

INSPECTION REPORT

FURNESS VALE PRIMARY SCHOOL

Furness Vale

LEA area: Derbyshire

Unique reference number: 112648

Headteacher: Julie Ward

Lead inspector: Barbara Crane

Dates of inspection: 15th – 18th September 2003

Inspection number: 256186

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Primary
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	4 – 11
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
Number on roll:	99
School address:	Buxton Road Furness Vale High Peak Derbyshire
Postcode:	SK23 7PQ
Telephone number:	01663 744103
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Appropriate authority:	Governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Tim Beard
Date of previous inspection:	June 1998

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

This is a smaller than average primary school with 99 pupils on roll aged from four to eleven. Nearly all of the pupils come from white, British families and no pupils are learning English as an additional language. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs is higher than average, at around 33 per cent of the school; the number has increased over recent years. About five per cent of the pupils have Statements of Special Educational Need, which is high for a school of this size. These pupils have very specific needs including physical, learning and speech and language difficulties.

Children's attainment on entry to the school shows a full range of ability and varies in different years but is overall below average.

The school gained the Basic Skills Quality Mark in 2001 and a School Achievement award in 2002. A Healthy Schools award was gained in 2002 and the local education authority (LEA) award of excellence was gained for the school's stance on bullying in 2001.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
21227	Barbara Crane	Lead inspector	English, Foundation Stage, art and design.
19426	Chris Farris	Lay inspector	
20010	John Sangster	Team inspector	Mathematics, information and communication technology, music, physical education.
27541	John Collins	Team inspector	Science, design and technology, history, geography, religious education.

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

OVERALL EVALUATION

This is a good school. It very effectively promotes pupils' personal development and they achieve well to reach good standards in most subjects by the time they leave. This is because teaching is good throughout the school. The school is very well led by the headteacher and is effectively managed. **The school provides good value for money.**

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- The pupils achieve well and standards are above average in English, mathematics, science, and several other subjects for the oldest pupils.
- Pupils with special educational needs are well supported and very well included in activities.
- The school knows its pupils well, and takes their views into account. It gives them what they need to grow in self-confidence, get on well together and enjoy learning.
- The curriculum is enriched through a very good range of activities outside normal lessons.
- The headteacher provides very good leadership and the school is well managed so that it tackles important areas for improvement effectively.
- The pupils do not make the best possible progress in writing because they sometimes lack sufficient guidance on how to improve or opportunities to practise basic skills.
- Pupils have too few opportunities to use ICT (information and communication technology) to support their learning in other subjects.

There has been a **good rate of improvement** since the school's last inspection in 1998. This is because the school looks carefully at how well it is doing and acts effectively to bring about change for the better. The staff and governors form a hard-working team with the right priorities. The school has resolved most of the problems it had with ICT, which was the only issue from the previous inspection, and has improved standards, teaching and resources. There is still work to do to ensure that pupils use their skills in ICT in other subjects.

STANDARDS ACHIEVED

Results in National Curriculum tests at the end of Year 6, compared with:	all schools			similar schools
	2000	2001	2002	2002
English	D	A	B	B
Mathematics	E	B	E	E
Science	E	A	C	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.

Results in this small school vary from year to year and need cautious interpretation. The unconfirmed 2003 results were much better than in 2002, particularly in mathematics. **Throughout the school pupils achieve well.** Standards currently rise from being below average at the end of Reception to average in Year 2 and above average in English, mathematics and science in Year 6. A significant number of pupils in Years 1 and 2 are still struggling with forming letters correctly. Standards in history, geography, design and technology and religious education are above average for the oldest pupils. Although standards in ICT are broadly average they could be higher. However, the range of opportunities for pupils to use their skills in other subjects is limited. In all other subjects that were seen, standards are average. There was insufficient evidence to make judgements about physical education and music.

Provision for pupils' moral, social, spiritual and cultural development is good. As a result, pupils have **very good attitudes to school** and this is demonstrated in their enthusiasm for learning and **very good relationships. Pupils' behaviour is very good.** They display pride in the school and are keen to help each other and adults. **The school's attendance rate is average.**

QUALITY OF EDUCATION

The school provides a good quality education. Teaching and learning are good. There is good teaching in all parts of the school. Teachers encourage pupils very well to use their initiative and explore their ideas. Teachers work hard to make lessons enjoyable and make sure all pupils are involved. Good effort is rewarded and pupils want to please their teachers and so they try hard. Support staff know what they need to do to help pupils and so form a valuable and effective part of the team. In Reception, the good teaching means that children get a thorough grounding in basic skills and quickly settle into school. Throughout Years 1 to 6 teachers check how well pupils are doing and adapt work very well to meet individual needs in reading, mathematics and science. In writing, the targets set are not as consistently sharp and pupils are not as clear about what they need to do to improve.

The school provides a good, well-balanced and interesting curriculum. The many extra-curricular activities, visits and visitors to school enhance the pupils' learning very well. Literacy and numeracy skills are well used in other subjects but pupils do not have the same good opportunities to use ICT to support their learning. The school's **partnership with parents is good** and parents get good information about their children's progress. **The school takes very good care of its pupils** and strives to ensure that pupils with special educational needs are included in all activities.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

The leadership of the school is very good. The headteacher sets the tone through the example of her teaching and the close focus on raising standards. **The management of the school is good** and based on a clear vision and effective teamwork that enable the staff and governors to work together to resolve areas of weakness. **The governance of the school is good.** The school knows what it needs to work on next because it asks the right questions about how well it is doing. As a result, the school has identified the weaknesses in writing and ICT and it has comprehensive planning for action to bring about improvement. The governors work well to support the school and check that it is on track to meet its targets for improvement.

PARENTS' AND PUPILS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

Parents hold the school in high regard and feel that the staff know their children well and give them what they need. The pupils enjoy school and appreciate that their views are taken into account.

IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

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

- Further improve standards in writing, including letter formation in the younger classes.
- Ensure that teaching enables pupils to use their skills in ICT in other subjects.

PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS

STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

Standards achieved in areas of learning subjects and courses

Pupils do well at this school. Achievement in all year groups is good. Standards in English, mathematics and science and some other subjects are above average by the time pupils leave school.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children in the Foundation Stage get off to a good start.
- Pupils of all abilities, including higher attainers and those with special educational needs, achieve well in all year groups.
- Standards are above average in English, mathematics and science by the time the pupils leave.
- Attainment in history, geography, religious education and design and technology is better than expected for the oldest pupils.
- Pupils do not always make the best possible progress in writing and some pupils in Years 1 and 2 do not form letters correctly.

Commentary

1. The school is good at looking at what individual pupils need to achieve well, and at including all pupils in activities. This is central to the school's aims and is brought about by good management. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress because teachers and classroom assistants adapt work successfully to meet individual needs and there is good support in lessons. Higher attaining pupils are also identified and work is planned to challenge them.
2. Children in the Foundation Stage make a good start to their education. Although the children mostly do not reach the goals set for their age except in personal and social development, they achieve well in all areas of learning. Children's language improves through careful nurturing and they gain a thorough grounding in basic skills in literacy and numeracy, as well as broadening their understanding of the world. Higher attaining children get what they need to make good progress and children who need more time to learn basic skills are well supported so that they achieve well.
3. The small numbers of pupils in each year group mean that there are considerable variations in results from year to year, and comparisons with other schools need treating with caution. The table below sets out the average points scores for Year 2 pupils in 2002:

Standards in national tests at the end of Year 2 – average point scores in 2002

Standards in:	School results	National results
Reading	14.6 (13.8)	15.7 (15.8)
Writing	14.7 (12.7)	14.3 (14.4)
Mathematics	16.5 (16.2)	16.2 (16.5)

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

4. Results for the pupils who took the tests in 2003, which are not yet confirmed, reflected a much lower attaining year group; almost half of the pupils were assessed as having special educational needs. Nevertheless, the Year 2 pupils made good gains because of effective teaching and achieved well, given their well below average starting point. Standards in Year 2

now are average in reading, writing and mathematics and pupils achieve well. The school's drive to improve standards in writing has been sustained and pupils readily record their ideas and know how to use different forms of writing, such as lists, to organise their work. A significant number of pupils in Years 1 and 2, however, do not form letters correctly and this means that they struggle to join their writing. Although handwriting is practised weekly, overcoming these problems is a slow process with such infrequent opportunities to learn the correct letter formation. Standards in other subjects are broadly average by the end of Year 2.

The table below gives results for pupils in Year 6 in 2002:

Standards in national tests at the end of Year 6 – average point scores in 2002

Standards in:	School results	National results
English	27.8 (29.5)	27.0 (27.0)
Mathematics	25.4 (27.3)	26.7 (26.6)
Science	28.6 (29.7)	28.3 (28.3)

There were 15 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year

- The 2003 results for Year 6 pupils (as yet unconfirmed) were much better than in 2002, particularly in mathematics. Improving standards in mathematics has been a major focus for the school and its efforts have been rewarded by pupils' better attainment, particularly at the level higher than expected for their age. Although the overall results for English in 2003 were very good, most pupils did better in reading than in writing. Standards in Year 6 now are above average in reading, speaking and listening, mathematics and science. Standards in writing are average. Pupils in Years 3 to 6 do not always make the best possible progress in writing because they are not always clear about what they need to work on next to improve. Pupils sometimes continue to make the same mistakes in spelling or punctuation, for example, because the teachers do not always follow up the guidance that pupils have been given. Standards in history, geography, design and technology and religious education are above average for the oldest pupils. This is because teaching builds well on the skills that pupils have gained in each subject and pupils have good opportunities to use their ideas and explore issues. Although standards in ICT are broadly average they could be higher. There are, however, too few opportunities for pupils to use their skills in other subjects for pupils to make better progress.

Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities

Pupils' attitudes to school are very good and so is their behaviour. The school provides well for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development and so pupils grow in confidence and awareness of others' needs, and feel involved in the school's daily life. Attendance is similar to most schools.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils' views are taken into account and they willingly take on responsibility.
- They are quick to use their initiative and enjoy exploring ideas.
- Relationships are very good and pupils are polite and helpful to each other and adults.
- The school succeeds very well in involving pupils with special educational needs in activities.

Commentary

- Pupils say that they enjoy school. They get on very well because of the good opportunities they have to learn how to work together and share ideas, both in classrooms and in activities outside lessons. Pupils in the present Year 6, for example, recall how much the previous Year 6 pupils

enjoyed creating a dance to perform at their farewell assembly and the pride felt by the whole school when the video was presented to parents. Pupils respond very well to the school's clear guidelines for behaviour and relish the opportunities they have to get involved with making decisions about what happens in school. The school council, for example, takes its responsibilities very seriously and has gathered views from classmates about establishing rules to govern behaviour in the newly refurbished toilets. Pupils enjoy challenging discussions, when they can air their views and consider those of others.

7. The oldest pupils show a very good level of maturity and take pride in the school. Pupils appreciate what the staff do for them in providing activities outside normal lessons and large numbers take part in the clubs after school. The staff turn the disadvantages of the building into opportunities for pupils to show responsibility and thought for others. Pupils notice what needs to be done and use their initiative. They often work in cramped conditions but their sense of responsibility is evident in the calm way in which they work together to re-organise furniture to accommodate different activities in classrooms. The needs of pupils with special educational needs are quickly recognised and met by other pupils. For example, pupils spontaneously re-arrange areas to accommodate the needs of those with physical difficulties. The youngest pupils quickly settle into the routines of school life because of good guidance from the staff and the example of their older schoolmates. Reception children, for example, help to organise the fruit that is made available for all classes at breaktime. Pupils of all ages and backgrounds play very well together, organising lively games on the playground that show a good sense of fair play.

Attendance

Attendance in the latest complete reporting year (%)

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
School data	5.4	School data	0.1
National data	5.4	National data	0.5

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

Ethnic background of pupils

Categories used in the Annual School Census
White – British
White – any other White background
Mixed – White and Asian
Mixed – any other mixed background

Exclusions in the last school year

No of pupils on roll	Number of fixed period exclusions	Number of permanent exclusions
96	0	0
1	0	0
1	0	0
1	0	0

The table gives the number of exclusions, which may be different from the number of pupils excluded.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

The school provides a good quality education for its pupils because of good teaching that instils in pupils the desire to learn. The school takes very good care of pupils and provides them with opportunities to succeed. Lessons are interesting and there is plenty for pupils to get involved in at other times.

Teaching and learning

Teaching and learning are good in each part of the school.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils are keen to learn because the work is interesting and challenges their thinking.
- Teachers manage pupils' behaviour very well.
- Discussion is used well and as a result pupils talk confidently about their work
- Support for pupils with special educational needs is effective.
- Assessment is mostly well used to set targets for pupils to aim at.

Commentary

8. Teaching has improved since the last inspection, particularly in ICT and for pupils with special educational needs. Improvement has been brought about by well-planned professional development, sharing best practice in the school and checking how well learning is promoted in classrooms. Teachers work hard to involve all pupils in lessons. In the Foundation Stage, the good teaching means that children get off to a good start and the basic skills are taught well. Children's interest is harnessed very effectively so that they want to find out for themselves. This sets the pattern for learning throughout the school. Pupils enjoy the work and learn at a good rate because there is a good level of challenge and the activities allow them to work together and explore their ideas. In a design and technology lesson, for example, the teacher probed Year 6 pupils' understanding of cam mechanisms through well-focused questioning. Pupils' interest and involvement were stimulated so that when they set about the task in their groups, they had plenty to talk about and ideas to follow up. Pupils contribute confidently to discussions because they know that others will listen and take their views seriously.
9. There is a good climate for learning because teachers have high expectations of pupils' behaviour and pupils know what is expected of them. They respond very well. This means that classrooms are calm and pupils work without distraction. The support staff know what they need to do to help pupils and are skilled in providing individuals or groups with what they need to succeed. They form a valuable and effective part of the team. This was evident in a literacy session with Year 2 pupils, for example, when sensitive support for pupils with special educational needs enabled them to complete their poems.
10. Teachers check how well pupils are doing and use the information gained to adapt work to meet pupils' different needs. Targets are set for pupils in English and mathematics. The targets for reading and mathematics focus closely on what pupils need to do next and very effectively support pupils' progress. In writing, the targets set are not always as closely focused and pupils are not as clear about what they need to do to improve.

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 20 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
0	4	10	6	0	0	0

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

The curriculum

The school provides a good, interesting curriculum with a very good range of activities outside normal lessons.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- There are good opportunities for pupils to use their skills in literacy and numeracy to support their learning in other subjects but pupils do not use computers often enough to do this.
- The curriculum is enriched by a very good range of activities outside lessons as well as visits and visitors to school.
- There is very good provision for pupils' personal, social and health education.
- Provision for pupils with special educational needs is good.

Commentary

11. The school teaches everything it should and the curriculum has improved since the last inspection. The curriculum is well managed, with a firm emphasis on retaining good breadth and balance. This is reflected in the good standards in several subjects for the oldest pupils. Teachers plan good opportunities for the pupils to use the skills they have learned in English and mathematics well in other lessons and this boosts the pupils' confidence and rate of learning in other subjects. In history, for example, the pupils' good skills in reading mean that they can quickly sift through information and find what they need. Computers are used much less frequently to support pupils' learning and so pupils do not sufficiently put into practice the skills they have learned in relevant situations.
12. Activities outside lessons, such as netball, football, choir, recorder groups, gardening and drama, are very well supported by pupils. Almost half of the school, for example, take part in the football club. The staff give freely of their time to organise and run these activities that make an important contribution to pupils' personal development.
13. The school promotes pupils' awareness of a healthy lifestyle and the importance of living in a community effectively. Pupils relate what they have learned to their everyday life in school. For example, pupils know that the fresh fruit that is eaten at break time is a necessary part of a balanced diet, because of their work in science. Sessions often start with a 'brain gym' activity that helps pupils to focus on the next task and pupils are encouraged to drink plenty of water. The quality of relationships in the school means that pupils freely express their ideas or concerns and adults or classmates are willing listeners.
14. The provision for pupils with special educational needs is well planned and so they make good progress towards achieving their targets in their individual educational plans. These plans have clear targets that are known to all relevant staff, and so good support is provided in lessons. Staff plan carefully so that pupils can take part in all activities.

Care, guidance and support

The school takes very good care of its pupils. Very good support, advice and guidance are provided for each pupil. The school involves pupils very well in its work and development.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- There are clear procedures for caring for pupils that are consistently implemented by all staff.
- The governors play a full part in ensuring pupils' welfare and safety.
- The staff know the pupils very well and make sure that individual needs are met.
- Pupils' views are sought, valued and acted upon.

Commentary

15. The school places a high priority on making sure that pupils are well looked after and checks very carefully on possible risks that might arise through activities in and out of school. The governors give very good support in the process of checking that pupils' welfare is assured. They look closely at how the school makes sure that pupils are safe in classrooms, at play and

on visits outside school. All of the staff are clear about health and safety procedures and implement them consistently.

16. Children new to the school are helped to settle through a very good programme that eases them into school life. The staff know the pupils very well and are sensitive to their individual needs. In the Reception class, for example, a child was disconcerted in one session by a large, animated puppet. He was helped to overcome his anxiety by the classroom assistant, who first introduced him to smaller puppets and the teacher gradually increased his exposure to the larger puppet as his confidence increased.
17. The pupils know who they can talk to should they have problems and concerns. They also know that their views are taken seriously and that they can affect what happens in school. Some pupils, for example, voiced the opinion that the prizes given as rewards for outstanding effort or behaviour were not sufficiently attractive to boys and the school acted to improve the range on offer.

Partnership with parents, other schools and the community

The school has a good partnership with parents and the community and very good links with other schools.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The school provides parents with good information about what pupils will learn and how well pupils are doing.
- Parents express a high level of confidence in the school and appreciate the staff's efforts to get to know pupils as individuals and meet their needs.
- The school does not have a systematic way of gathering parents' views.
- The school benefits from working with other schools in its area, to benefit pupils' learning.

Commentary

18. The school's management puts forging good links with parents as a high priority and works diligently to create a good partnership between home and school. Parents are pleased with what is offered to their children and feel welcome in school. The school gives them good guidance on how they might help their children at home and many parents do. This has a positive impact on pupils' learning in reading, for example, or in learning spellings. Parents appreciate that the staff make a very good effort to get to know individual children well and to give them what they need to learn and grow in confidence. They know what goes on at school and how well their children are doing because the school gives parents good information. The reports that teachers write about pupils' progress are very detailed and informative, setting out not only where pupils are now but what they need to do next.
19. The school gathers parents' views informally. The staff are readily available to discuss concerns. However, the governors have identified, through looking at how they can improve their effectiveness, the need to establish a more systematic way of finding out what parents think about the school. This is included for action in the current school improvement plan.
20. The school has very good links with other schools in its area and so pupils benefit from a wider range of experiences that could be offered by this small school. Local schools join together for sports activities and tournaments, for example. The school shares a specialist teacher of ICT with its cluster of schools and both pupils and staff benefit from his level of expertise. Teachers from the local secondary school also share their expertise, in art for example.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

The leadership and management of the school are good. The headteacher provides very good leadership. The school is well managed. Governance of the school is good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The headteacher leads by example, both in her teaching and in maintaining a strong focus on bringing about improvement.
- The staff work well together as an effective team, combining a clear vision with an enthusiasm and commitment in their work.
- The school checks carefully on how well it is doing, and planning for improvement is good.
- The governors work effectively to support the school and ask the right questions to help it improve.

Commentary

21. There is a strong sense of purpose that pervades the school’s daily life that is firmly based on promoting pupils’ personal development and seeking to raise pupils’ achievement and standards. The headteacher gives a very strong lead in this, both in the example she sets in the classroom and in the clear direction she has established for the school that is supported by good systems and organisation. Even though she teaches a class for just over half of each week, the headteacher has found ways of check teaching and learning throughout the school and feeding back points for improvement. The school is good at focusing on important issues and so the school has moved on at a good rate since the last inspection.
22. All teachers are involved in drawing up the school’s planning for improvement and so they understand what needs to be done and how it will be achieved. Inevitably, each teacher has several responsibilities in this small school, but the good focus on working on priorities means that teachers’ workload is managed well. The school looks closely at its performance and knows what it needs to do next. Over recent years, for example, the school has worked effectively to improve its provision for higher attaining pupils in Years 3 to 6 in mathematics, as well as standards in writing throughout the school. The school has successfully dealt with the first area, as shown by the numbers of pupils achieving above average levels by the end of Year 6. A good start has been made in writing, although more needs to be done. As a result of these good checks on provision, the school has already identified the areas of comparative weakness raised in this report and suitable action plans are in place.
23. Key staff give good support to the headteacher in checking provision and manage their responsibilities well. The co-ordinator for special educational needs, for example, ensures that provision is tailored to individual needs and runs smoothly.
24. The governors fulfil all of their responsibilities well. They have a firm grasp of the school’s strengths and weaknesses and are skilled at asking the right questions to challenge the school. Governors are able to do this because of the good information they receive from the school, as well as from checks made when they visit to see for themselves. They consider different options in their expenditure and weigh up which will provide the best value. For example, the decision to budget to maintain a part-time teacher who works with small groups of pupils to meet specific needs was based on the improved performance of pupils, shown by the school’s well-developed systems for tracking individuals.

Financial information

Financial information for the year April 2002 to March 2003

Income and expenditure (£)		Balances (£)	
Total income	275872	Balance from previous year	22228
Total expenditure	264714	Balance carried forward to the next	33386

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

AREAS OF LEARNING IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

25. **Provision for children in the Foundation Stage is good** and so is children's achievement. Teaching and learning are good. Although there is a wide range of attainment evident, children enter the Reception year with levels of attainment that are generally below those expected for their age. In spite of their good achievement, most are unlikely to attain the early learning goals in all six areas of learning by the end of the year, except for personal and social development. At the time of the inspection there were nine children in the Reception year; more will join them after Christmas. The Reception children are partly taught on their own as a group but are sometimes joined by Year 1 pupils.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The adults are sensitive to the children's individual needs and create a warm and supportive environment in which children flourish.
- Basic skills in reading, writing and mathematics are thoroughly taught in an interesting manner.
- Children learn more about the world through a wide range of interesting activities.
- There are limited opportunities for adventurous play outdoors because of the school's site.

Commentary

26. Children's **personal and social development** is well supported. Teaching takes account of what the children need to feel comfortable in their new surroundings. The sessions are carefully planned so that periods of sitting to listen and talk are interspersed with more active sessions; this is a successful strategy that keeps children interested and eager to take part. There is a firm but sensitive emphasis on learning accepted ways of behaving, such as helping each other and sharing resources, that most children respond to very well. Children quickly learn that if everyone helps with tidying up, the task is completed more easily.
27. Children's achievement in **communication, language and literacy** is good. Teaching extends children's language very well through prompts such as questions to encourage fuller answers. Children are encouraged to talk about their ideas before they record them in pictures and writing so that they know that what they write has meaning. The reading of stories is lively and expressive so that children become immersed in the book. In a session with a book that combined several familiar traditional stories, for example, even more reticent children were sensitively drawn into the discussion about the pictures and helped to offer simple explanations about what was happening because of the good questions to individuals. More able children were stimulated to think about why characters acted as they did and given the chance to explain their ideas. Children's achievement in **mathematical development** is good because of effective teaching of mathematical words and plenty of practical activities that children find interesting. In one session, for example, children worked together outside in games that involved counting activities and practised how to form the symbols for numbers in chalk on the playground. Provision for children's developing **knowledge and understanding of the world** is good because it both builds well on children's own experience and introduces exciting new ones. In one session, for example, an aeroplane's flight crew visited the class to help extend children's ideas about what they might do in the planned role-play area that will represent an aeroplane. Children know how to use the computer and often choose to. The good displays of work indicate good opportunities for **creative development**, for example, children's paintings of caterpillars and butterflies. The children sing songs and rhymes tunefully and are aware that they need to start and finish together. The provision for **physical development** is satisfactory

and planning includes both indoor and outdoor activities as well as activities to promote finer skills such as cutting and gluing. The nature of the school's site means that there is no outdoor area where children can explore space, climb or engage in role-play activities and this is a limiting factor.

SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 1 and 2

ENGLISH

Provision in English is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils' speaking and listening are better than expected for their age by the time they leave the school.
- Pupils achieve well in reading because the work is well organised, challenging and interesting.
- Pupils with special educational needs make good progress because of good support.
- The subject is well managed so that improvements are made.
- The pupils in Years 1 and 2 often struggle with forming letters correctly and pupils in Years 3 to 6 do not always make the best possible progress in writing.

Commentary

28. Teaching and learning are good throughout the school and so pupils achieve well. The subject manager has looked closely at what works well and what needs improving in the subject. This has led to a focus on improving speaking and listening, and writing. Both areas have been worked on successfully and the school knows what it needs to work on in writing.
29. The oldest pupils are confident speakers and listen to both adults and each other. This is because teaching in every year group places a good emphasis on developing these skills. In a mathematics lesson, for example, Year 3 and 4 pupils had good opportunities to explain to each other how they had arrived at their answers or explain alternative methods for calculation.
30. Pupils learn the basic skills in reading thoroughly in Years 1 and 2 and so they have plenty of strategies for working out words that they have not seen before. They enjoy books and most use good expression when they read. The oldest pupils are competent readers who can explain why they like a particular style of writing or the features that attract them to the work of particular authors. Throughout the school, teachers use their assessments of pupils' progress to set targets for improvement that are challenging. Pupils of all abilities make good progress in reading.
31. Although the school has worked effectively to bring about improvements in writing, particularly in spelling and improving the range of pupils' writing, there is still work to do to ensure that the pupils make the best possible progress. At present, pupils' achievement is satisfactory but they could do better. A significant number of pupils in Years 1 and 2 do not form all of their letters correctly and have too few opportunities to practise the correct formation. The targets set for pupils in writing in all year groups do not pinpoint what they need to do next as precisely as in reading. Pupils are not always clear about what they should work on next. When teachers mark pupils' work, they sometimes do not follow up points that they have previously raised for improvement and so pupils continue to make the same mistakes. There are some good examples of effective written guidance for pupils in Year 6, but this good quality is not reflected consistently throughout the school.
32. Pupils with special educational needs are well supported by both the teachers and classroom assistants. Their individual education plans are devised after careful assessment of individual needs and all relevant adults know what pupils need to do next to reach their targets. Support

for these pupils in lessons achieves a good balance of encouraging independence and timely intervention. As a result of all of these factors, pupils make good progress in all aspects of English.

Language and literacy across the curriculum

33. Pupils have plenty of opportunities to use their skills in reading and writing in other subjects and they do so very well. Pupils quickly access information from reference books to support learning in history and geography. They know how to adapt their writing to suit different purposes. In history, for example, older pupils write accounts that show imaginative use of language and good awareness of how to structure pieces that capture the feelings and experiences of Victorian children or sailors in Tudor times. In science, pupils write up their experiments in a clear and well-organised manner.

MATHEMATICS

Provision in mathematics is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- By the time pupils leave school they attain standards that are above average for their age and this represents good achievement.
- Teaching is good in all parts of the school, so pupils learn well.
- Pupils are set clear and appropriate targets, which help them to improve.
- The subject is managed well, and areas of weakness are identified and remedied through effective staff training.
- Pupils do not always set their work out clearly enough, which sometimes causes them to make mistakes.
- More opportunities should be sought to use computers in mathematics lessons.

Commentary

34. Because the school is small, numbers in each group vary from year to year, and comparisons between different year groups must be treated with caution. Standards in the current Year 2 are broadly average, which is an improvement on the previous two years as indicated by the results of the national tests. In Year 6, however, pupils are now achieving standards that are above average, with about a third of the pupils exceeding the level expected for their age. This is an improvement on the results in national tests up to 2002, and also on the standards being achieved at the time of the last inspection. Pupils make good progress, starting from a below average base in terms of mathematical skills when they start school.
35. The quality of teaching is good. Teachers have a good understanding of the subject and follow the principles of the numeracy strategy well. After some 'brain gymnastics', lessons start with mental work that involves all pupils in calculating and also in explaining the strategies they use. Teachers encourage and reward the pupils for their efforts, thereby raising their self-esteem, which makes pupils keen to contribute more to lessons. In the main part of the lessons teachers offer clear explanations which enable pupils to understand the processes they need to adopt, for instance to multiply the tens and units of two-digit numbers in Years 4 and 5. In a lesson with Year 6, the teacher made particularly good use of her colleague's evaluation of the previous lesson to ensure that pupils were able to make good progress in estimating and solving word problems. Individual pupils were observed using computers, for instance in Year 2 matching the words for numbers to figures, but there is little evidence of the regular use of computers in lessons.
36. The subject has been managed well by the co-ordinator. The school identified some weaknesses and has used the services of a numeracy consultant effectively to provide training

for teachers. The co-ordinator has also monitored teaching and provided good support and advice to colleagues where it has been needed.

37. The presentation of pupils' work is sometimes a weakness, particularly in younger classes; this can make it difficult for pupils to work accurately and so slows progress. In Year 6, however, pupils take great care and pride in their work. Pupils have positive attitudes in lessons and maintain their concentration well, even in sometimes cramped and airless conditions.
38. The school had made good progress since the last inspection, maintaining the good quality of teaching and raising the standards achieved by the oldest pupils. A major factor in this has been the setting of clear targets for pupils, which they understand and are keen to achieve. There is also good support for those pupils with special educational needs, which helps them to make good progress.

Mathematics across the curriculum

39. Pupils' mathematical skills are developed sufficiently well to enable them to make good progress in other areas of the curriculum, such as in science when they take measurements or create graphs and tables.

SCIENCE

The provision for science is **good**. Well-planned and well-resourced lessons engage and stimulate most groups of pupils to achieve well. Three lessons were seen and inspectors looked at the previous work of pupils and teachers' planning.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards in Year 6 are above average.
- Teaching overall is good.
- Very good use is made of classroom support staff to help less able pupils and pupils with special educational needs.
- Good use is made of literacy and numeracy skills in recording science work.
- More use could be made of ICT skills to support teaching and learning in science.

Commentary

40. The great majority of pupils respond with interest and enthusiasm to the activities planned for them in science. Good teaching and very good support enable all groups of pupils to achieve well by the end of Year 6. Standards are average in Year 2. Overall most pupils in infant classes are achieving as well as they might and making satisfactory progress. As pupils progress through the school they develop a good knowledge and understanding of all areas of the science curriculum, particularly materials and their properties. Older pupils use their literacy skills in recording the observations and conclusions of their experiments and make sound use of measuring and data handling skills. However, more use could be made of their developing skills in ICT. The subject is led well by the co-ordinator and resources are used well in lessons so that all pupils are able to settle quickly to their tasks.
41. The previous standards and progress in Years 1 and 2 have been maintained and most pupils continue to achieve satisfactorily in spite of the increased numbers of pupils with special educational needs. Standards by the end of Year 6 have improved since the last inspection and the work of the majority of pupils demonstrates good achievement and progress.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY (ICT)

Provision in ICT is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils make good progress in developing skills.
- Teachers receive very good support from a teacher from the cluster group of schools.
- With good leadership the provision has improved since the last inspection.
- There are not enough regular opportunities for pupils to use computers in other subjects.

Commentary

42. Pupils in Years 2 and 6 achieve standards that are average for their age. Pupils in Year 2 show a sound understanding of the computer keyboard, knowing, for instance, how to use backspace and shift keys; pupils in a science lesson sorted images of foods into healthy and unhealthy categories by moving them around on the screen. In Year 6 pupils talk about how they devised a computerised system to control traffic lights, and monitored sound, wind and rain with a sensor.
43. The only direct teaching of specific skills to pupils observed during the inspection was in two short sessions taken by the cluster support teacher; these skills were put into practice during the week. The teaching in these sessions was very good, with clear explanations based on a very good knowledge of the subject. This helped pupils to make good progress in the development of skills. The overall quality of teaching in the school is satisfactory; although pupils learn the basic skills and teachers plan some opportunities for pupils to use these skills in other lessons, they are not frequent or regular enough, and very little evidence was seen in displays or pupils' books of the use of ICT to enhance their work. One good example of its use was in an English lesson with Year 6, when pupils composed 'witches' spells' based on their reading of *Macbeth*, using lap-top computers; in the lesson taken by the specialist teacher with this class, pupils were in the first stages of learning how to produce a multi-media presentation on the play.
44. The subject leader and support teacher provide good leadership and support for other teachers, who have received training to develop their own skills. The school has made good improvement since the last inspection, when both provision and teaching were unsatisfactory. Resources have been improved, so that the ratio of computers to pupils is now just above the average for primary schools and good use is made by teachers of other equipment, such as a digital camera and an interactive whiteboard.

ICT across the curriculum

45. Pupils were able to talk about some of the opportunities they had had in the past, which had clearly enthused them, for instance using the Internet to find out about ancient Egyptian death rituals, or using spreadsheets to work out the cost of a meal. The school's improvement plan for ICT sets out an action plan to improve opportunities to use ICT in other subjects over the next three years.

HUMANITIES

Geography and history

Provision in geography and history is **good**. Standards in both subjects are average in Year 2 and above average in Year 6. No lessons in geography or history were seen but evidence was gathered through looking at previous work and teachers' planning in all subject areas and talking to pupils.

46. Pupils have good opportunities to sift evidence, think about issues and come to conclusions based on both what they have learned and personal experience. Good levels of challenge are seen in previous geography work that looked at the advantages and disadvantages of a by-pass road for Furness Vale. Older more able pupils show good knowledge in their work on the pharaohs of ancient Egypt and the belief in an after-life. Standards in Year 2 are in line with those expected nationally. Less able pupils and those with special educational needs are well integrated in lessons and, due to the good levels of support, are achieving well. No secure judgement on teaching in geography and history could be made, but scrutiny of planning and previous work shows that most pupils are making sound progress in Years 1 and 2 and good progress in Years 3 to 6. Pupils make good use of their literacy skills to look for information in all subjects and write in different styles to suit different purposes, such as writing a diary in history. Although some use is made of the Internet and CD-ROMs for research, this is an area that needs to be developed further. The school makes good use of its local historical heritage and the physical features of its locality to support pupils' learning.
47. Both subjects are well led by their respective co-ordinators and the current school improvement plan has targets to effectively develop each subject. Standards by Year 6 have improved since the last inspection.

Religious education

Provision in religious education is **good**. Standards are average in Year 2 and above average in Year 6. This is an improvement in standards in Year 6 since the last inspection.

It was possible to see only one lesson in religious education during the inspection. Additional evidence was gathered through looking at previous work and teachers' planning, and through talking to pupils.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards are good because of challenging work and good teaching that prompts pupils to think and explore difficult questions.
- Work in religious education is very well integrated with the school's provision for pupils' personal, social and health education.

Commentary

48. Pupils in Year 6 say that they enjoy lessons because of the opportunities they have to talk about important issues and listen to others' points of view. Pupils are clear about why they enjoy such debates – because "It makes you think about yourself". Teaching is good because it allows pupils to expand their ideas and viewpoints. The very good lesson seen in religious education in Year 6 provided ample evidence of the very mature approach pupils have to serious and challenging questions. The pupils considered what purpose would have been served if God had tried to protect Adam and Eve from temptation, and the extent to which they took account of others' viewpoints was evident in their responses. Pupils relate what they have learned in religious education to what they learn in lessons about personal and social education. For example, pupils can explain the importance of having guidelines such as rules in their school community and relate this to the rules that guide some people in particular faiths or in a certain direction in life. Pupils show a very mature attitude when they discuss difficult questions. The subject is well managed so that it forms a lively part of the curriculum.

CREATIVE, AESTHETIC, PRACTICAL AND PHYSICAL SUBJECTS

Art and design, design and technology, physical education, music

Provision for **design and technology** is **good** and standards are above average. Provision for **art and design** is satisfactory and so are standards. No lessons were seen in music or physical education, but extra-curricular activities in sport were seen and there was singing in assemblies.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The opportunities in art for pupils to work with a specialist teacher from the local secondary school enhance their skills and experience.
- Standards in design and technology are above average.
- There is a very good range of extra-curricular activities in sport and music.

Commentary

49. Standards in design and technology are good in Year 6. There has been good improvement since the previous inspection, when standards were below average. Pupils' achievement is now good because of the close focus in teaching on each aspect of the design, make and evaluate process. The good detail in pupils' planning is reflected in the high quality finish of their work. The pupils use their ideas very well to explore the possibilities of materials and mechanisms. Year 6 pupils, for example, produced high quality felt hats after visiting a hat factory. They all made the felt to create the basis of the hat but then created very individual designs and were very clear about what they might do to improve their work.
50. Older pupils have benefited from working with a specialist teacher of art and design to create batik panels based on images from Oceanic art. This work reaches a good standard, with fine control of this challenging medium, and thoughtful designs that use the vivid colours and bold shapes drawn from looking at Oceanic art.
51. Pupils' singing in assemblies is good. In a whole-school singing practice they kept good time as they sang first in two and then in four parts, led well by the teacher accompanying them on guitar and piano and giving good guidance on technique. There are also opportunities for pupils to learn to play recorders and brass instruments in school and very good opportunities for pupils to take part in extra-curricular activities, performing in concerts with other schools in the local cluster.
52. Despite the restrictions of its accommodation, the school provides the full range of physical education activities, including outdoor and adventurous activities on a biennial residential visit for pupils in Years 5 and 6. There is good provision for swimming at a local pool, with the result that nearly all pupils are swimmers by the time they leave the school. The school has a talented swimmer among its pupils. An innovative feature of the curriculum is lacrosse, and there are also very well supported extra-curricular sports clubs.

PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

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

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