils in the school. There is a variety of sporting activities, French and computer clubs. These activities are well attended by pupils. Pupils in Years 5 and 6 are also offered the opportunity of taking part in a residential visit where they undertake outdoor and adventurous games. Visitors into school enhance the curriculum offered to all pupils. Visits are used very well to develop pupils' understanding in subjects such as history, geography and art and design.
26. The school grounds and immediate environment have been developed very well and are well used to enrich the curriculum. There are, for example, animal and bird trails which can be used by all age-ranges in the school. The school has effective links with the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds, who have helped to raise pupils' awareness of endangered species; this makes a good contribution to pupils' personal development.
27. The school has an appropriate team of suitably qualified teachers whose skills and experience match the demands of the curriculum well. There is a very effective team of teaching assistants. These members of staff have benefited from a good level of training and, in consequence, they work very well alongside teachers and provide excellent support for pupils in lessons. The quality of resources is satisfactory, and these are effectively managed and used well in lessons.
28. Although the headteacher and governors have made imaginative use of every inch of available space through extensions to the classrooms, the creation of an office and staffroom and the adaptation of storerooms to teaching spaces, the building remains cramped. The main disadvantages are the very small classroom currently used by Year 6 and the tiny hall. Very good use is made of outdoor accommodation to provide opportunities for developing physical education skills but the hall is much too small to allow the pupils to safely develop their physical education skills. This is a barrier to raising standards in gymnastics and dance and seriously limits the further development of links with parents and the community.

Care, guidance and support

The school provides very well for the care, welfare, health and safety of its pupils. Pupils get very good support, advice and guidance. There are very good measures to involve pupils in the school's work and development, through seeking and acting on their views.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The school cares very well for its pupils.
- The very good support provided for pupils helps them to become aware of their skills and attributes.
- The school regards the views of pupils as important to all aspects of its work.

Commentary

29. The formal policies and practices relating to health and safety and child protection are very well considered and properly carried out. Staff know the pupils very well and address their needs. They act quickly if a pupil is unhappy or under pressure and are careful to make sure new arrivals are helped to settle in. The arrangements for pupils' induction to the reception class and transfer to a number of secondary schools are very good.

30. The support of all pupils' achievement, through monitoring, is frequent, thorough and very effectively shared with pupils and parents. Staff regularly assess pupils' personal qualities, including their behaviour, politeness, maturity, responsibility, sociability and independence. This information is shared with parents and, where there are concerns, teachers and other staff work very closely with pupils and their parents to identify how the concerns can be overcome. Pupils know their individual targets, which relate to both their academic progress and personal development, and this helps them to understand what they need to do to improve and to recognise where they have been successful. This important work is underpinned by good assessment of pupils' achievements, which are particularly good in English and mathematics.
31. As part of an exceptionally positive approach to inclusion, the school has surveyed its pupils' views. As part of personal, social, health and citizenship education, discussions, where pupils share their feelings and concerns, are a very well established feature. The re-launched school council, comprising a boy and girl elected by each of Years 2 to 6, is making a very positive contribution to the school's inclusive practices and the pupils' personal development. Pupils organise and chair their meeting and report back regularly to their classes. The council is well regarded by other pupils as they know good suggestions will be acted upon. The views of individual pupils with special educational needs form a key part of their reviews. In lessons, most pupils are comfortable making suggestions and asking questions.

Partnership with parents, other schools and the community

There are very good links with parents, which makes a significant contribution to the quality of education provided and the standards achieved. Links with other schools and colleges are very good. Links with the local community make a good contribution to pupils' development.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The parents and staff work very well together to support the children.
- There are good links with the community.
- The very effective partnerships developed with other schools in the area benefit the pupils and staff.

Commentary

32. The partnership works very well, as school and nearly all parents work on the basis that both have key roles in a shared enterprise. The school's key contributions to the very good links with parents are:
 - The practice of organising trips to the park for new pupils and their parents gives all parties very good opportunities to get to know each other; staff therefore have a very good understanding of each pupils' needs from the outset.
 - The frequency, range and quality of information to help support pupils' learning: very well-attended parents' evenings and very good annual reports are key features; curriculum outlines for each class each half-term keep parents very well informed on the work their children are doing.
 - Very good use of the home-school reading book and the homework diaries means parents and pupils are clear on set homework; as a result there is an unusually high level of satisfaction about homework and its arrangements; the diary is also an effective medium for other messages between home and school.
 - Regular surveys similar to the inspection questionnaire with a space for parents to express any other concerns mean that the school is very well informed on their concerns,
 - Decisive action taken to address any concerns; for example, the half-termly curriculum information and the homework diaries were introduced as a result of parental survey responses.

33. Parents' key parental contributions to the successful partnership include:
- Almost full parental attendance at parents' evenings.
 - Ensuring that their children attend school regularly so that pupils' attendance is consistently well above the national average.
 - Arranging and supporting a series of successful fundraising events through the Parent-Teacher Association; these events also contribute to pupils' personal development and the strong sense of community that prevails, as staff, parents and pupils are involved in many of the events.
- The success of the parental links is reflected in the very positive parental survey. Only a few parents have any concerns on any of the survey questions.
34. Pupils' learning benefits from a good range of visitors and visits. Public services such as the police, health and fire services enrich the curriculum with contributions on personal safety and healthy living. Pupils take part in a range of collections and sponsored events for charity. The school and its pupils take a full part in village life, entering a float at the annual Caton Gala, for example. There are also important links with a number of local churches.
35. The school has very good links with other primary schools in the Lune Valley cluster. Regular headteacher meetings have resulted in joint training for staff and shared use of an information and communication technology teacher and technician. The school's work on environmental trails within the school grounds is shared with other primary schools through the school website. Lessons on thinking skills have resulted from staff training funded by a Beacon primary school. As part of a Pathfinder project on the introduction of modern foreign languages into primary schools, a local secondary school teacher teaches French to Year 5 pupils. Year 6 pupils' grasp of the chemistry elements in their science curriculum is greatly enhanced by practical lessons at an adjacent secondary school. Student teachers, from St Martin's College in Lancaster, take part of their teaching practice at the school. The school takes part in sporting events with other schools, providing older pupils with additional understanding of the local community whilst developing their sense of fair play and competition.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Leadership, management and governance are very good overall. The leadership of the headteacher is very good. The school is very well managed by the confident, well informed headteacher, governors, and staff.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The headteacher's leadership is very good. His influence on the quality of teaching and the curriculum is excellent. He has high aspirations for the development of the school, which has been very influential in developing the work of the staff and governors.
- The commitment of the headteacher, staff and governors to ensuring that the needs of individual pupils are met as well as they possibly can be is outstanding.
- The senior teacher provides excellent leadership for the provision for children in the reception class and in Years 1 and 2.
- The governors have a very good understanding of the school, its strengths and areas for improvement and use this very well to influence the vision for school development.
- The school makes good use of self-evaluation measures to provide an agenda for school improvement but class teachers have limited involvement in analysing test results.
- Very good management of financial and other resources by the headteacher and governors helps the school to achieve its priorities for improvement.

Commentary

36. The headteacher has a very clear and well expressed vision for the development of the school so that all staff and governors know what they are working towards. He has made very good use of school self-evaluation and the analysis of assessment data to identify areas of strength and relative weakness. This has enabled the school to set out its priorities for improvement during the year ahead and to convert strategic decisions into effective action. The school development plan has a strong focus on raising standards and the targets are very clearly written to provide a very useful and manageable agenda for change. The headteacher has been very successful in developing a committed team of staff and governors who put the needs of pupils at the centre of all their work. He listens to and values the ideas of pupils, parents, staff and governors and actively encourages inclusion through discussion and positive expectations for all. It is this coherent approach that enables the school to meet the needs of all pupils well. The headteacher is unafraid to make decisions and take innovative steps to improve the educational provision for pupils. For example, an opportunity to secure funding to develop the school's extensive grounds to provide a rich resource for environmental learning has considerable benefits for pupils' learning, particularly in science, geography, English and the arts.
37. The senior teacher provides very good support for the headteacher and they work very effectively together and provide exemplary role models for their colleagues. Their knowledge and understanding of the curriculum, teaching and how children learn has been very influential in shaping the quality of education. The senior teacher has also provided a very strong lead in establishing assessment strategies and using the results to map pupils' progress and achievement and to identify target areas for further improvement.
38. Staff with responsibilities for leading subjects or aspects of the school's work carry out their roles well. Each teacher carries a considerable number of responsibilities. They are conscientious and regularly monitor their colleagues' plans for teaching, examine samples of pupils' work and keep the curriculum under review. Opportunities to evaluate their colleagues' teaching have been limited but this is appropriately targeted as an area for development in the current school improvement plan. The leadership and management of special educational needs in school are strong and effective. The co-ordinator ensures that Code of Practice is followed and all records and pupils' individual educational plans are kept fully up to date. He liaises effectively with a teaching assistant who has been designated to support pupils when they are withdrawn from classes.
39. The governors have a very good relationship with the headteacher and staff. The mutual respect and honesty in the relationship enables them to influence the direction of the school. The headteacher keeps governors very well informed and they, in turn, provide good support by questioning and challenging professional matters. The governors know the strengths and relative weaknesses of the school and have a clear understanding of the priorities for development and how decisions about the budget and staffing levels need to support these priorities. The governors fulfil their statutory duties very well and are eager to further improve the part they play in leading the school. For example, they have recently started to identify targets for the development of school governance and have included these in the school development plan. They are fully involved in appraising the work of the headteacher and setting performance targets for him. Overall they provide very good leadership for the school and have been very effective in their response to the previous inspection.
40. The school is very well managed. The headteacher, governors and staff make very good use of the local education authority's framework for school self-evaluation. They reflect on the findings of their monitoring of teaching and learning and performance data and make accurate diagnoses of strengths and weaknesses. This has helped them to focus on the most important areas for improvement and not to be sidetracked by minor issues. They welcome external views on their work and make good use of the feedback they receive. The analysis and interpretation of performance data has been used well to improve aspects of the school. The

school has rightly identified that this analysis and interpretation of test results needs to become much more the responsibility of class teachers. There are current plans to develop the teachers' role in using the data to set detailed and aspirational targets for the pupils in their class. The performance management of teachers is used well to bring about improvement by relating the teachers' personal objectives to the school's objectives.

Financial information for the year April 2002 to March 2003

Income and expenditure (£)		Balances (£)	
Total income	342,031	Balance from previous year	25,251
Total expenditure	329,099	Balance carried forward to the next	38,183
Expenditure per pupil	2898		

41. The balance carried forward from March 2003 was higher than usual because money for capital expenditure was carried forward over the end of the financial year. The carry forward in March 2004 is projected to be considerably lower and well within the expected range. The strategic management of finances is very good. The headteacher and governors make very good use of all available funding and explore every opportunity to win additional funds for the school. They have, for example, used funds made available through a variety of partnerships to develop the school environment and support pupil projects. Currently, a bid to win funding for a hall has been submitted. This is to be shared with the community and used to extend curriculum opportunities in physical education, to strengthen the links with parents and the wider community and raise funds through lettings. The day-to-day management of financial resources is efficient and effective. The recently appointed administrative assistant provides good support for the headteacher and staff, freeing them to focus on their work with the pupils.
42. The headteacher and governors have managed the recruitment and retention of staff very well. Appointments have been made that bring additional strengths and skills to the school and staff are very well supported by the induction procedures and continuing professional development including staff training. A particularly successful initiative has been to increase the number of teaching assistants and provide them with relevant training. The team of teaching assistants is very well managed by the teachers and provides an outstanding contribution to pupils' progress and achievement.
43. The school has made good use of national and local initiatives for raising achievement and is well placed to further improve. Aids to improvement include the strength of the leadership and management and the very effective teamwork of all staff and governors. The good quality of teaching, learning and assessment are also significant factors in the school's potential for improvement. The main barrier to improvement is the limited space available in the school.

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

AREAS OF LEARNING IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

44. Provision for children in the reception class is very good and is a strength of the school. This is very good improvement since the last inspection. Children are admitted to the reception class at the beginning of the school year in which they have their fifth birthday. They are taught alongside the youngest pupils in the Year 1. They enter school with a broad range of attainment but overall, standards are average for all areas of learning.
45. The provision is very well managed and led by the senior teacher and as a result, children achieve well in all areas of learning, about one in three from a low starting point. Teaching during the last inspection was judged to be good, but there was a weakness in the provision for physical development. Teaching and learning are now consistently very good. The teacher's high expectations for the children are evident in the exciting and stimulating learning activities. The main strengths of the teaching and learning are:
- the meticulous and detailed planning that ensures that all the children are provided with challenging activities that help them to achieve well;
 - the excellent teamwork between the teacher and the teaching assistants makes best use of the children's time;
 - the emphasis on children learning through imaginative and practical activities ensures that they develop positive attitudes to learning;
 - the way in which the teaching engages and holds the children's interest so that they concentrate for long periods and persevere with their tasks;
 - the way in which assessment is used to identify children's achievements and target the next steps in their learning.
46. There are very good induction arrangements that help the children to settle into school quickly and relationships with parents are very good. This helps the children to get off to a good start.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The very good teaching provides children with exciting and relevant opportunities to develop positive attitudes to learning and to form good relationships with one another.
- The children achieve well and reach above average standards for their age.

Commentary

47. The teacher plans exciting learning opportunities for the children. The children are engaged by the enthusiastic and imaginative teaching and are interested, excited and motivated to learn. Almost all are confident to try new activities and to speak in the class group. They maintain their attention and concentrate well because the teaching and learning strategies are varied and lessons move at a brisk pace. Their positive attitudes to learning help them to achieve well in all the areas of learning. Many of the children initiate interactions with others and when they play together, they often show an awareness of the views and feelings of others.
48. Because the staff establish clear and consistent routines and expectations, the children are helped to adapt their behaviour to different situations. They understand what behaviour is acceptable in the classroom, are eager to please and behave very well. They generally work well as part of a group, taking turns, sharing resources and ideas. They are all confident to work independently within the classroom, selecting and using activities and resources. Most children are becoming more independent when dressing and undressing for physical education

lessons. They manage their personal hygiene with confidence. Adults use praise and encouragement very well to build the children's confidence and, as a result, children have a positive self-regard and are proud of their achievements. Most children have already reached the standards expected for children by the end of the reception year.

COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children's language skills are developed very well by the very good teaching.
- Early reading and writing skills are taught systematically and very well.

Commentary

49. Children's speaking and listening skills are developed very well through the use of stimulating role-play in which the adults provide a very good model of vocabulary and language structure. The adults are enthusiastic and lively when they speak to the children and expect them to listen carefully and to make contributions to discussions and answer questions. Adults value the children's contributions and this helps to build their confidence in using more adventurous vocabulary and sentence structures.
50. Good use is made of literacy lessons to build children's skills in reading and in writing. The teaching is carefully matched to the needs of all children and this enables them to make good progress in lessons and to achieve well over time. About half the children can accurately hear the letter sounds at the beginning and end of words and use this knowledge well to read simple texts. The remaining children recognise the first sound in words. The regular practising of high frequency words is systematically building their confidence as readers. Almost all the children join in with repeated phrases in well known stories. For example, when they hear different versions of the story of 'Goldilocks and the Three Bears', they join in with phrases such as, 'Who's been eating my porridge?' each time it occurs in the text. They show a keen interest in books and delight in stories. They retell the stories they know well using dolls, puppets and illustrations.
51. The teaching of writing is carefully structured so that by the end of the reception class the highest attaining children write simple sentences correctly, using their knowledge of letter sounds to spell a range of simple words. Most children leave spaces between words and use their knowledge of sounds well to attempt spellings. Many relevant opportunities are provided for children to write as part of their play and this helps them to have a good understanding of the uses of writing to communicate ideas. Handwriting skills are taught systematically and this helps the children to form letters correctly from the start and to write clearly.

MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision in mathematical development is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- A very good variety of relevant practical activities ensure that children achieve well.
- Opportunities to use their developing knowledge and skills are provided for well in most areas of the classroom.
- The teacher and teaching assistants model correct mathematical vocabulary well and this helps the children to develop a secure understanding of mathematical ideas.

Commentary

52. The children know a wide range of songs and rhymes that the staff use well to reinforce their knowledge and understanding of counting and number. Every opportunity is used to practise counting, sorting and matching objects in a variety of practical and relevant situations. Many opportunities are provided in the classroom for the children to learn and practise mathematical ideas. For example, they make repeating patterns, sort objects and label them with numerals, sort buttons and add 'one more' to each group. Most children count to 10 and know most of the numerals. Children name and recognise the features of simple shapes including rectangles, squares, triangles and circles. They have investigated symmetry and increased their understanding of terms including 'full' and 'empty' when using sand, water and dough. All these activities are carefully planned so that the children learn as part of their play or through very good direct teaching that enables them to achieve well.
53. The adults model correct mathematical vocabulary well and this helps the children to use the words accurately and with confidence. For example, when they learnt to use positional words, including 'on', 'in front of', 'behind' and 'beside', the teaching assistant made very good use of repetition and a Humpty Dumpty toy to reinforce their understanding of the vocabulary. Children were engaged by the use of interesting materials and the lively approach that actively involved each child well.

KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE WORLD

Provision in knowledge and understanding of the world is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Role-play is used very well to help children to identify differences between the past and the present.
- Children respond well to the opportunities to explore a range of materials and tools and to look closely at similarities and differences.
- Very good use is made of the smartboard and computers to support children's learning and to extend their knowledge and use of information and communication technology.

Commentary

54. The children have been helped to identify similarities and differences between household artefacts from the past and the present through the richly resourced role-play area. For example, in one session, the children and adults dressed in Victorian clothes and learned about chores such as lighting the fire, shopping for candles, washing the clothes, beating the carpets and ironing. They achieved very well because the very good teaching involved them in handling and using historical artefacts and included a very high level of involvement for all the children. An earlier role-play opportunity provided the context of a hotel in which the children were able to use their computer skills to 'make the bookings'.
55. The children have tasted fruits and compared their flavour, colour and texture. They have looked carefully at old and new teddy bears and identified differences in size, shape and colour and noticed how the older bears are sometimes rather worn. They have used their developing skills in writing to record some of the things they have noticed. When they use the computers, children use the mouse accurately to pinpoint objects on the screen. They have selected pictures from a collection on the computer, labelled and printed them.
56. The children enjoyed following routes marked on the floor using the 'Three Bears' footprints. They were able to describe the routes they had taken and identify the destinations in the classroom. Very good links were made with the children's learning in mathematics with the use of positional vocabulary including 'beside', 'over', 'through' between' and 'around'. The idea of

routes and the use of positional language were further reinforced by reading the story of 'Rosie's Walk' and later using the interactive smartboard screen.

PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision in physical development is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children manipulate materials and objects well to achieve the effect they want.
- Children have a good sense of space and move with confidence and in safety.

Commentary

57. Most children are able to take off their clothes independently and manage all but the most difficult fastenings. They demonstrate very good co-ordination and control when they use a needle and thread to sew around the sides of a felt teddy bear using blanket stitch. They reach standards above the expectations for the age group. They use scissors well and cut with increasing accuracy. When children use malleable materials such as dough or clay, they squeeze, pat, pinch and twist to achieve the result they want. They use simple tools to make changes to the materials. For example, when they made and painted salt-dough bears, they shaped the materials and used tools such as paint brushes to apply detail. The results were attractive and finished to above average standards.
58. The quality of teaching is very good. The activities are very well planned to challenge the children in a wide range of relevant experiences. The children are confident to try new activities and this helps them to achieve well. In a physical education lesson, the children moved energetically when they jumped, leapt and hopped. They showed very good awareness of space and managed well in the limited space of the very small hall. The imaginative teaching promotes their understanding of the use of space and the awareness of the needs of others. The children move sensitively and imaginatively as they pretend to walk on cracking ice or fall to the ground as snowflakes or raindrops. They understand that physical activity brings about changes in their body and, for example, makes their heart 'bump'.

CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT

Provision in creative development is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children respond well to stimulating teaching that develops their imagination through art and design, music, dance, and role-play.
- The children are provided with a rich range of opportunities to respond to the world around them and to express and communicate their ideas.

Commentary

59. The children's imagination is used well to motivate their learning across the curriculum. For example, after hearing the story of 'Old Bear' the children were asked to invent a machine to rescue the bear in the story from the attic. The children's ideas were imaginative and made good use of their knowledge and understanding in communication, language and literacy and in knowledge and understanding of the world. In a physical education lesson, the children were encouraged to imagine that markers on the hall floor were rabbit holes and that they were rabbits. They looked around as they emerged from the rabbit holes to see if it was safe to run, jump or gallop to another hole. This promoted not only their imaginative skills but also their

awareness of others and the use of space in the hall. They gained in confidence in expressing their ideas because of the teacher's encouragement and praise.

60. When children listen to music they are able to identify long and short sounds and move imaginatively in response to the tempo and mood of the melodies. They know and enjoy a wide range of songs that they sing rhythmically and with enjoyment. They can maintain a steady beat when they clap or use a drum. The children have created large-scale paintings of their teddy bears. These are well observed and represent the colours, shapes and expressions of the bears well. The opportunities for imaginative and role-play are varied and planned well to appeal to the children's interests and to support their learning across the curriculum. Recently, they have enjoyed working in 'Santa's Grotto', the 'Stable at Bethlehem', the 'Olden-days house', a 'Hotel' and a 'Teddy bear Shop'

SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 1 AND 2

ENGLISH

Provision in English is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Good quality teaching that takes account of pupils' different learning needs in lessons.
- The role of teaching assistants in lessons, which creates a supportive and inclusive atmosphere for pupils to learn in.
- Strong and effective leadership of the subject, and clear systems for assessing and monitoring pupils' achievements as they move through the school.
- Computers in classrooms are insufficiently used to support pupils' learning in the subject.

Commentary

61. Current standards in Years 2 and 6 are in line with the national average. Inspection evidence suggests that pupils in Year 2 will achieve standards in line with the national average in their writing, which is an improvement on last year's test results. Standards in Year 6 are generally higher than those observed, but are currently lower due to the high proportion of pupils with special educational needs in the present class. The co-ordinator has a clear overview of where the subject needs to be developed further. For example, a current priority is to build on the good approach to teaching writing in the reception year by developing similar approaches in Years 1 and 2. Assessment procedures are very thorough, and statutory test results are carefully analysed to identify strengths and weaknesses in the delivery of the subject. This results in pupils of all abilities achieving well as they move through the school. There has been good improvement since the last inspection.
62. Standards in speaking and listening are above the average by the end of Years 2 and 6. Personal, social and health education lessons and group discussions are used effectively to develop pupils' speaking and listening skills. Pupils have gained sufficient confidence to use a range of vocabulary and expression when they speak in either formal or informal situations. For example, in an English lesson in Year 6, pupils confidently discussed with the class and teacher the differences between autobiographical and biographical writing.
63. Standards in reading are average in Years 2 and 6. Throughout the school all pupils are involved in well planned and taught guided reading activities and this is having a positive effect on their rate of progress and their achievements. A home reading scheme, in which reading tasks are undertaken by pupils and checked by teaching assistants, is also being used well to raise standards and promote pupils' interest in and enthusiasm for reading. Reading records, used to monitor pupils' progress, help teachers to target the teaching accurately and this contributes to the progress pupils make and their overall achievement. The updated reading scheme materials and reference books have made a valuable contribution to the improvement

in standards since the last inspection. Pupils enjoy reading and often express preferences for particular authors or types of books. They enthusiastically share their thoughts on the book that they are reading, and make sensible comments on the characters and what they think might happen next.

64. Standards in writing are average in Years 2 and 6. The school has a clear focus on ensuring writing is developed and used for relevant purposes in all subjects. Higher attaining pupils in Year 2 write legibly and make correct use of capital letters and full stops in their writing. Lower attaining pupils need reminding to use capital letters when composing their sentences. Pupils develop their skills well by writing for a range of purposes in subjects across the curriculum. This helps them to develop a good understanding of the appropriate language and style they should use to communicate their ideas. Higher attaining pupils write using a neat, legible and fluent hand with few spelling mistakes. They use interesting language, for example, when describing the life histories of fellow pupils. Lower attaining pupils need some help in ordering their thoughts when they write.
65. The quality of teaching and learning is good. All teachers plan effectively for lessons and ensure that pupils are able to be successful and achieve well by matching the tasks to their specific needs. The use and deployment of teaching assistants in lessons are excellent, play an important role in supporting both teachers and pupils, and have a very positive effect on pupils' progress and achievement. This was demonstrated in a lesson in Year 5 when a teaching assistant worked with a lower attaining group to enable them to successfully compile lists of the features of myths and legends. The pupils were able to achieve well because of the very good quality of her intervention. The specific needs of pupils with educational needs are met well. As a result, they achieve well in lessons and make good progress over time. The good organisation and management of learning means that there is a supportive atmosphere in lessons. This helps pupils to gain in confidence and to overcome any difficulty they encounter during their work. Although there is very effective use of laptop computers to support pupils' learning, there are some missed opportunities to consolidate computer skills in the classroom.

Language and literacy across the curriculum

66. The use of literacy skills across the curriculum in the school is good. There are good opportunities for pupils' to develop their speaking and listening skills in group discussions and in lessons such as geography, history and physical education. The displays of subject specific vocabulary and the way in which staff promote the use of correct terminology have a positive influence on the pupils' use of language. Pupils' writing skills are used well in most subjects and this helps to develop their skills in writing for a good range of purposes and audiences.

MATHEMATICS

Provision in mathematics is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The quality of teaching is good and pupils achieve well throughout the school.
- Very good use has been made of the analysis and interpretation of test results to match the work to the needs of pupils.
- Pupils have positive attitudes to learning mathematics and work hard in lessons.
- The co-ordinator provides very good leadership for his colleagues, has high expectations for the quality of teaching and learning and a realistic and practical approach to raising standards.

Commentary

67. There has been good improvement since the last inspection. The teachers have made good use of guidance and materials from the national numeracy strategy. They have made good use of support from the local education authority's consultants and of school self-evaluation,

including classroom observations by the co-ordinator, to improve the quality of teaching and planning. The improvement in standards is due in part to the very good use of the results of assessments to identify where there are specific weaknesses in teaching or learning. Teachers have successfully focused their efforts on these areas and this contributed to the well above average standards in 2003. A high proportion of pupils achieved Level 5 in the same year as a result of these strategies. Current standards are average in both Years 2 and 6. The variation between years is due to the small size of the year group rather than changes in provision. The teachers know each pupil very well and they take care to plan work that matches each pupil's learning need to enable the best progress to be made. They give detailed feedback so that each individual knows what he or she needs to do to improve their work. This strategy has also successfully contributed to the improvement in standards.

68. The lively and well planned lessons ensure that pupils are actively involved through, for example, question and answer sessions, investigations and by sharing their strategies with the class. The lessons move along at a good pace and build very successfully on pupils' prior learning. The teaching assistants are very well deployed in lessons. They are fully aware of the pupils' learning objectives and this enables them to teach and support groups and individuals very effectively. For example, in a lesson for pupils in Years 1 and 2 where a group of pupils worked with the teaching assistant the activities were well matched and the teaching assistant had high expectations for their achievements. At the end of the session, she challenged them very effectively by asking questions which revealed that they had achieved well.
69. The lively mental and oral session used to start most lessons engages the pupils' attention. Their interest is maintained throughout the lesson by the variety of activities and the encouragement, challenge and support provided by the adults and, as a result, they achieve well. Pupils generally take pride in and derive satisfaction from their achievements. The pupils concentrate very well in lessons. They settle quickly to their tasks and can generally explain their work clearly. All these factors contribute to their rate of progress and they generally achieve well. Opportunities for pupils to work individually, in pairs or in small groups help them to develop good work habits.
70. The co-ordinator has a very clear understanding of standards in mathematics and a very perceptive view of what next needs to be done to bring about further improvements. For example, plans are in place to help teachers to improve the arrangements for tracking the progress of individual pupils in their class and to raise expectations. The co-ordinator intends that this will result in refinements to the plans for teaching so that activities provide an even more precise match.

Mathematics across the curriculum

71. The national numeracy strategy has been implemented very well in mathematics lessons and there is evidence that pupils use their developing skills well in some other subjects. For example, measuring skills are used well in design and technology to draw plans and to create the product. Pupils make good use of their skills to interpret and create bar charts and graphs in science and in geography. Older pupils' knowledge of calculations is used well in constructing spreadsheets in information and communication technology.

SCIENCE

Provision in science is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- There has been a good improvement in standards since the last inspection and good progress towards the key issue to improve the balance of the curriculum and opportunities to learn through practical investigations.
- Teachers plan the lessons well so that pupils are given many opportunities to explore and investigate scientific ideas through practical activities and to use their literacy and numeracy skills in relevant situations. Pupils are enthusiastic and achieve well.
- The development of the environmental area has made a major contribution to the resources for studying living things.

Commentary

72. Standards have risen steadily since the last inspection and overall improvement has been good. In 2003, standards in the Year 6 national tests were well above average, but achievement was satisfactory. The pupils in the present Years 2 and 6 reach average standards. All achieve well in relation to their ability. A high proportion of the pupils in Year 6 are identified as having special educational needs. Changes in the time allocated to the subject and the reorganisation of the curriculum into a two-year rolling programme have contributed to this improvement in achievement in Year 6. Another important factor has been the detailed analysis and interpretation of the results of tests and assessments. This information has been used well to identify changes needed in the curriculum and teaching methods. Assessment procedures and their use are developing well. Other factors that have helped to raise standards are the enhancement of resources and the benefits derived from good links with other schools in the local cluster and with the secondary school. For example, pupils in Year 6 have benefited greatly from an opportunity to have five science lessons at a local grammar school. The focus in the lesson seen was on chemistry; pupils' thinking was stretched by the high expectations of the teacher and they responded very well. The lesson observed was the last in the series and most pupils showed that they had a good understanding of solubility and the use of simple laboratory equipment. Many came away from the session with a great enthusiasm for science.
73. Teaching is good. Lesson plans are detailed. They make clear what is to be taught and learnt and the part the adults are to play in the lesson. The tasks are carefully planned to match the challenge of the work to different groups and individuals. Further challenge is provided by the skilled use of the teacher's and teaching assistant's skilled intervention in the learning and their well matched questions. For example, in a Year 3 and 4 lesson where pupils investigated electrical circuits, they were grouped in pairs and trios to work on tasks that provided them with intellectual challenge. The intervention of the teacher and the teaching assistant enabled pupils of all abilities to achieve well in understanding and explaining the effect of putting a second bulb into a simple series circuit. Because the lessons are well planned and interactive the pupils concentrate well on the tasks. They are enthusiastic and collaborate and co-operate well with one another when they work in pairs or small groups.
74. Evidence from lesson observations, the sample of pupils' work and discussions with pupils revealed that teachers plan lessons so that pupils are actively involved in scientific investigations in most lessons. This is a good improvement since the last inspection when learning through investigation was judged to be too little used. Pupils' literacy and numeracy skills are promoted very well. Pupils are encouraged to devise their own way of recording their results in reports, tables and graphs. This helps the teachers to make accurate assessments of the pupils' understanding of the key ideas they have been taught.
75. Leadership is good. A major and successful project for the school has been the development of an area of woodland in the school grounds as an area for the study of the environment. This promises to make a very valuable contribution to pupils' understanding of living things and their habitats. The involvement of experts has already helped the pupils' knowledge and understanding of plants, trees, birds and other small creatures. Good links are being established with other schools who will use the resource through the development of a website.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

Provision in information and communication technology is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Very effective use of information and communication technology to support pupils' learning in most subjects.
- All teaching staff are confident in using information and communication technology as part of their daily practice.
- Effective teaching, planning and use of resources, including deployment of teaching assistants to assist pupils.
- Some missed opportunities for using computers based in classrooms to support pupils' learning in classrooms.

Commentary

76. Pupils enjoy working and using computers in lessons and generally achieve well. Teachers' confidence in teaching the subject is beginning to ensure that pupils' skills are systematically built year by year. Current pupils in Years 2 and 6 attain standards that are in line with national expectations. Laptop computers are used very effectively across the school in all curricular areas to support pupils' learning, whether they are working independently, or researching a topic, for example, in a Year 5 history lesson on the Ancient Greeks. However, there are occasions when opportunities for using class-based computers are missed to support pupils' learning, for instance in English lessons.
77. In all lessons where information and communication technology was being used, teachers and teaching assistants displayed secure knowledge and used the equipment well. Lessons are well planned and include the very effective deployment and contribution of teaching assistants in lessons when computers are being used. Both the teacher and teaching assistant helped groups of pupils in Years 3 and 4 to use different tools and functions to produce repeating patterns on their Christmas trees. When pupils work with computers they treat them with respect and allow other children to use them when they have completed their tasks.
78. The resources for the subject are good. The use of laptop computers for class teaching makes good use of the space available in the school and yet allows for effective and efficient teaching. The very effective use of interactive smartboards in classrooms to support pupils' learning across the curriculum also develops their computer skills. The school has appropriate safety procedures in place when pupils access Internet web sites. Assessment procedures are effective in monitoring pupils' achievements and in identifying areas for curriculum development. Curriculum leadership is good. The co-ordinator monitors teachers' plans each half term and, with the assistance of a teaching assistant, offers colleagues good support and advice. This has helped teachers to grow in confidence and to provide pupils with challenging work that is contributing to the rate of progress. There has been good improvement since the last inspection.

Information and communication technology across the curriculum

79. Information and communication technology is used very effectively to support learning across all subjects. For instance, in mathematics lesson in Years 1 and 2, pupils used computers to reinforce their understanding of simple fractions and telling the time. There are some occasions when opportunities to use class based computers are missed; for example, to support pupils' learning in English.

HUMANITIES

Religious education was inspected in full and is reported below. History and geography were sampled.

80. In **history**, planning documents indicate that the National Curriculum requirements are met. Samples of work undertaken in this academic year indicate that pupils' literacy skills are used well in the subject. In the lesson seen, the quality of teaching and learning was good
81. Standards seen in **geography** in Years 2 and 6 were those expected nationally. Pupils' accurate use of geographical vocabulary is developed well and this helps them to describe accurately what they see on maps and in photographs. When Year 1 and 2 pupils used aerial maps to compare the village of Caton with the French village of Lansac, pupils identified similarities and differences accurately. Year 6 pupils made good use of reference books and laptop computers to find information about St. Lucia in the West Indies. They were then able to describe the geographical features of the area. The activity gave them useful insights into how different world locations can be accessed through sources such as the Internet and reference books.
82. The quality of teaching seen was good. The teachers had secure subject knowledge and used a good variety of resources and strategies to help to build pupils' understanding. This included the use of smartboards and the very effective deployment of teaching assistants in lessons. Pupils sometimes worked as a whole class and at other times in pairs or small groups to carry out research and to present their findings. Where teachers and teaching assistants made good use of questions to challenge the pupils' thinking, the pupils achieved well.

Religious education

The provision for religious education is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Effective use of literacy to promote pupils' learning in the subject.
- The good quality of teaching and learning.
- Strong and effective leadership of the subject.

Commentary

83. Standards are in line with those expected in the locally agreed syllabus in Years 2 and 6, and pupils achieve well. Teaching and learning are good. Leadership and management of the subject are good and are having a good effect on the quality of teaching and learning. The co-ordinator monitors planning and pupils' work each term and undertakes an annual scrutiny of pupils' books to ensure there is progression and continuity throughout the school. There has been satisfactory improvement since the last inspection.
84. During their time in school, pupils learn about different world faiths including Christianity, Sikhism and Judaism and have a sound understanding of the key features of each faith group. Teachers use appropriate questioning and guidance to help pupils to gain a clear understanding and knowledge of the theme being taught. For example, in a lesson for reception and Year 1 pupils, the teacher narrated the 'Nativity Story' whilst the pupils acted out the story. This resulted in all the pupils gaining a good understanding of the story and its meaning in the Christian faith. This type of guidance has a positive impact on pupils' interest in the subject, and helps to develop their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
85. The sample of work showed that a good emphasis is placed on asking pupils to record their knowledge and understanding of the subject in writing. This allows pupils to practise their literacy skills in a meaningful context and gives teachers a useful way of evaluating the impact of their teaching. Visitors into schools such as the local clergy in Caton, links with churches in

Lancaster, and assembly are used well to support and develop pupils' subject knowledge and understanding.

CREATIVE, AESTHETIC, PRACTICAL AND PHYSICAL SUBJECTS

Physical education is reported in full below. Work was sampled in art and design, design and technology and music.

86. The pupils' **art and design** work indicates that they experience a good range of opportunities to work with a variety of materials and to develop skills. For example, Pupils in Year 2 have created well observed self-portraits using collage. By Year 6, pupils' drawings of 'moving figures' show that they are beginning to understand proportion and to show detail through line tone and texture. Pupils are given suitable opportunities to consider the work of other artists. For example, pupils in Year 2 have created good quality designs in the style of Mondrian and Picasso. Links with local artists are a strength of the provision. For example, work with a local artist has resulted in some very well observed and good quality watercolour paintings of birds. The pupils went on to work with the artist to design a gate for the school that incorporates the shapes of birds. This has given them a good understanding of one of the practical applications of being a professional artist. Another artist has created murals in the school and the pupils have been able to suggest ideas for the designs. Pupils in Years 5 and 6 have an opportunity to visit a gallery and all pupils have the chance to exhibit their own work in the school's annual 'Dog Show'.
87. In the one **design and technology** lesson seen, the quality of teaching and learning was good and pupils achieved well. Pupils in Years 3 and 4 have designed money containers made in felt and decorated with a variety of trimmings. The activity was well planned to interest the pupils and to develop their skills in designing, making and evaluating a product. The pupils concentrated and were eager to discuss their product and point out where and why they had adapted their original design. They made sensible decisions about the materials that they would use to decorate the container and the best way to fasten them on. The sample of work indicates that teachers give pupils many well planned opportunities to use their numeracy skills in lessons. Pupils in Year 2 present the designs for vehicles from more than one angle and label their diagrams clearly. Pupils in Year 3 and 4 use simple lever mechanisms to create greetings cards and have designed and made torches powered by batteries. In Year 5, pupils are using card to make large-scale fairground rides powered by electric motors; these are of good quality. The work sample indicates that pupils reach the standards expected for their age in Years 2 and 6.
88. In **music**, it was evident in collective worship that pupils enjoy singing. Their diction is clear and their performance rhythmic and generally well in tune. The quality of teaching and learning in the Year 6 lesson seen was very good and pupils achieved very well. The pupils concentrated hard and, because of the teacher's clear demonstration and encouragement, several were confident enough to clap appropriate rhythms to fill the gaps in a phrase showing a satisfactory level of skill. The pupils sang tunefully and rhythmically and were able to sustain a two-part harmony well when they sang 'Silver and gold'. Their performance improved during the lesson because of the teacher's high expectations and focus on points for improvement.
89. About 14 pupils learn to play a variety of woodwind instruments. They achieved well in the sessions observed. The teacher demanded high standards and linked praise well to her expectations. This helped the pupils to improve their performance. A particular strength of the instrumental teaching is the emphasis on improvisation. This gives pupils confidence to play freely, rhythmically and expressively and they make a good sound. Many more pupils have instrumental lessons than at the time of the last inspection and this is a good improvement. The curriculum is well enriched by visiting musicians, including a jazz workshop that involved the whole school and concerts performed by the local education authority's visiting music teachers.

Physical education

The provision for physical education is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The good quality of teaching and learning.
- Strong and effective management of the subject co-ordinator.
- Good use of resources and deployment of teaching assistants during lessons.
- The size of the school hall restricts the full delivery of the subject.

Commentary

90. Pupils in Years 2 and 6 attain the standards expected nationally for their age group. Pupils work hard in lessons and often achieve well in lessons although achievement over time is satisfactory. Although all elements of the physical education curriculum are taught, the size of the hall is an inhibiting factor on the range of activities undertaken and the standards achieved. However, pupils are able to reach average standards because the teachers plan carefully to ensure that best use is made of the space available and the outdoor facilities have been developed very well to compensate for the lack of suitable indoor space. The headteacher and governors are anxious to improve the facilities so that pupils can reach higher standards and there is currently a bid in place to secure funding to build a larger hall. The leadership and management of the subject are strong and effective. The co-ordinator has a clear vision for the development of the subject. There has been a satisfactory rate of improvement since the last inspection.
91. The quality of teaching and learning is good. The good teaching was characterised by the teachers' secure subject knowledge, detailed planning and skilled management of the pupils in the confined space. For example, Year 1 and 2 pupils were immediately engaged by the teacher's imaginative and enthusiastic approach, worked hard in pairs and small groups and achieved well in the lesson because of the teacher's consistently high expectations. Teachers use pupil demonstrations well to establish their expectations and this helps pupils to improve their performance. In a Year 5 games lesson, pupils made good progress in their passing skills because of the teacher's effective demonstration of a chest pass.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP

92. Personal, social and health education and citizenship were sampled through a study of the planned programme. There is good planning for the subjects. A formal programme was introduced at the beginning of this academic year and includes the development of personal relationships through the group discussion strategy referred to as 'circle time'.

PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

<i>Inspection judgement</i>	<i>Grade</i>
The overall effectiveness of the school	2
How inclusive the school is	1
How the school's effectiveness has changed since its last inspection	3
Value for money provided by the school	3
Overall standards achieved	3
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	2
The quality of education provided by the school	3
The quality of teaching	3
How well pupils learn	3
The quality of assessment	3
How well the curriculum meets pupils' needs	3
Enrichment of the curriculum, including out-of-school activities	3
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	2
The effectiveness of the school's links with parents	2
The quality of the school's links with the community	3
The school's links with other schools and colleges	2
The leadership and management of the school	2
The governance of the school	2
The leadership of the headteacher	2
The leadership of other key staff	3
The effectiveness of management	2

Inspectors make judgements on a scale: excellent (grade 1); very good (2); good (3); satisfactory (4); unsatisfactory (5); poor (6); very poor (7).