

INSPECTION REPORT

SEDBERGH PRIMARY SCHOOL

Sedbergh

LEA area: Cumbria

Unique reference number: 112233

Headteacher: Mrs M Cullen

Lead inspector: Paula Allison

Dates of inspection: 24th - 26th May 2004

Inspection number: 257425

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:	3 - 11 years
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
Number on roll:	202
School address:	Long Lane Sedbergh Cumbria
Postcode:	LA10 5AL
Telephone number:	01539 620510
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Appropriate authority:	The Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr John Bannister
Date of previous inspection:	June 1998

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

With 202 girls and boys on roll, Sedbergh is about the same size as other primary schools. There are 190 pupils in school, taught in seven classes and 24 children who attend a nursery class for five half days a week. The nursery is currently housed in a mobile classroom at the local high school, but is very soon to move into a new building in the school. The school is in the small market town of Sedbergh and serves an extensive rural catchment area of villages, hamlets and farms. A large number of pupils need transport of one kind or another in order to get to school. There is a wide social mix amongst the families of pupils in school but, overall, socio-economic circumstances are broadly average. Although the school usually has a fairly stable population, in recent years there have been a number of pupils who have joined the school after the first year, several of them identified as having special educational needs. The percentage of pupils who are eligible for free school meals is 1.5 per cent, which is well below average; however, a number of families are on low incomes.

There is a wide range of attainment on entry to the school. There are some very capable children with well developed skills, but also a number of children who have speech and language difficulties. Overall, attainment on entry is broadly in line with what is expected for children of this age. Pupils are mainly of white, British ethnic origin, although there are a few of other ethnic backgrounds. There are no pupils for whom English is an additional language. Several pupils are in public care. Eighteen per cent of pupils have been identified as having special educational needs, which is about average. The percentage of pupils with statements is 3 per cent, which is above average. Mainly the needs are speech and language or learning difficulties.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
21420	Paula Allison	Lead inspector	Mathematics Information and communication technology Geography History Religious education English as an additional language
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17907	Michael Bowers	Team inspector	Science Art and design Design and technology The Foundation Stage
34177	Chris Maloney	Team inspector	English Music Physical education Special educational needs

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

OVERALL EVALUATION

This is a highly effective school with some outstanding features. Pupils achieve very well and reach very high standards. The school meets the needs of all its pupils and supports and cares for them very well. The school is very well led and managed and is highly regarded by its pupils, parents and the local community. It provides very good value for money.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- The leadership of the headteacher is excellent and the school is very well managed, with governors providing high quality support;
- Teachers have high expectations of their pupils, which encourages them to work hard and make very good progress;
- Pupils have excellent attitudes to school; they respect others and behave responsibly;
- The curriculum is broad and provides an exciting range of experiences and opportunities; the provision for pupils with special educational needs is excellent;
- Currently the accommodation and resources for the nursery class are inadequate; however, this is soon to be rectified with the completion of the new nursery building;
- The school has an impressive range of links with the community and other schools;
- Subject co-ordinators manage their subjects well but do not always know enough about the standards and quality of teaching and learning in their subjects through the school.

The school was last inspected in June 1998. High standards and a good quality of education were identified then and the school has managed to improve these still further. There have been improvements in many key areas, such as achievement of pupils, curriculum, assessment and care for pupils. The key issue relating to standards in spelling has been very well addressed and standards in this area are now high. The issue relating to the role of subject co-ordinators has been partially addressed.

STANDARDS ACHIEVED

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

*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.*

Achievement is very good. Children enter the nursery with a broad range of skills. They make good progress, particularly in the reception class, and by the time they are ready to enter Year 1, most have reached the goals children are expected to reach by the end of reception. Achievement in Years 1 and 2 is very good. Standards in reading, writing and mathematics by the end of Year 2 are above average and compare very well with those achieved in similar schools. Pupils continue to achieve very well in Years 3 to 6 and by Year 6, standards in English, mathematics and science are well above average. Standards are also well above what pupils achieve in schools whose pupils attained similarly at the end of Year 2, demonstrating the very good progress that pupils make in this school.

Pupils gain very secure skills in literacy, numeracy and science, which they build on as they move through the school. The way in which pupils use and extend their literacy skills in other subjects is a particular strength; the quality of handwriting is outstanding. During the inspection some very good work was seen in Year 6 in art, music, geography and religious education, an indication of the high standards pupils reach across the curriculum.

Pupils' personal qualities, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, are very good. Attitudes are excellent; pupils work hard and respect others. Behaviour is very good; pupils behave responsibly in class and around the school. Attendance is good.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION

The quality of education provided by the school is very good. Teaching is good. Teaching is consistently good through the school, and is often very good or excellent. There are particular strengths in Years 5 and 6 and in reception. Teachers are secure in their knowledge and understanding of the subjects that they teach and they encourage and engage pupils, involving all individuals in their lessons. This inspires pupils and motivates them to apply themselves to the work they are given to do. The teaching of literacy and numeracy skills is very good throughout the school.

The very good curriculum is interesting and exciting and is particularly well enhanced by the range of experiences and opportunities provided, both during and outside school time. Pupils are extremely well cared for and supported. The provision made for pupils with special educational needs is very effective. The partnership with parents is very good; with the community and other schools it is excellent.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Leadership and management are very good. The headteacher provides excellent leadership. She is the dynamic, driving force of the school and is well respected by everyone. She is well supported by the deputy headteacher. Both are able to lead by example, because of their excellent knowledge of the curriculum and the very high quality of their own teaching. Other key staff provide very good leadership, although the role of subject co-ordinator is not developed as well as it could be. The school is very well managed. Governors support the school and its community very well and have a very good knowledge of all aspects of the school's work. Their commitment to including all pupils is a particularly strong feature of their work. The school complies with all statutory requirements.

PARENTS' AND PUPILS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

Parents' views of the school are very positive. In particular, they are very happy with the quality of teaching, the way the school is led and managed, the range of activities provided and the progress their children make. A few parents feel that they are not consulted sufficiently and, whilst the inspection team feels that sufficient consultation does take place, the governing body is considering ways in which to address this. Pupils are very happy with their school. They are particularly confident that they are well cared for and supported.

IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

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

- Ensure that all teachers, in their role as subject co-ordinator, have the skills to enable them to take responsibility for standards and quality of teaching and learning in their subjects through the school;
- Ensure that the nursery class is rehoused as soon as possible and that this results in a more consistent quality of education through the whole of the nursery and reception stage.

PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS

STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

Standards achieved in areas of learning and subjects

Achievement overall in the school is very good. Achievement in nursery and reception is good and most children reach the expected goals by the end of the reception year. Achievement in the rest of the school is very good. Standards in Year 2 are above average; in Year 6 they are well above average.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards are consistently high and pupils achieve very well;
- All pupils achieve well because of the school's careful tracking of their progress;
- Literacy skills are used very well across the curriculum.

Commentary

1. Standards in Year 6 in English, mathematics and science are well above average and are also well above those achieved in similar schools. Most pupils reach the expected level and a high percentage achieve higher than this. The school sets itself challenging targets, based on accurate data, which is regularly reviewed. They invariably reach these targets.

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
English	28.7 (28.9)	26.8 (27.0)
mathematics	28.3 (29.5)	26.8 (26.7)
science	30.2 (30.7)	28.6 (28.3)

There were 32 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year.

2. Standards in Year 2 in reading, writing and mathematics are above average and usually above those in similar schools. They are particularly high currently in mathematics, where a lot of improvement has taken place and a very high percentage of pupils achieve at higher than the expected levels.

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
reading	16.7 (17.8)	15.7 (15.8)
writing	15.6 (16.6)	14.6 (14.4)
mathematics	18.1 (17.2)	16.3 (16.5)

There were 26 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year.

3. The high standards are the result of the constant drive for improvement permeating from the leadership of the school and reflected in the high expectations of teachers. Standards have either been maintained at the high level they were at the time of the last inspection or have improved since then. Some fluctuations in standards can occur as, for example, in Year 6 in 2003 when results were slightly down, due to the higher than average number of pupils with special educational needs in the class. But overall, standards are improving year on year.

Standards in information and communication technology (ICT) have certainly improved, as a result of much better resources being available, and these skills are now helping pupils to make progress in other subjects. Literacy skills are very well taught and pupils use these competently across the curriculum. Standards in handwriting are exceptionally high.

4. Parents are very happy with the progress their children make in school and they are right to be confident, as pupils achieve very well. On entry to nursery, attainment is below average, with some quite significant weaknesses in speech and language and personal and social skills. Children make good progress through nursery and reception, although currently progress is better in reception as nursery staff struggle with less than ideal accommodation and resources. By the time they are at the end of the reception year, most children have reached the goals expected of them. There are particular strengths in communication, language and literacy, mathematical development and knowledge and understanding of the world, as children gain the skills that help to lay the foundations for future achievement.
5. Pupils make very good progress through Years 1 and 2. The standards they reach in reading, writing and mathematics by the end of Year 2 are impressive and are an indication of how well they are achieving in these areas. However, with the emphasis on literacy and numeracy skills being as it is, pupils do not always achieve similarly high standards in other subjects, although even in these they are reaching the standards expected, if not higher.
6. Pupils continue to make very good progress in Years 3 to 6 and the standards in Year 6 in English, mathematics and science are higher than might be expected. This very good achievement is reflected in the fact that pupils achieve very much better than they do in other schools where pupils attained at similar levels in Year 2. Pupils in Year 6 also achieve very well in other subjects. For example, during the inspection some high standards of work were seen in art, music, geography and religious education.
7. The school has secure assessment systems and the progress of pupils is constantly monitored. As a result, all pupils achieve as well as they can, particularly in literacy and numeracy. Provision for pupils with special educational needs is excellent. This enables them to benefit from inclusion in the full range of activities open to other pupils and they achieve very well. Throughout the school, higher attaining pupils achieve well, which is reflected in the high level of pupils reaching higher than expected levels in tests. The school makes good provision for pupils showing particular gifts or talents and they achieve very well.

Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities

This is a very strong feature of the school. Pupils' attitudes are excellent and behaviour is very good. Pupils' personal qualities are very good. Attendance is good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils are enthusiastic and keen to learn and show great enthusiasm for both curricular and extra-curricular activities;
- There are excellent relationships between pupils;
- Learning is enriched by pupils' very good behaviour, both in lessons and around the school;
- The school council gives pupils very good opportunities to influence developments;
- The spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils is very good.

Commentary

8. Parents say that their children enjoy coming to school. Pupils say that lessons are interesting and fun. Pupils are enthusiastic, keen to work hard and involve themselves in a wide range of extra-curricular activities. They concentrate on their work. Reception children collaborate well to complete tasks, such as painting the Beanstalk or searching for treasure in the sand. Year 6 pupils develop positive relationships with outside speakers. They have developed the maturity to take a break from their work and then come back to it full of enthusiasm and interest. The attitudes and behaviour of pupils with special educational needs are very good. Their personal qualities are very well developed by the school's inclusive policy that focuses on the achievement of all pupils within a caring environment in which they are treated with sensitivity.
9. Very positive attitudes exist between pupils. They are helpful, considerate and consistently behave well. There were no exclusions during the last school year. A few pupils can sometimes present some challenging behaviour, but this is very well managed by teachers and rarely affects the work of others in the class. Pupils have a good understanding of the difficulties experienced by some classmates. Lunchtimes are pleasant and relaxed and pupils play energetically at break times and are considerate of each other.
10. The school council is very effective in debating aspects of school life to decide whether it can be improved or extended. All pupils have the opportunity to spend time as a class representative on the council and this successfully develops their understanding of responsibility. During the inspection, the council was debating the suggestion that bushes placed in and around the play area would make the environment a better place for play. The 'pro and cons' of the argument were discussed at length prior to a decision being made. A Year 6 pupil chaired the session effectively, whilst another kept accurate minutes. These activities give pupils very good insights into the idea of citizenship. The school plays an active part in the various community festivals.
11. Pupils show a developing spirituality as they move through the school. Their artwork captures the wonder of the natural world and the beauty of the changing seasons. They have very good opportunities to reflect on the work of famous artists when they visit National Art Galleries and when they are introduced to the skills of the craftsmen in their local environment. Their studies in art and geography give them very good introductory insights into different world cultures and their residential visits to Liverpool add to this dimension. The study of Islam and Judaism adds to pupils' understanding of non-Christian beliefs.
12. Attendance is consistently good, above the national average and almost all children arrive punctually all the time. Unauthorised absence is below the national median. Pupils settle to lessons promptly and enthusiastically. Procedures for monitoring attendance are very good.

Attendance in the latest complete reporting year (%)

Authorised absence	
School data	4.7
National data	5.4

Unauthorised absence	
School data	0.0
National data	0.4

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

QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

The overall quality of education is very good. Teaching is consistently good through the school. The curriculum is very good and is particularly well enhanced by the range of experiences and opportunities provided, both during and outside school time. Pupils are extremely well cared for and supported. The partnership with parents is very good; with the community and other schools it is excellent.

Teaching and learning

The quality of teaching is good which ensures that pupils learn effectively. There are particular strengths in the teaching in reception and Years 5 and 6. The quality of assessment of pupils' work is very good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teachers encourage and support pupils, which keeps them all involved in lessons;
- The secure knowledge and understanding teachers have of the subjects they teach helps pupils to gain the skills they need;
- Teachers have a very good understanding of how their pupils are progressing and can plan accordingly to meet their needs.

Commentary

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 42 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
2 (5)	13 (31)	16 (38)	10 (24)	1(2)	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.

13. The overall quality of teaching is good. Teaching is consistently good through the school and is often very good or excellent. In all classes, pupils learn effectively and make very good progress. The quality of teaching and learning was found to be a strength of the school in the last inspection and this remains so now. Teaching is particularly good in Years 5 and 6, where some inspired teaching by very experienced members of staff brings about high achievement. Currently, the teaching in the nursery is not as good as it could be, as the accommodation and resources are inadequate. This is more than made up for by the high quality of teaching by the headteacher in the reception class, which ensures that children enter Year 1 with well developed skills. Parents are very happy with the quality of teaching that their children receive and pupils themselves are confident that they learn new things in lessons and are helped if they find the work difficult.
14. Relationships in classes are excellent. Teachers insist on high standards of behaviour but have also established a rapport with pupils, which makes for a very positive learning environment. They continuously encourage and support pupils. This was a characteristic of all lessons seen during the inspection and helps to explain the confident and positive attitudes of pupils. No one is afraid to 'have a go' in lessons, even if their answer may be wrong. All pupils are involved in lessons, often by very skilful questioning based on a teacher's knowledge of individuals. Pupils respond well to this and are always keen to make a contribution. As a result, the learning is good. Pupils apply themselves and make very good progress in lessons.

15. Teachers have secure subject knowledge and understanding, one of the results of the management of the school emphasising the importance of staff development and training. This confidence shows in the level of planning and the clear learning objectives that help to focus the teaching and learning. Teachers plan tasks that match the needs of pupils, so they can get on and complete what they have been given to do, but at the same time are sufficiently challenged. Teachers have high expectations of what pupils can achieve and pupils rise to this. This high quality of teaching was seen in all literacy and numeracy lessons and is a key factor in the high standards that are being achieved.
16. Very occasionally, planning is not as focused as it could be and tasks are not thought through sufficiently so that they build on what pupils have already learnt. For example, in Year 2, although pupils are very well challenged in literacy and numeracy and make very good progress in these lessons, in other subjects there is sometimes not as much focus on what different pupils are capable of and the planning does not always match their needs.
17. Teachers make very good use of resources, for example artefacts in religious education and good quality materials and equipment in art and design. Currently, the use of interactive whiteboards is being developed and teachers are using these very effectively to enhance their teaching and pupils' learning across the curriculum. Support staff, specialist teachers and other volunteer adults are deployed very well and they always make a valuable contribution to the overall quality of learning in lessons.
18. Pupils with special educational needs are very well taught. The teaching focuses closely on learning targets, which accelerates the rate of pupils' progress and, as a result, pupils achieve very well. Excellent teamwork between teachers and teaching assistants ensures high levels of inclusive education for pupils of lower ability. Teaching and support staff have a very caring attitude towards all pupils.
19. Assessment systems, particularly for English and mathematics, have been very well developed. Teachers make accurate assessments of what pupils have achieved and they then use this information to help them plan for individual pupils and groups. This is why pupils make such rapid progress. Marking of pupils' work is thorough and constructive. Pupils are encouraged and helped to understand how they can improve. Target setting is in place and is helping pupils to take responsibility for their own learning.

The curriculum

The curriculum is very good. It meets all statutory requirements and pupils of all abilities and backgrounds have equal access to activities. Opportunities for enrichment through clubs, working with outside agencies, visits and visitors are excellent.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Provision in the reception class is very good;
- The school makes excellent provision for pupils with special educational needs;
- Exciting activities and experiences enrich the curriculum;
- Resourcing and accommodation in the nursery class is unsatisfactory;
- There are very good links with the local high school;
- Excellent innovative practice promotes very high standards.

Commentary

20. Since the last inspection, the curriculum has improved. A very good programme of learning is planned for the reception class. Provision in the nursery class is not of the same quality, because the accommodation is cramped and the resources are insufficient to meet the needs of the children. The school recognises this and a new purpose built classroom will soon be available for these children, with funding allocated for suitable resources to provide interesting and challenging learning activities. Classrooms throughout the school are often challenging and stimulating places of learning. The programmes of study follow national directions and clear links are made between subjects to support learning in all areas of the curriculum.
21. The quality of the curriculum ensures that all pupils are included. Provision for pupils with special educational needs is excellent. The school works hard to identify pupils with special educational needs, including the gifted and talented, at a very early age. Thereafter, their specific learning needs are carefully addressed and progress is thoroughly tracked. When necessary, high quality individual education plans are agreed between home, school and the relevant outside agencies. The school has a very detailed register of gifted and talented pupils and provides curriculum enhancement for them.
22. The school provides excellent opportunities for enrichment of learning. Residential visits to cities are organised regularly for the older pupils. All classes benefit from day visits that extend their classroom learning and include such venues as York, Eden Camp and visits to museums and art galleries. Resident artists and environmentalists work with pupils in school and very good use is made of visits to craft centres, where pupils gain new skills and techniques. The city visits give pupils excellent insights into urban life and how it contrasts with their own market town. Pupils make theatre visits which extend their cultural experiences.
23. This excellent provision extends to links with local high schools. Occasionally, Years 4, 5 and 6 are taught by high school teachers and more advanced pupils meet regularly to extend their skills in English, mathematics and science. There is a high level of pupil involvement in sport and competition. Pupils enjoy a 'walk around' activity, where they walk around the school observing other pupils' work on display. The programmes of study are regularly monitored by the headteacher and subject co-ordinators. This ensures that the very high standards are maintained.
24. Apart from the nursery class, the accommodation is very good and well maintained. The learning environment is richly displayed and welcoming. It helps pupils to achieve well. Teaching areas are bright, clean, stimulating, very well resourced and conform to the school's ethos of high expectation. Classroom displays celebrate pupils' successes and emphasise cross-curricular links in their learning.

Care, guidance and support

The school has very good procedures for ensuring the care, health and safety of pupils. It provides excellent support and guidance for them. Pupils are very well involved in the running of the school.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Very effective procedures for risk assessments and health and safety;
- Emphasis on the 'whole child' provides excellent support for all pupils, including those with special educational needs and vulnerable children, through relationships with adults and sensitive teaching;
- Outstanding child protection provision, with family support links through Barnardo's;
- Very good development of responsibility in pupils through the school council and encouragement of social and environmental awareness.

Commentary

25. The school's emphasis on making children into better functioning adults is matched by very good procedures to ensure pupils' health, welfare and safety. The headteacher makes a point of getting to know each child and their family well, from reception onwards. Children are confident that adults in the school care for them and treat them fairly. The governors have a very well defined system of risk assessment and safety checks, and follow up concerns effectively. Some parents expressed concern that children are not supervised in the playground until 10 minutes before the start of school. Inspectors found that there are effective systems in place before and after school, and that special arrangements can be made to admit children early and, in some cases, give them jobs to do. A walking bus arrangement escorts children across town, all looking very smart in orange vests. School transport shared with the high school means that younger children are accompanied by older pupils on the buses to outlying villages.
26. Child protection procedures are outstanding. A foster carer wrote to inspectors to express her appreciation of the school over many years. Recently, a partnership with Barnardo's, the children's charity, has enabled the development of additional services for vulnerable children and their families. The school encourages pupils to develop a sense of duty and responsibility through the school council and through involvement in environmental projects, such as the design of and fund raising for a local playground. Assemblies and other shared times are used to help pupils to come to terms with difficulties in their lives. For example, during the inspection a particularly moving assembly on the theme of bereavement was given by the headteacher.
27. The extent to which all staff provide care, guidance and support is excellent. All staff are very knowledgeable of individual pupil's needs, which enables them to provide appropriate levels of challenge and support. The school works very well with other agencies to promote the development of pupils with special educational needs. Detailed assessment procedures ensure that teachers and other staff track the progress and personal development of all pupils very effectively.

Partnership with parents, other schools and the community

The school continues to have very good links with parents and carers. It maintains an excellent partnership with the wider community. There is an excellent range of links with other primary and secondary schools and colleges.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Very high quality of reports on pupils' achievements and other written information;
- Parents give valuable practical and financial help to the school;
- Pupils take part in a wide range of community, environmental and cultural projects;
- There are very close working relationships with other local services and organisations;
- Links with other schools allow for curriculum enrichment and development, staff training and sporting and other links;
- Links with St. Martin's College enhance the history curriculum and enable the school to contribute effectively to teacher training.

Commentary

28. The school has continued to extend its partnerships with parents and the community to the benefit of pupils and the town. Inspectors found that the written information provided by the school is of a very high standard, especially the annual reports on pupils' progress which are excellent. A whole page review of the curriculum content for the year introduces the reports on what each pupil knows, understands and can do, with comparative information about achievement against expectations and suggestions for areas to concentrate on in future. The pupil's own commentary on the report is handwritten. Newsletters and information are sent out frequently and there are plans to include these on the website in the near future. The school encourages parents to discuss pupils' progress frequently, informally as well as at parents' evenings. The headteacher makes a point of meeting parents at the school gate after school. Parents are closely involved at every stage of the provision for pupils with special educational needs.
29. The governors have consulted parents about various aspects of school, such as sex education, healthy eating and uniform, but some parents still want more opportunities to express their opinions. The inspection team's view is that this school already does much more than most. Parents and other local residents play a valuable role in supporting the school financially and practically, through the Friends of the School, as well as by helping in classrooms and transporting pupils on visits.
30. If ever a school could be said to be at the heart of the community, it applies to this school. Very effective links have been made with external agencies and the community, ensuring that pupils receive the support they need. There are very productive links with all the health agencies in the town and also with the children's charity Barnardo's to support families, six different Christian denominations, a range of local societies such as local history and wildlife societies. A local arts centre enriches the art and design curriculum. Pupils have the chance to take part in performances at the arts festival and their work is displayed at the library and the health centre. The quality of these links is excellent, as are the links with primary and secondary schools, especially the adjacent high school. The school shares a community development centre building, providing adult education qualification courses in ICT; the high school provides advanced mathematics lessons for more able pupils and shares its specialist expertise about autism.
31. Another local high school provides sports development input. This school is working alongside two local village schools to develop their literacy and writing curriculum. The headteacher's contacts in a wider consortium of schools provide additional ideas and skills. Through St. Martin's College, pupils' history skills are enhanced by good communication with student teachers, while a teacher is seconded to the college part-time. All of these partnerships contribute to the very high quality of education provided. The educational support programmes very effectively identify pupils' individual needs. Close links with Settlebeck High School aids the transition of pupils with special educational needs.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Leadership and management are very good. The leadership of the headteacher is excellent. The leadership of key staff is very good. Management is very good. Governance is very good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The headteacher is the driving force of the school, providing clear vision and direction and setting high standards for its work;
- The deputy headteacher and other key staff provide high quality support, particularly in terms of the curriculum;
- Management reflects a school that is confident and effective;
- Governors are capable managers, committed to the school and its inclusion policies;
- Financial management is very secure and helps the school achieve its goals;
- Subject co-ordinators do not always know enough about the standards and quality of teaching and learning in their subjects through the school.

Commentary

32. The headteacher provides outstanding leadership for the school. She is dynamic and determined, letting nothing stand in the way of the school achieving the highest possible standards and quality of education for its pupils. She provides a clear vision for the school, with a relentless focus on pupils' achievement. She retains a substantial commitment to a teaching role, which enables her to get to know pupils and their families. Her understanding of pupils and their needs is excellent. It is her commitment to caring for individuals that lies at the heart of the school's very strong ethos of inclusion.
33. The deputy headteacher provides strong and innovative support. Her work in the classroom is of a very high standard and her enthusiasm is a major factor in the breadth and enrichment of the curriculum. Other key staff, including the English co-ordinator and special educational needs co-ordinator, work hard and effectively to maintain the high standards in the school. Although the latter was on maternity leave during the inspection, it is obvious that she provides very good leadership and manages the provision very well. She has a clear view of the strengths and areas for development. She monitors and evaluates the progress of all pupils with special educational needs and gives very good support to colleagues. All members of the senior management team, including the headteacher, set very good examples in the high quality of their own teaching and their commitment to providing everyone with the opportunity to succeed. They truly lead by example.
34. Governors are loyal to the school and its community and are very committed to the inclusion policies. They work hard, particularly in committees, to manage the school and ensure that all statutory requirements are met. They are kept very well informed by the headteacher but are also well aware of what is going on in school through their various close links with its day-to-day life. They bring to the school a range of interests and expertise and involve themselves with school life in many different capacities. They support the headteacher very well but are willing to question, and if necessary challenge, decisions that are being made.
35. The school is very well managed. The whole school has a welcoming, confident and efficient ethos. Self-evaluation is thorough and useful. The headteacher is herself reflective and self-critical and she encourages openness and honesty from everyone. Performance data is used very effectively to monitor and evaluate how well the school is doing. Any pupils not making the progress they are expected to, are soon identified and supported. The school development planning process is informal and the document itself sometimes lacks clarity in its criteria for success, but it is a process that works. Agreed priorities are appropriate and the progress towards achieving goals is effectively reviewed. Whatever the school sets out to do, it usually does successfully.

36. The school is focused on developing teachers' skills and a high priority is placed on staff training and development. This shows in the confidence with which teachers approach the subjects they teach. However, teachers are not on the whole quite as confident when it comes to their role as subject co-ordinators. Although they all manage resources well and have the opportunity through a school development cycle to review their subject in detail, they do not have as much influence on how well pupils learn and are not all sufficiently aware what the standards are in their subjects through the school. Skills in these areas are not very strong, even amongst staff who have held the role for some time.
37. Financial planning is excellent. The budget is very carefully monitored and, even when money is tight, it is so well managed that the school is usually able to achieve its educational priorities. A long-term view is taken to ensure continuity of staffing in years when there is a shortfall. Resources are used imaginatively and somehow the means to achieve what is felt to be important are found. A good example is the new nursery building, which has been a long time in the planning but has the potential to help transform the quality of education for the youngest children in school. Expenditure is broadly in line with similar schools but with the high standards that are achieved and the very good quality of education provided, the school is giving very good value for money.

Financial information for the year April 2002 to March 2003

Income and expenditure (£)		Balances (£)	
Total income	495,483	Balance from previous year	45,763
Total expenditure	512,201	Balance carried forward to the next	33,098
Expenditure per pupil	2,207		

The school carried forward a substantial balance into the current year. This includes money allocated for building renovations, which is being spent this year.

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

AREAS OF LEARNING IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

38. As at the time of the last inspection, nursery provision is made on a part-time basis by a part-time teacher and a learning assistant in a mobile classroom, which is also used by early years groups in the community. However, the accommodation is cramped for the 24 children enrolled in the class. Some work has been done to improve the outside play area and, consequently, a soft cushion material that makes it safe now covers the surface. Although adults work hard to provide an exciting and stimulating learning environment, they are constrained by a general lack of resources. Those that are available are often missing key components that make it difficult for the children to complete their tasks. The school is fully aware of the situation and a purpose built nursery classroom is nearing completion. Funding has been identified to furnish the new accommodation with a full range of acceptable and relevant toys and equipment. There is good liaison between the nursery staff and both parents and the local play groups. This ensures that children are confident and feel secure when they begin their nursery education.
39. The curriculum is very well planned in the reception class to provide a wide range of interesting activities, matched to the children's needs. Consequently, they are well prepared for the transfer to Year 1. In the reception class, there is a good ratio of adults to children. The reception class accommodation is very good, with the room and its immediate outside area carefully organised to give the children a wide range of challenging activities from which they can choose. Provision for outdoor activities is good.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children achieve well because of the good teaching and high expectations set;
- Every opportunity is taken to enhance children's development;
- Adults have a firm friendly relationship with the children who consequently feel confident and happy.

Commentary

40. When they join the nursery, the personal, social and emotional development of a significant minority of children is below what is usually expected. Many have under developed social skills and find it difficult to accept routines within the classroom or to conform to the high expectations set by the staff. Even at this time of year, there is a small minority of children who have not yet understood fully what is expected of them and, from time to time, there is unacceptable behaviour. However, the presence of clear boundaries and the consistent approach of adults ensure that most children know what is expected of them, so they learn quickly to correct the way they behave.
41. Throughout the nursery, most children know the routines well, settle to tasks with the minimum of fuss and behave sensibly. A good example of this is the way that children tidy up at the end of a session. Reception children are now fully aware of all routines. The very good teamwork of the adults gives children superb examples of co-operation and a calm but rigorous approach to work. Adults treat each other and the children with courtesy and respect in a calm considerate atmosphere, where levels of trust are high. The majority of the children show interest in what they are doing, concentrate and achieve very well even when not directly supervised.

42. In both classes, children are continually encouraged to feel confident about what they achieve. For instance, in the nursery children were enthralled by a puppet show given by their classmates. Other children concentrated on the task of building towers and vehicles from large construction kits. They proudly showed their finished products to an adult, although there was nowhere to display their finished work prominently. Children are taught to share and take turns amicably and to put up their hands when prepared to answer a question.
43. Good use is made of role play in the nursery to help children to work positively with each other and adults often intervene to help them sustain their interest. However, insufficient space or resources are available to fully promote this aspect of social development.
44. Children in the reception class collaborate well together, for example when they painted a large 'beanstalk'. They do not talk over each other when engaged in group discussions, because they know, accept and use the classroom rules. Overall, children make good progress in the Foundation Stage and those in the reception class are currently in line to achieve the expected goals by the end of the year.

COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teachers and learning assistants take every opportunity to develop children's language skills and teaching is good.

Commentary

45. A substantial number of children come into the nursery with delayed speaking and listening skills. They make good and often very good, progress and, by the end of reception, are in line to achieve the goals expected of children of this age. Staff take every opportunity during activities to extend children's vocabulary through questioning and consistent insistence that they listen to the contributions of others. For instance, during a puppet show the nursery teacher continued to focus children's attention on the storyline. In reception, children were given very good opportunities to talk to the whole class about their favourite toys. The teacher used the techniques of 'hot seating' effectively, enabling children to talk about their favourite toy, who gave it to them and why they like it. Almost one quarter of the class speak with greater maturity and answer questions in sentences, rather than with one word or phrase.
46. All children enjoy books and listen attentively when a story is read to them. Children show great pleasure in turning over pages to gain meaning from the colourful and stimulating pictures. Children in reception are making very good progress in their reading, with many learning that words carry meaning. One third of the children read sequences of sentences to enjoy a story. They are developing a visual memory, use picture clues to understand what is happening in the story and are beginning to use phonic techniques to read individual words. Reading development is a strength of the reception class. All the children possess their own reading book.
47. Children in the nursery confidently make marks and begin to associate these marks with letters and words as writing begins to emerge. Children are encouraged to use mark making in role play, when they write down the cost of the operation on their pet at the 'veterinary surgery'. Children in reception write in simple sentences, often sequencing three or four sentences together. Their handwriting is legible and many spellings are accurate or recognisable.

MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision in mathematical development is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teachers plan varied activities to support mathematical learning, which ensures that children achieve well.

Commentary

48. Teaching is satisfactory in the nursery and good in the reception class. Teachers plan a wide variety of interesting activities to promote children's mathematical thinking. However, the lack of resources in the nursery sometimes makes it difficult for children to complete some tasks fully, for example if pieces of a pattern are missing. The younger children can create recurring colour and shape patterns, when making necklaces of beads. They can recognise numbers to five and accurately play a domino game by counting the dots on the tiles.
49. The older children gain very good insights into the concept of volume by organising an investigation into the capacities of various plant pots. Children count the number of small containers required to fill the larger plant pots with compost. The more advanced children rank these pots in order of size, writing the number down by the side. They show an accurate counting ability to 13. Other children order and classify seeds according to size and colour, with some accurately counting to 22. Mathematics is expertly incorporated into role play where visitors order and pay for refreshments in the 'café'. Money changes hands and change is given.
50. Very good teaching ensures that more advanced children understand the concept of 'o'clock' times. They set a small clock to a specific time, then place themselves on a large clock face, becoming the hour and minute hands to record the specific time. They use an egg timer to develop their understanding of the length of one minute. Achievement in mathematical development is good overall and, by the time children reach the end of the reception class, they are working confidently at the expected levels.

KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE WORLD

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Staff plan activities and use questioning very well to enhance children's knowledge and understanding of the world around them.

Commentary

51. Teaching and learning are good and children achieve well. Most children in reception are working at levels close to that expected for their age and the more advanced are working at the equivalent of the first level of the National Curriculum. A good variety of appropriate activities is planned to stimulate children's curiosity and enhance their understanding. For instance, children in the nursery are aware of seasonal change. They produce imaginary three-dimensional maps and meet key people in their lives. Children plant bulbs and manipulate clay and wet sand to experience their properties. Children in reception are involved in fieldwork; for example, they follow the course of the local river, complete maps to show its course and identify and label prominent features. They develop their work, using imaginary maps to create an imaginary village. They visit the local shops and speak with visitors to the school about their jobs. Following up from the nursery children's work, they begin to learn of the religious beliefs of non-Christians.

PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision in physical development is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Good use is made of the school hall for dance and movement activities;
- Good provision is made for children's fine motor skill development.

Commentary

52. Indications are that children will meet the expected goals by the end of the year. Reception children have excellent opportunities to experience country dancing. They enjoy this activity, working well as a class, in groups or with a partner. Children skip in a circle keeping time and quickly forming a right hand star, because the teacher has placed a sticky label on each child's right hand. There are very high levels of concentration and the high teacher expectation and very good pace of the lessons keeps them interested and on task.
53. All children have good opportunities to play with toys that develop their fine motor skills. They hold pencils and other mark making tools correctly, accurately thread beads or assemble components of construction kits to build a model. They paint enthusiastically, showing good brush control. Sometimes there is only satisfactory development of the youngest children's movement skills, because adults over control these activities. This restricts the children's ability to work out their own ways of balancing, climbing, rolling and stretching.
54. Effective use is made of the outdoor play areas, enabling children to ride a variety of wheeled vehicles. They complete these activities energetically and are mindful of the proximity and safety of others.

CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT

Provision in creative development is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children use materials imaginatively to create unique images and representations;
- Role play activities are under developed in the nursery because of the lack of resources.

Commentary

55. Although no direct teaching was observed during the inspection, children were seen in role play activities, painting and using construction kits to create models of vehicles, machines and structures. Displays of children's work in the nursery included bubble paintings, which created colourful and imaginative patterns. This was further developed in the reception class, where children created marble patterns. Good levels of imaginative play were observed in both classes, where children used the model farm to create an imaginary adventure, involving high levels of conversation to tell a story. All children confidently use recyclable materials to create models of buildings and animals. Good use is made of ICT, with reception children using toolbar programs to create colourful patterns.

SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 1 and 2

ENGLISH

Provision in English is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- By the end of Year 6, standards in reading, writing and speaking and listening are well above the national average;
- Standards of teaching are very good overall;
- Provision for pupils with special educational needs is excellent;
- By the end of Year 6 standards in handwriting are excellent;
- The development of literacy across the curriculum is very good overall;
- Leadership and management of the subject are very good.

Commentary

56. Standards by the age of 7, which were judged to be good at the last inspection, have been sustained. Those at the age of 11 have improved from good to very good. This represents very good achievement, as the level of attainment on entry to the nursery is judged to be in line with the national average. Standards in handwriting are excellent and those for speaking and listening are very good. Provision for pupils with special educational needs is excellent, enabling them to make very good progress. Standards in spelling have improved since the last inspection and are now good. Improvement since the last inspection is very good.
57. Reading standards of the current Year 2 pupils are good. They read confidently, fluently and with considerable expression. They are able to talk about the characters, plots and main events of a story, showing very high levels of understanding. Below average pupils have less well developed phonic skills, which makes reading unfamiliar words difficult. This, in turn, affects their levels of understanding. However, less able pupils receive excellent support from highly trained teaching assistants, community volunteers and very good quality resources to support their reading development. Individual education plans contain very specific information on what they need to achieve and the type of support they require. Many initiatives have been put into place to support reading, including the very successful shared reading sessions, where older pupils support the reading of younger ones. These sessions not only contribute to improvements in literacy skills, but also to the personal development of those involved. Silent reading sessions provide further opportunities to develop reading for pleasure.
58. Pupils in Year 6 are achieving well above average standards in reading. Many read with confidence, accuracy, intonation and expression. They are given opportunities to read their work to other pupils and adults, to act as 'critical friends' and to demonstrate higher order skills of inference and deduction. These high standards in reading allow pupils to access and understand information in other subjects of the curriculum. As in Years 1 and 2, pupils with special educational needs in the junior classes receive excellent support from trained learning support assistants, so they achieve very well.

59. Developing writing is a continued focus for the school. In the infant classes pupils are given the opportunity to write for a variety of purposes, for example letters, instructions, book reviews and invitations. By Year 2, the majority of the pupils work in a structured way with imagination and clarity. Punctuation and spelling is generally accurate. They write about their own ideas, using interesting vocabulary and sequences of sentences to extend their writing. In the junior classes, pupils' use of grammar is very well developed, as is their ability to write for different purposes. By Year 6, standards in writing are very good. Pupils in Year 6 use grammar with increasing confidence and their spelling is mainly accurate. They write for a range of purposes and are given opportunities for extended writing. Their writing is lively, thoughtful and imaginative. This is exemplified in high quality letter writing connected with problems at Sedbergh Peoples Playing Field and the writing of parodies of 'The Smugglers Song' by Rudyard Kipling. Pupils throughout the school benefit from a range of visiting writers, like Dennis Bond, and older pupils are gaining much from a collaborative writing project with Dent Primary School. By the time pupils leave Year 6 their standards in handwriting are excellent.
60. Skills in speaking and listening are above average in Year 2 because of the rich opportunities pupils have to practise them. Pupils answer questions confidently with increasingly analytical language. Standards are well above average by the time pupils are in Year 6. These improvements throughout the school are because teachers plan for the development of speaking and listening in lessons. There are also opportunities for pupils to explore their ideas and opinions in lessons, role play, drama, visiting theatre groups and school productions. Teachers encourage pupils to act as 'critical friends', thus helping develop their own self-confidence and self-esteem and helping to improve their own and others work.
61. The quality of teaching is very good overall. Lesson planning in both key stages shows teachers have a secure knowledge of the subject. Very good teaching, especially in Years 5 and 6, is characterised by good subject knowledge, the sharing and reviewing of lesson objectives with the pupils, building on previous learning, skilful questioning, a brisk pace, high expectations, very good use of additional staff to support pupils with special educational needs, well organised resources and interesting, challenging activities. Procedures for assessment and monitoring of pupils' achievement are very good, with challenging targets set for pupils to achieve. Teachers' marking ranges from good to very good. Where it is very good, as in Years 5 and 6, it provides pupils with clear information on their successes and on what they need to do next to improve further.

The main objective of the Year 6 lesson was to develop atmosphere and tension in their writing, whilst in the role of an African slave being taken against their will by slave traders. The lesson opened with the teacher taking them on an imaginative tour of the Maritime Museum, visited on a recent residential trip to Liverpool. The memories of what they had learnt about the slave trade came flooding back, reinforced by the graphic video on slavers they had watched earlier and the skilful prompting of the teacher. She then used the interactive whiteboard to share carefully selected examples from the previous Year 6 so that the pupils could compare and contrast their use of dramatic devices. By this time, the pupils were eager to produce their own dramatic accounts. The teacher insisted on silent working so that pupils could really concentrate. She knelt by individuals, working in a whisper, encouraging and challenging their work. The lesson ended with pupils confidently sharing their writing, first with partners and then the class, who acted as 'critical friends' making mature and constructive judgements, helping all to improve. The lesson had a challenging pace, imaginative activities that promoted the learning objectives and outcomes that demonstrated exceptional achievement.

62. The co-ordinator provides very good leadership and management of the subject. Her skills, knowledge and understanding are very well developed, enabling her to act as a very good role model to others. She has a clear view of the quality of teaching and standards achieved. Teaching and learning are monitored and developmental feedback given to colleagues. Progress is rigorously assessed, so that pupils of all abilities are closely tracked and their rate of improvement monitored. English is a priority area in the school improvement plan and an action plan has been agreed to move it forward.

Language and literacy across the curriculum

63. The development of literacy across the curriculum is good in Years 1 and 2 and very good in Years 3 to 6. Other subjects are used very effectively to extend pupils' vocabulary as well as their reading and writing skills. Examples of this are detailed accounts of the journeys of Christopher Columbus in Year 5 and very accurate and sequenced report writing in Year 6 science. The Year 4 topic of Ancient Greece provided an excellent opportunity for extended writing on the retelling of Greek myths. Writing was clearly linked to purpose and audience, with interesting vocabulary and paragraphing techniques used.

MATHEMATICS

Provision in mathematics is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- By the time pupils leave the school, standards in mathematics are well above average;
- Teachers are confident in teaching the subject, which enables pupils to make very good progress through the school;
- Very good leadership and management of mathematics are keeping standards high.

Commentary

64. Standards in mathematics are high and are even better than they were at the time of the last inspection. In Year 2, standards are above average. Most pupils reach expected levels and a high percentage of pupils work at a higher level than this. Standards have been improving year on year and inspection evidence indicates that this continues to be the case. Pupils have a very good understanding of number; for example, they can apply their own strategies when given a problem to work out. Achievement is very good. Work in pupils' books shows them to be gaining skills at a rapid rate and becoming more and more confident with handling numbers. They learn to tell the time and to work in various ways with shapes and measures.
65. In Year 6, standards are well above average and compare very favourably with those achieved in similar schools. Standards can fluctuate a little from year to year; for example last year there was an unusually high number of pupils with special educational needs in the year group. However, standards were still high and the school comfortably reached its challenging targets. Inspection evidence shows pupils can handle five or six digit numbers, understand ratio and proportion and work confidently with fractions. Pupils achieve very well, which is shown in the very good progress made from where they were at the end of Year 2.
66. Teaching is consistently good through the school and can be very good, especially in Years 5 and 6. Teachers are confident in their teaching of mathematics. This shows in the way they plan carefully to meet the needs of all the pupils in their classes. It also shows in the skilful questioning that takes place, keeping all pupils involved in oral sessions. As a result, all pupils gain skills and understanding and continuously build on their previous learning. The methods teachers use help pupils to gain confidence. For example, in a Year 3 lesson, when pupils were working with multiples of five and trying to find complements, they suggested which ones to rub off the board when they were so confident that they no longer needed the help. These pupils made noticeable progress in the lesson, shown by the way in which their responses got quicker. Lower attaining pupils are skilfully supported in lessons and they are able to achieve well. The school makes good provision for higher attaining pupils and those showing a particular aptitude for mathematics. Currently a group of such pupils are given time with a retired teacher, where they can talk about mathematics and develop their skills further. The enjoyment shown by these pupils is evidence of the effectiveness of this provision.

67. The headteacher leads the subject very competently. She has a very good understanding of the standards being achieved and the progress made by groups of pupils. It is this and her high expectations and constant drive for improvement that have helped to keep standards high. The emphasis placed on training has ensured that teachers are confident in teaching the subject, which in turn has ensured that pupils achieve as well as they do.

Mathematics across the curriculum

68. Teachers generally link subjects together effectively and this applies to mathematics as much as to any other subject. For example, Year 5 pupils had been learning about weather and climate in geography and in a mathematics lesson this was used as a context for them to learn about probability. Pupils used their knowledge of weather to assess the likelihood of specific patterns occurring at different times of the year. Teachers ensure that pupils use their mathematical skills in practical ways. For example, Year 6 pupils had learnt how to convert imperial measures to metric and in another lesson they used this skill to help them use recipes for cooking.

SCIENCE

Provision in science is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils achieve very well as a result of generally very good teaching, particularly of the older pupils;
- There is very good emphasis on the development of investigations planned alongside activities that highlight scientific fact;
- Pupils in Years 3 to 6 are taught to raise questions, predict and hypothesise and use specific scientific language.

Commentary

69. The current Year 6 pupils have made excellent achievement to continue the trend of very high attainment. In the national tests, pupils in Year 6 achieve standards that are consistently well above the expected levels. This is because of the very good teaching the involvement of pupils in investigative work, the introduction of accurate scientific vocabulary and the use of technical language. No differences were observed between the achievement of boys and girls; they all achieve well, including those with special educational needs. Planning for lessons in the junior years includes more challenge for the higher attaining pupils. The school has successfully sustained the high quality of provision in science noted at the last inspection. However, standards do not rise above average in Year 2 because there are insufficient opportunities for the more advanced pupils to work at the higher levels.
70. In the lessons seen during the inspection, teaching varied between unsatisfactory and very good. Overall teaching and learning are satisfactory in Years 1 and 2, and very good in Years 3 to 6. In lessons where teacher subject knowledge was good or better and planning showed a clear focus, pupils learned well, showed enthusiasm for the subject and concentrated hard. Where there were too few opportunities to learn through practical activities and insufficient account was taken of the needs of the higher attaining pupils, learning was unsatisfactory. Teachers generally provide good or better opportunities for pupils to carry out experiments. The analysis of work indicates that by Year 6 pupils have exciting and challenging opportunities to plan and carry out their own investigations. These opportunities enable pupils to become confident and articulate scientists, who are able to predict the possible outcomes of their experiments, raise thoughtful questions and formulate hypotheses against which they can check their results. The recording of their work is accurate and includes mathematical analysis of their results through the compiling of tables and the use of graphs.

71. Standards have remained very high by Year 6 because of the pupils' ability to develop an investigation to test a hypothesis, for example that 'light travels in straight lines'. The time given to the subject is used well and consequently these pupils have opportunities to raise questions, such as 'Can you really see in the dark?' They continue their work by examining the phenomenon of reflected light and examine the effect of light hitting a shiny surface.
72. Year 1 pupils can develop a fair test to identify the best method to propel a ping pong ball alongside a piece of guttering, using a plastic straw to blow air on the ball, a fan to sweep air over the ball, or an empty squeeze bottle which they deflate to force air against the ball. They make predictions, measure how far each attempt travels and compile bar charts. The subject is very effectively led and managed, particularly in Years 3 to 6.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- A major investment in resources has resulted in much improved standards;
- Pupils, especially in Years 3 to 6, have a wide range of opportunities to use ICT across the curriculum;
- Pupils are confident with ICT and enjoy the work they are given to do.

Commentary

73. Standards now are much better than they were at the time of the last inspection. At that time, pupils did not have sufficient access to computers and standards were not as high in ICT as they were in other subjects. With a big investment in resources, pupils are now making good progress and are achieving well through the school. This is very good improvement. By Year 2, standards are in line with what is expected. Pupils use ICT to create and amend pictures and text. They gather data and make graphs. In one lesson, Year 1 pupils showed that they were already confident with using a programmable toy. They had a good understanding of how to make a 'Roamer' move in the way they wanted it to, by giving it directions. So confident were they that they were able to tell the teacher how she went wrong when she made a 'mistake'.
74. By Year 6, standards are above those expected. Pupils have a high level of confidence when using ICT in a wide range of contexts. They have explored design programs and understand what a spreadsheet can be used for. They have worked with circuits and logo. They carry out extensive research for their topics, searching for and selecting the information they need and organising it in a form suitable for their purpose. Pupils enjoy working with ICT and are able to work independently and co-operatively on specific projects.
75. Teaching is good through the school, with particular strengths in Years 3 to 6. Teachers are confident with ICT and they appropriately select software to support pupils' learning and present it effectively to pupils. For example, the Year 3 teacher spent some time introducing her class to two kinds of simulation program. She demonstrated them very well, using the interactive whiteboard and involving all pupils. Then individuals were able to use the programs confidently and were given the opportunity to evaluate them. Pupils gained a lot of understanding about ICT during this session. By Years 5 and 6, pupils are being given an impressive range of opportunities to work with ICT. The bank of computers in the entrance of the school is constantly in use as pupils carry out tasks and follow their own interests.

76. Leadership of ICT is satisfactory. The co-ordinator for ICT is relatively new to the role and she is developing this well, albeit in a narrow way currently. She is keen to develop the use of ICT as a tool for learning and has supported teachers during the introduction of interactive whiteboards into classrooms. She is not yet sufficiently confident in monitoring or influencing standards and the quality of teaching and learning through the school.

Information and communication technology across the curriculum

77. The school places an emphasis on ICT as a tool for learning and so every opportunity is taken to use it to support other subjects. For example, pupils undertake research in geography and make graphs in mathematics. Teachers are currently developing the use of interactive whiteboards. In some classes these are new, but in most classes they are already effectively enhancing teaching and learning across the whole curriculum.

HUMANITIES

Religious education and geography are reported fully below. It was not possible during the inspection to observe enough lessons in **history** for a judgement to be made about provision overall.

78. From pupils' history work it is clear that a broad curriculum is in place and they are given a wide range of experiences and opportunities in the subject. Year 1 have looked at kitchens and vehicles from different times and have made comparisons. They understand how things have changed. Year 2 pupils are gaining a good sense of events and time. They have been encouraged to empathise, for example, with pit children.
79. Year 3 pupils have studied the Aztecs and show a good understanding of societies and how they work. By Year 4, pupils are using a range of sources, for example when studying some local history. Year 5 pupils have gained an impressive breadth of knowledge and understanding, as they have studied Ancient Greece and Britain since 1930. By Year 6, pupils can check the validity of evidence and have looked carefully at Britain and the wider world in Tudor times. This sampling suggests that achievement is at least as good as found in most schools.

Geography

Provision in geography is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils achieve well in Years 3 to 6; the breadth of the curriculum in these years is very good;
- Very good use is made of visits locally and further afield to enhance the curriculum.

Commentary

80. In Year 2, standards are broadly in line with what is expected and pupils achieve satisfactorily. Pupils show that they are developing geographical skills, such as observing weather, drawing maps and plans. They are beginning to make comparisons between places. However, there is limited evidence of the same breadth of curriculum as experienced in Years 3 to 6. By Year 6, standards are above expectations and pupils are achieving well. They demonstrate an impressive range of knowledge and understanding across a broad base of places, human activities and physical processes. They carry out field work studies and make predictions based on their prior knowledge. They explain why things are as they are and how they have changed. From the range of pupils' work scrutinised, it is obvious that pupils are making good progress through Years 3 to 6 and by the time they leave the school they have achieved well.

81. Teaching is good overall and very good in Years 5 and 6. Lessons in Years 3 to 6 are very carefully planned and teachers make particularly good use of resources. For example, in Year 3 the teacher had maps of different scales on an interactive whiteboard and a game using directions. Both of these enhanced the lesson and enabled all pupils to be involved. They were later given a carefully planned worksheet and asked to plan a route and give directions, using the skills and vocabulary they had learnt. This was effective. In a very good lesson in Year 6, the teacher used a range of resources to help pupils to gain an understanding of how their own town compared to a town in Nigeria, based in this instance on the market.
82. The breadth of the geography curriculum is good overall; in Years 3 to 6 it is very good. The locality of the school is used well; for example, Year 4 pupils studied a local waterfall and followed a river. Year 6 carried out field work in Liverpool during a residential visit. There are good links made with other subjects, for example in a Greek project. Topics are relevant and interesting to pupils.
83. The subject is satisfactorily led and managed. The co-ordinator reviews resources and supports colleagues. However, he does not have enough understanding of how well pupils are learning through the school or what standards are being achieved.

Religious education

Provision in religious education is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards in Year 6 are above those expected by the locally agreed syllabus;
- An emphasis on appreciation of diversity makes a very good contribution to pupils' cultural development;
- Teachers use resources effectively to enhance pupils' learning.

Commentary

84. In Year 2, standards are broadly in line with what is expected by the locally agreed syllabus. Pupils have a satisfactory knowledge and understanding of aspects of different religions. They know about the Bible and can talk about how other religions have special books. They have learnt about the life of Jesus. Achievement is good. Pupils make good gains in knowledge and understanding. For example, in Year 1 pupils have thought about the qualities of a good friend and have learnt about symbols.
85. By Year 6, standards are above those expected by the locally agreed syllabus. Pupils are well able to consider the ways in which having a faith affects peoples' lives. They understand how moral values are embodied in religion and they confidently talk about aspects of their own lives, such as their behaviour and how it affects others. Achievement is good. As a result of the good teaching and the well structured and broad curriculum, pupils make good progress and effectively develop their knowledge and understanding. The confidence with which Year 6 pupils consider issues and use their knowledge is a reflection of their good achievement.
86. Teaching is good through the school and can be very good. Teachers approach the subject confidently and with a high degree of sensitivity. For example, the Year 2 teacher made a deliberate point of handling a Koran very carefully so that pupils understood how special it is to some people. When the teaching is very good, the two aspects of religious education inherent in the agreed syllabus which are learning about and learning from religion, are closely blended together. For example, in a very good Year 6 lesson pupils were taught about aspects of Muslim life and how their faith affects how they live. At the same time, they

- were encouraged to think about their own lives, such as the rules they might live by. This promoted very good learning.
87. Resources are excellent. Artefacts and books have been gathered over the years and now add up to an impressive collection. Teachers use these resources very well to provide stimulating displays and enhance teaching and learning. ICT is also now being effectively used to provide visual impact in lessons. Visits and visitors are also very well used. Year 4 pupils visited a local church and were able to experience what made it a special place. Year 6 pupils have looked at art work in Liverpool Cathedral, thus linking religious education and art very effectively. The curriculum is thus broad. It is also well planned to meet the requirements of the locally agreed syllabus. A particular emphasis on appreciation of diversity means that the subject makes a very good contribution to pupils' cultural development.
88. The subject is well led and managed. The co-ordinator provides advice and encouragement and the subject is well promoted by the headteacher, who has a special interest in it. Assembly themes support the subject and provide some links for teachers, as well as enabling the headteacher to lead by example. Religious education was a strong aspect of the school's provision at the time of the last inspection and it remains so now.

CREATIVE, AESTHETIC, PRACTICAL AND PHYSICAL SUBJECTS

Art and design and music are reported in full below. There was insufficient evidence on which to make an overall judgement on provision in **design and technology** or **physical education**.

Commentary

89. In design and technology, the observation of pupils' work on display showed that they were gaining in experience in a good range of materials and techniques, and developing the expected techniques of designing, making and evaluating a variety of products. Younger pupils designed, and then assembled, models of sea creatures in shoeboxes placed on their sides to represent an aquarium. These environments were enhanced by the use of pebble ribbons and frieze paper to represent the undersea world. Well finished models of sea creatures were carefully suspended to produce good three-dimensional images. Year 2 pupils were busily erecting large models of medieval castles. A great deal of work had already taken place on the use of scissors to cut out battlements, and to shape the portcullis, the inner keep and drawbridges. Other good links are forged between the subject and history; for example, Year 6 pupils have followed their designs to construct Tudor houses. Year 4 pupils apply their scientific knowledge of forces to design bridges, before evaluating their models by testing them to see which supports the heaviest weight. Considerable detail has been included in this and the Tudor building project, which necessitates careful measurement of card and wood and the use of saws and glues to cut and join the beams, girders and walls and to erect the models.
90. Only a small number of lessons were seen in physical education. However, in addition, discussions were held with the co-ordinator and records of pupil progress assessed. Standards in swimming are above the national average by the end of Year 6 and pupils achieve well. Pupils go swimming throughout Years 5 and 6 and it is unusual for any pupils to leave unable to swim, with most confident swimmers well before this time.
91. Lessons seen during the inspection focused on games and dance. Where achievement is good, pupils are well motivated and know exactly what they are to do and learn. They are set challenging and interesting activities that build upon previous learning and their individual abilities. A good example of this was seen in a Year 2 lesson, where pupils were challenged to design their own game based on previously learned skills, as part of a team. The pupils achieved good standards due to the teacher's very good subject knowledge, organisation of resources, enthusiasm and support and challenge to differing ability groups. Good practice was demonstrated throughout the lesson, with other pupils acting as 'critical friends' to help

improve performance. Consequently they made rapid progress, becoming increasingly self-confident. All lessons seen included a warm-up, with attention being brought to different parts of the body and to the need for a healthy heart. Support for pupils with special educational needs seen in lessons was excellent. A good example of this was the very good teaching assistant support provided in a Year 3 games lesson that enabled all pupils to achieve well.

92. Pupils are given the opportunity to participate in an excellent range of extra-curricular activities, some of which are competitive, such as gymnastics, hockey and netball. Girls are successfully encouraged to participate in their own football club. Very good links have been made with Kirkby Stephen Specialist Sports College, who provide coaching sessions especially for the more able.
93. The co-ordinator, who has recently taken up the responsibility for physical education, provides keen and enthusiastic support to his colleagues. He has plans to further develop this subject. Progress in physical education was recognised in 2002 when the school was awarded the 'Active Mark'.

Art and design

Provision in art and design is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Provision in the subject has improved since the last inspection;
- The teaching of the subject skills is very good;
- Pupils learn about the techniques of many artists, through visits to art galleries and painting in their unique styles;
- There are very good links between the subject and design and technology.

Commentary

94. By Year 6, pupils' art and design skills are excellent. In the direct teaching session seen in the Year 6 class, very good teaching enabled pupils to make substantial progress and achieve well. Very good planning made sufficient time available for the pupils to learn the basic techniques of the artistic style of Betty La Duke, then add colour and texture to their moving images and incorporate symbolism. The teacher's very high level of subject knowledge was very effectively shared with the pupils through the use of a carefully planned interactive whiteboard presentation. This gave them a visual awareness of the artist's style. The very high teacher expectation challenged pupils to identify specific themes for their work, for instance episodes from Greek myths or exotic animals. Pupils were enthralled by the presentation, which aroused their thoughts and imagination. They concentrated on their ideas, continually experimenting until they were satisfied with the sketch or pattern. The teacher circulated the class very effectively to enter into conversations with the pupils about their work. Pupils valued these opportunities, which gave them further ideas to help them improve.
95. The display of pupils' art in Years 5 and 6 is excellent. Line drawings incorporating colour celebrated pupils' confidence and technique in the use of perspective based on a visit to Liverpool. Motif, Batik and geometrical patterning captured pupils' awareness of African art and culture, and pupils' use of malleable wire created sculptures of moving figures. The use of chalk to create images on cloth and watercolour techniques show excellent skills and confidence, when pupils worked in the style of Degas. All this and printing in the style of Andy Warhol mirrored the highest challenge of the teaching and the aesthetic response of the children.

96. Pupils' artistic skills and subject knowledge are systematically developed as they move from class to class. In Year 2, they increase their ability to mix paint to create tones and shades of colour and develop their abstract art techniques in the style of Picasso. Year 3 pupils practise their fine brush control as they improve their watercolour techniques. They experiment with shade and line. They use many pastels to capture the character and style of a fox, just visible within its natural environment. The provision is further enriched by work with artists in residence and visits to local craft centres and forest environments, where specialist skills such as appliqué, plaster sculpture and observational work are developed.
97. The subject is very well led and managed. The documentation identifies a progression of skills and ensures that pupils' knowledge of the world's great artists is extended as they move from year to year. The work within the subject is regularly monitored and the subject development plan has identified opportunities to link art with dance and drama, as the school strives to achieve the 'Arts Mark' award.

Music

Provision in music is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils attain above average standards by the end of Year 6 and demonstrate good musical knowledge;
- Standards in teaching are very good in Key Stage 2;
- The quality and number of musical instruments in school is very good and reflects multicultural diversity;
- The excellent links with the local and wider community results in very good progress of the many instrumental groups.

Commentary

98. The school has improved the standards seen at the time of the last inspection. By the time pupils leave the school, standards are above average. Many pupils read music and are competent musicians. Pupils have a good sense of rhythm and clap a given rhythm back very accurately. They listen carefully and this helps them to develop both their pitch and rhythm work. Pupils understand the difference between tuned and untuned instruments. They respond to the teacher's prompts very well when playing loud/soft, long/short and high and low notes. Standards of composition are good. Those who play musical instruments do so to a very good standard and with great enthusiasm. Pupils sing in tune, with expression and confidence.
99. Teaching seen was satisfactory in Key Stage 1 and very good in Key Stage 2. Where teaching is very good, teachers have high expectations, demonstrate good subject knowledge, share and review lesson objectives with the pupils and build on previous learning. They also set a brisk pace, use skilful questioning, use additional staff and resources well to support pupils with special educational needs and set interesting and challenging activities which motivate the pupils. For example, in a Year 6 lesson very good teaching enabled pupils to compose their own music to represent 'cyclic patterns'. They showed excellent understanding of the use of repeated melodies or rhythmic phrases and of the use of improvisation, receiving skilled and sensitive support from the teacher and a teaching assistant. This enabled all pupils to achieve well. Pupils perform and evaluate their work and act as 'critical friends' to each other. This helps them improve their work. Pupils are given good opportunities to evaluate and compare features of music. Music is used very effectively in other subjects. A good example of this was found in Year 5, where pupils linked art and music through the ages and also wrote a song 'Reading is Fun' for World Book Day.

100. Music in school is not limited to lessons. The school also promotes music through the use of visiting performers, such as Latvian and Spanish folk singing and 'Travelling by Tuba'. Many pupils play a musical instrument from the very wide range provided. These are taught by visiting musicians from the Cumbria Music service and volunteers from the community, including governors. This very good contribution has a significant impact on the achievement of these pupils. The school has forged excellent links with the community, which enrich the curriculum. They benefit greatly from their involvement with the 'Pepperpot Orchestra' which provides a very good outlet for the more able musicians. There are plenty of opportunities for pupils to perform for their parents and friends at assemblies, concerts and within the community, including end of term talent shows and Christmas and Harvest Festival productions. The school has also produced a tape of Christmas songs for a local visually impaired magazine. Preparations are currently underway for the school to take part in the 'Making Music Festival' production of 'Once Upon A Future'. The co-ordinator, who has recently been appointed to this responsibility, is keen and enthusiastic in supporting her colleagues, and is eager to develop her knowledge and understanding of standards of teaching and learning in this subject. She has plans for developing the subject still further.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP

101. The personal, social and health education and citizenship (PSHCE) programme is well established and inclusive. Through PSHCE, the school promotes well the skills necessary for pupils to become good citizens. Pupils express their opinions through the school council and there are good opportunities for discussion in many lessons. This includes sex and relationships education and drugs awareness. There are very good opportunities for pupils to accept responsibility; one particularly good example was seen in the initiative shown by pupils in the organisation of a recent disco. All aspects of the planning were set up by the pupils, who presented it to the teachers for approval.

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	2
Value for money provided by the school	2
Overall standards achieved	2
Pupils' achievement	2
Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities	2
Attendance	2
Attitudes	1
Behaviour, including the extent of exclusions	2
Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2
The quality of education provided by the school	2
The quality of teaching	3
How well pupils learn	3
The quality of assessment	2
How well the curriculum meets pupils' needs	2
Enrichment of the curriculum, including out-of-school activities	1
Accommodation and resources	3
Pupils' care, welfare, health and safety	2
Support, advice and guidance for pupils	1
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	1
The school's links with other schools and colleges	1
The leadership and management of the school	2
The governance of the school	2
The leadership of the headteacher	1
The leadership of other key staff	2
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).