

INSPECTION REPORT

ST MICHAEL'S NURSERY AND INFANT SCHOOL

Workington

LEA area: Cumbria

Unique reference number: 112143

Headteacher: Mrs Ann Macrory

Lead inspector: Mrs Moira Fitzpatrick

Dates of inspection: 13 – 15 October 2003

Inspection number: 257873

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Infant school
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	3 – 7
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
Number on roll:	116
School address:	Station Road Workington
Postcode:	CA14 2UY
Telephone number:	01900 325244
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Appropriate authority:	Governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mrs Ann Ferguson
Date of previous inspection:	30 March 1998

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

St Michael's is small infant school, with 116 pupils on roll and about the same number of boys and girls. There is a 52 place Nursery which children over the age of three attend on a part-time basis. The percentage of pupils who are eligible for free school meals is about average. The school community is predominantly of white European heritage, with one child from Asian British heritage. The school has a higher than average number of pupils with Statements of Special Educational Needs. Currently there are five and four of these are in Year 1. The percentage of pupils on the school's register of special educational needs is about average. The attainment of pupils when they join the school is below that of children of a similar age.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
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8263	Mrs M Forsman	Team inspector	Mathematics Science Information and communication technology Art and design Design and technology Geography Music Physical education Religious education Foundation stage Special educational needs

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REPORT CONTENTS

	Page
PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT	6
PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE MAIN INSPECTION FINDINGS	
STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS	9
Standards achieved in areas of learning, subjects and courses	
Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities	
QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL	11
Teaching and learning	
The curriculum	
Care, guidance and support	
Partnership with parents, other schools and the community	
LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT	16
PART C: THE QUALITY OF EDUCATION IN AREAS OF LEARNING, SUBJECTS AND COURSES	19
AREAS OF LEARNING IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE	
SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGE 1	
PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS	30

PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

OVERALL EVALUATION

St Michael's is a very good school, where children achieve very well and reach good standards. The excellent leadership of the headteacher, and the very good leadership and management in the school, ensure that it is continually improving, that the environment and climate for learning are very good and that excellent teamwork underpins the school's development. Children make a good start to their learning in the Nursery. The school gives good value for money.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- Standards are above the national average by the end of Year 2 and pupils' achievement is very good in Years 1 and 2.
- There is very good leadership and management in the school overall; that of the headteacher is excellent.
- Provision in the Nursery is good.
- Teaching is very good overall.
- Learning support assistants give very good support to teaching and learning.
- The curriculum is well planned in the Nursery, and in Years 1 and 2 it is very good, extending pupils' learning through a wide range of activities and experiences.
- Learning and expectations in Reception are not of the same high quality as elsewhere in the school; overall children make satisfactory rather than good progress in this class.
- There is very effective management of learning in a class with a high proportion of special educational needs pupils.
- The school's accommodation and learning resources are very good and make a significant contribution to the quality of learning.
- The school has very good links with parents to support pupils' learning.
- The governors give good support to the strategic development of the school and discharge their responsibilities well.
- Pupils do not know enough about other cultural traditions in the society in which they live.

The school has made very good progress since it was last inspected in 1998. The school's performance in national tests has risen to above the national average, and standards by the end of Year 2 have risen to above the national expectation in most of subjects. All issues raised at the previous inspection have been successfully tackled. The quality of teaching has improved, there are good monitoring and evaluation procedures in place and the curriculum is based on appropriate schemes of work. The school's environment has been significantly improved, with imaginative use of space to support learning and effectively manage the needs of pupils with special educational needs. Under the leadership of the new headteacher, teamwork in the school has become excellent and the professional development of all staff very well managed to ensure that they have the skills and expertise to manage the challenges that the school faces. The school is in a very good position to continue to improve.

STANDARDS ACHIEVED

Results in National Curriculum tests at the end of Year 2, compared with:	all schools			similar schools
	2000	2001	2002	2002
reading	A	C	B	B
writing	A	C	C	C
mathematics	B	C	B	B

*Key: A - well above average; B - above average; C - average; D - below average; E - well below average
Similar schools are those with similar percentages of pupils eligible for free school meals*

Pupils' achievement is **very good**. The school's performance in the National Curriculum tests in 2002 was above that of similar schools and represents very good progress for pupils since they joined the school. The results of the teacher's assessment in science also places the school's performance above the national average. Results in this year's tests (2003) show a further improvement, with more pupils reaching the higher level in writing and mathematics. Pupils currently in Year 2 are reaching similar standards to those seen above, but with a greater proportion working towards the higher level in reading, writing and mathematics. Their standards in art, music and information and communication technology are also above the expected level; in all other subjects they reach the expected level. Pupils exceed the expectations for their learning because of the high quality of teaching and the curriculum and their own enthusiasm for learning. Children in the Foundation Stage make satisfactory progress overall, from the time they join the school. Progress is better in the Nursery, where the teacher's planning is of a higher quality as are her expectations of what children can do. By the end of Reception, most did not reach the early learning goals in communication language and literacy or in mathematical development. However, they did reach the early learning goals in, knowledge and understanding of the world and in creative and physical development and in personal, social and emotional development they exceeded them.

Pupils' personal development, attitudes and behaviour are **good** because of the school's **good** provision for their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Pupils could know more about the traditions of different cultures in their society. Attendance and punctuality are **good**.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION

The quality of education provided by the school is very good.

Teaching is **very good** overall, with very good teaching consistently seen in Years 1 and 2. The teaching of basic skills in Years 1 and 2 is very good and pupils have frequent opportunities to consolidate their learning in English, mathematics and information and communication technology, through using these skills in other subjects. In Years 1 and 2, pupils' learning in art and music are very good because of the teachers' very good planning for skills development and the enthusiasm they bring to their teaching. Teaching in the Nursery is good and sometimes very good. The teacher and teaching assistant work closely to assess children's progress so that they are able to plan effectively for the next stage of learning. They are particularly effective in developing children's independence and confidence for learning. In Reception, teaching is satisfactory overall, but the teacher does not have high enough expectations of what children can do in English and mathematics to enable them to make good progress.

The curriculum is **good** overall. In the Nursery it is **good**; it is **satisfactory** in Reception and in Years 1 and 2 it is **very good**. Children in the Nursery have a good range of activities to choose from; they are encouraged to tackle new experiences from the earliest age and are given a sense of wonder about the world around them. In Reception learning activities are not always well matched to what children need to learn next and sometimes cause them to lose interest. In Years 1 and 2, teachers plan a very rich curriculum which is enhanced by the links they make between subjects, as well as the visits and visitors they provide for pupils. This has created a relish for learning among pupils of all abilities, who are eager to tackle new challenges and experiences. Provision for out of school clubs is very good, offering pupils a wide range of activities to extend their learning, and personal and social skills.

The school provides **good** quality care and **very good** guidance for pupils. There are very good induction arrangements for children when they join the Nursery. Teachers form very good relationships with pupils who feel secure and valued. Pupils are given very good opportunities to comment on their school, through questionnaires and discussions held in class during *circle time* and they have many opportunities in the course of the day to take on responsibilities and show initiative which they seize with enthusiasm.

The school has **very good** links with parents who feel they are valued partners in their children's education. This relationship makes a significant contribution to children's learning as well as creating a very strong sense of community in the school. The school has **good** links with the community to enhance pupils' learning and with other schools to prepare pupils for transfer at the end of Year 2.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Leadership and management are **very good** overall. The headteacher provides **excellent** leadership and management for the development of the school. Her ambitions for high standards and good achievement for all pupils are very well supported by all who work in the school. Planning for improvement is very good, taking account of perceived weaknesses in the school and taking effective action to remedy these. For example, well targeted support in the Reception class has brought about significant improvements in the quality of provision during the last two years. However, the school recognises that further improvement is required here and this is part of the current development plan.

The leadership and management of subjects are **very good** and this is reflected in the strong curriculum in Years 1 and 2. Leadership of the Foundation Stage is **good** and management of provision for pupils with special educational needs is **very good**. The governing body discharge their duties well and have **good** involvement in the development of the school.

PARENTS' AND PUPILS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

Parents hold the school in very high esteem. They are very pleased with the school's partnership with them, the quality of education provided and the fact that their children make such good progress and are happy in school. Inspectors wholeheartedly agree with parents views of the school.

Pupils are secure and happy in school. They enjoy learning and say that it is interesting and fun. They like being involved in ways of improving their school and relish the opportunities to take on responsibility. A few pupils have concerns about the behaviour and friendliness of some other children. Inspectors found that there is a high proportion of pupils in one class who have behavioural difficulties, but that these are very well managed and are not allowed to detract from the learning of others.

IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

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

- Improve learning activities and expectations in the Reception class.
- Increase the opportunities that pupils have to learn about the cultural traditions of others.

PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS

STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

Pupils achievement is good overall. In the Nursery it is **good** and in Reception it is satisfactory. In Years 1 and 2 pupils' achievement is **very good**. By the end of Year 2 pupils reach standards that are above the average for their age. Pupils of all abilities achieve well because of the very good support the receive for learning.

Standards achieved in areas of learning, subjects and courses

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils in Year 2 exceed the level expected in most subjects.
- Children in the Foundation Stage achieve well in their personal, social and emotional development.
- Pupils with special educational needs achieve well.
- Standards in communication, language and literacy could be higher by the end of Reception.

Commentary

Results

1. On entry to the Nursery, the attainment of most children is below that expected for their age especially in their communication and mathematical skills and in their knowledge and understanding of the world. They make good progress in the Nursery because of the good and sometimes very good provision for their learning. Planning for their learning in the Nursery is based on good knowledge of the children's needs gathered from regular well recorded assessments of what they can do. Children's progress in Reception slows to satisfactory and by the end of the Reception, most do not reach the early learning goals in communication, language and literacy or mathematical development. This is because the activities that the teacher plans does not always offer high challenge to the children. In creative and physical development and in knowledge and understanding of the world nearly all pupils achieve the early learning goals. In personal, social and emotional development they exceed them because of the very good progress they make in this area when they are in the Nursery.
2. Results in the national tests in 2002 show that pupils' performance was above the national average in all subjects and this represents very good progress since these pupils joined the school. Results of the teacher assessment in science were also above the national average. Over the last three years the performance of pupils in reading, writing and mathematics has exceeded the national average for their age group. In that time, the performance of boys and girls in the tests has been similar.

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
reading	16.4 (15.9)	15.8 (15.7)
writing	14.7 (14.5)	14.4 (14.3)
mathematics	17.0 (16.5)	16.5 (16.2)

There were 42 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year

3. Pupils currently in Year 2 are reaching standards above average. In reading, writing, mathematics and science. This is because they have made very good progress from when they joined the school and are continuing to build upon this. Pupils are well supported in their

learning, by the teacher's thorough assessment of their needs and her very good planning, which ensures that each pupil has the correct level of challenge in their work. The involvement of the headteacher during literacy and numeracy lessons provides high quality support for lower attaining pupils and ensures that their learning proceeds at the same rate as others in the class. The teaching assistant also provides valuable support for pupils who have special educational needs. Pupils' achievement is very good as a result of this high quality provision and their own enthusiasm for learning.

4. Pupils in Year 2 now, are reaching higher than expected standards in art and design, information and communication technology and music, because teachers have good subject knowledge and they teach these subjects very well. They teach the skills needed to master the subjects progressively, are enthusiastic in their teaching. This spurs pupils to do well to please their teachers. In music, the additional support given by a musician, who works alongside teachers, provides very good support for pupils' learning and keeps the pace of lessons brisk. In information and communication technology, pupils' learning is good because besides being taught well, they are given many opportunities to practice and refine their skills and develop high levels of confidence when using computers. In all other subjects pupils reach the expected level for their age and in religious education they meet the expectations of the locally agreed syllabus.
5. Pupils who have special educational needs are very well provided for. Their progress is very good. This is because they are very well assessed by the special educational needs co-ordinator and are provided with individual educational plans which exactly meet their needs. Teachers plan very well to provide tasks which help pupils meet their targets. Their progress is carefully monitored and targets adjusted as necessary. Teaching assistants give very good support to pupils who have special educational needs because of their own high levels of expertise and the high quality teamwork between them and class teachers. In the current year, there is a very high number of pupils with Statements of Special Educational Need in the Year 1 class. These needs are both complex and challenging and range from blindness autism, speech and language deficiencies to emotional and behavioural problems. Besides these acute needs, there is a high number of pupils who have special educational needs in literacy and numeracy. The needs of all these pupils are very well met and their achievement is similar to that of other pupils. Learning Support assistants keep files detailing records of achievement so that the learning of pupils with special educational needs is well monitored and recorded.

Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities

Pupil's attitudes, values and personal qualities are **well developed**.

Attendance is **good**.

Punctuality is **good**.

Pupil's attitudes to the school are **good**.

Behaviour is **good**.

Pupil's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development are **good**; however pupils do not know enough about the different traditions of other cultures in our society.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The school teaches pupils to be self-reliant and take responsibility for themselves from the time they enter the Nursery.
- Pupils take full advantage of all school has to offer because they are interested during lessons and work hard to please teachers and teaching assistants.
- Pupils enjoy being in school and the majority have good attendance records. Attendance overall is, however, adversely effected by the amount of holiday taken during term time.
- Behaviour in the school is good and contributes to pupil's learning.

- The school is fostering in pupils a curiosity about their own world through a range of visits and encouraging them to think deeply. This does not, however, apply sufficiently to the wider world of Britain's multi-ethnic society.

Commentary

6. Pupils are keen to attend the school. The school's attendance procedures ensure that consistent records are kept and monitored so that effective measures can be put in place to counteract unacceptable trends in punctuality and attendance. These are clearly used to boost punctuality in the school. There is consistent involvement of all pupils in their learning and this follows through into school clubs, which are very well attended and boost pupils' learning. Behaviour overall is good throughout the school and in many lessons it is very good. Teachers skilfully manage some of the very difficult behaviour exhibited by a few pupils to ensure that the learning of others is not adversely affected. Other pupils are aware of these pupils' difficulties and are tolerant of them because teachers use 'circle time' to discuss issues of behaviour and self-discipline. There is very good promotion of pupils' independence from the Nursery onwards, with an insistence that pupils make their own choices, share equipment and return things when they have used them. By the time they reach the Reception class, children are able to monitor their learning using simple planning books. The school has begun to teach philosophy and this is helping to teach pupils to look 'below the surface' of facts and materials presented to them. Pupils have a good understanding of right and wrong and because of this are easily able to observe rules because they have an understanding of their purpose. Assemblies are highly regarded by pupils who enjoy their quiet spirituality, which was summed up by one pupil who enjoyed talking to God during these times. However, the school does not provide sufficient opportunities for pupils to fully understand the range of other ethnic groups in modern British society and how their different beliefs make them behave in different ways.

Attendance in the latest complete reporting year (%)

Authorised absence	
School data	5.8
National data	5.4

Unauthorised absence	
School data	0.0
National data	0.5

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

Exclusions

Ethnic background of pupils

Categories used in the Annual School Census
White – British
Asian or Asian British – Bangladeshi

Exclusions in the last school year

No of pupils on roll	Number of fixed period exclusions	Number of permanent exclusions
129	0	0
1	0	0

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

QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

The school provides **very good** quality education for its pupils.

Teaching and learning

Teaching is **very good**. Pupils' learning and achievement are **very good**. Assessment is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Very good teaching of basic and investigative skills.
- The use of assessment in planning to meet the needs of different pupils in Years 1 and 2.
- The provision that teachers make for pupils with special educational needs.
- High expectations of teachers in the Nursery, Years 1 and 2.
- The range of methods used to involve pupils actively in their learning.
- The quality and use of learning support assistants are both very good.
- There is very good application of basic skills in all subjects.
- The provision for personal, social and emotional development in the Foundation Stage is very good.
- There is very good use of the outside classroom for learning.
- Expectations are not high enough in some teaching of writing and mathematics in Reception.

Commentary

7. The quality of teaching seen during inspection was good overall in the Foundation Stage and very good in Years 1 and 2. The teaching in one lesson was unsatisfactory where the teacher's expectations of what the children could do were not high enough. There has been a significant increase in the proportion of good and very good teaching since the previous inspection. This is due to the emphasis that the headteacher places on the careful monitoring of teaching and learning, the many opportunities that are provided for the professional development of staff, the increase in the number and effectiveness of learning support assistants and the excellent teamwork which underpins teaching and learning.
8. Teaching in the Foundation Stage is never less than good in the Nursery and sometimes it is very good. This is because the teacher has a very good understanding of how young children learn and plans interesting activities to develop their independence in the classroom. Very good teamwork in the Nursery ensures that children's learning is well supervised and assessed, so that the teacher and teaching assistant have a very clear picture of what children need to learn next. Good use is made of talk for learning and this is well directed by adults who work from prompts in the different learning areas. In the Reception class, teaching is satisfactory overall, though on occasion the teacher does not have high enough expectations of what children can do and this leads sometimes to slower than expected progress in some areas of learning, notably in writing and mathematical development. Learning support assistants give valuable support to children's learning here and are very skilful at managing the behaviour of those who are at times challenging, ensuring that all children continue to learn. They have good questioning skills and develop children's thinking well. The outdoor classroom provides good opportunities for pupils to learn in a different environment and teachers make very good use of this facility to help children develop their physical skills on large apparatus as well as learning from the natural and built environments.
9. Teaching in Years 1 and 2 is nearly always good or very good. The teaching of English and mathematics is very good. Teachers in both classes have very good subject knowledge and expertise as well as imaginative ways of helping pupils to learn. They place very good emphasis in their planning on ensuring that while pupils are taught the basic skills of literacy and numeracy regularly, they also have many opportunities to practise these in other subjects. The result is that pupils have high levels of confidence in their knowledge about number and letter sounds. They are able to apply these in many different situations in their learning in other subjects. For example, in an art lesson, Year 2 pupils looked hard at faces to discover the proportions to give to the eyes, nose and mouth, and had a good understanding about proportions such as a quarter or a third, when they came to do their own drawings. Teachers also place good emphasis on pupils using the correct subject terminology so that their thinking is clear and accurate. In a very good Year 1 lesson about positional language, the teacher ensured that the pupils consolidated their understanding of expressions such as *going over*, *alongside*, *across* and *through*, by first reading a well-known story that used these terms, then

by taking the pupils on a walk in the playground where they consolidated their learning by following instructions using the terms.

10. In science, teachers give pupils many opportunities to learn through investigation. They provide pupils with simple but challenging situations so that they have to apply observational and thinking skills to come up with suggestions and predictions. In a lesson where the teaching was very good with Year 1 pupils finding out about the human body, the teacher's high quality questioning skills led the pupils into lively and interested discussion about relationships between height and head or hand size and length of hair and eye colour. Under the skilful management of the teacher pupils came up with very good ways of testing their predictions and were delighted at how well they managed to find out what they wanted to know. The use of talk in all of this activity was very well promoted by the teacher's judicious prompts and questions. Her skill at gauging when pupils needed to be independent and when they needed support ensured that learning was very close to the maximum for most pupils.
11. Teachers make very good use of assessment during lessons as well as at the end of units of work, to plan the next stages of learning for pupils. Because of this, the activities that they plan are well adapted so that every pupil is able to work independently and achieve success. This has a strong impact on the confidence of pupils of all abilities who tackle their tasks with great enthusiasm, sure that they will do well and please their teachers. Pupils in Year 2 made very good progress in their learning about weight because each group was set tasks at an appropriate level to stretch their thinking while giving them plenty of opportunity to check their answers with others in their group.
12. Learning support assistants make a very good contribution to pupils' learning because they are expert and very well prepared for their role in all lessons. They have a very good understanding of the needs of the pupils they work with and give well balanced support which allows pupils who have special educational needs to develop independence and confidence in their learning. Learning support assistants have benefited from good training to help them support pupils appropriately. For example, they are skilled at managing the behaviour of those pupils who present challenge or disrupt lessons by calling out. Because of their skilled interventions, learning for other pupils is able to continue, and those pupils with special needs in this area are learning how to manage their outbursts with more control. The headteacher is careful to monitor this aspect of the work of teaching assistants to ensure that they are not placed under too great a strain for prolonged periods. The support they give to pupils who have literacy or numeracy difficulties is very good, enabling these pupils to meet the short term targets that are set for them by teachers. The excellent teamwork that exists between teachers and learning support assistants is a strength of teaching and learning in the school.
13. The school makes good provision for homework and from the time their children start Nursery, parents are encouraged to support their learning at home. The school runs workshops to assist parents in this task with the result that pupils are well supported and prepared for the next stage of learning.

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 25 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
0	9	11	4	1	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.

The curriculum

The school provides a **very good** curriculum in Years 1 and 2; provision for out of school activities is **very good**. Accommodation and resources are both **very good**. In the Nursery it is **good** and in Reception **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Very good planning to ensure good links between subjects.
- Very good planned use of literacy, numeracy and ICT skills in other subjects.
- Very good extension to the curriculum through visits and visitors.
- Very good provision for personal, social and emotional development in the Nursery.
- Very good use of the outdoor classroom for learning in the Nursery.

Commentary

14. The curriculum provided at St Michael's is rich and broad. The school has successfully addressed the issues raised at the previous inspection regarding curriculum planning and schemes of work. The school maintains a broad curriculum that gives pupils enough time in all subjects to achieve well and mostly to reach higher than expected standards in Years 1 and 2. Literacy and numeracy skills are well used in other subjects giving pupils ample opportunity to consolidate their skills as well as enhance their learning through the effective use of these basic skills. Opportunities for using information and communication technology are very well planned so that pupils use computers as an aid to their learning in most subjects and from the earliest age. In the Foundation Stage a well planned curriculum enables children to make good progress in the Nursery; progress in the Reception class is satisfactory where planning is less rigorous. All relevant areas of learning are covered and children are provided with continuous opportunities to learn through play. They are very well supported by experienced and well-informed adults.
15. The school has fully adopted the national strategies in literacy and numeracy and is successful in adapting these to match the needs of different groups of pupils. In Years 1 and 2 there is a very strong emphasis on practical activities in mathematics which works especially well with lower attaining and younger pupils who are able to make good connections in the subject as a result. The school also places good emphasis on developing pupils' speaking and listening skills and this promotes good learning in all subjects as pupils make good use of talk for thinking and explaining their ideas. In both mathematics and science there is good planning for investigative work and again pupils' confidence in the subjects grows because of first hand experiences.
16. The staff at St Michael's go to considerable lengths to ensure that all pupils are well supported to join in all activities whatever their background or ability. Pupils who have special educational needs are very well supported, their progress is monitored closely and they are provided with good feedback on how well they are doing. Individual education plans are well written to provide good support for their learning in class, where teachers provide appropriately adapted activities. Teaching assistants are well informed and well trained to provide high quality support for these pupils. The school also makes good use of specialist teaching support services who work with pupils who have specific needs and who advise staff on how to manage their learning. These specialist staff monitor provision for pupils who have Statements or at a high level on the school's register of special educational needs.
17. The range of extra-curricular opportunities is very good. They are popular and very well supported by pupils. There are regular opportunities for sport, including football, basketball and basketball as well as the chance to play against other schools in tournaments. In the arts pupils have opportunities to play recorders and other instruments or join the art club for painting and craft activities. The computer club is very well supported by pupils of all ages; there is a yoga club and a philosophy club where pupils develop their thinking skills. All of these activities are of high quality and make a significant contribution to pupils' personal and social development as well as enhancing their learning.

18. Arrangements for monitoring planning are very good. All co-ordinators have a role in this for long and medium term planning. The headteacher and deputy headteacher monitor teachers' weekly planning to ensure that there is planning for progression. Where necessary, they give additional support to teachers with their planning and this has had a beneficial effect in planning for the Reception class.
19. The school's accommodation is very good. Developments to the building have been imaginative and have taken good account of the changing needs of the school's population. For example, the provision of two adjoining classrooms this year, with good space for both large and small group teaching, has been beneficial in helping Year 1 pupils adjust to the demands of the National Curriculum. The décor in the school is bright and welcoming and gives a very good backdrop to the high quality displays that teachers use to enhance pupils' learning. The provision of a small information and communication technology suite has been well thought out and offers easy access to all classes in Years 1 and 2. In the Foundation Stage the provision for outdoor learning is good and is very well used. The school has very high quality resources for learning. They are the result of careful planning, judicious spending and they support the school's philosophy of providing the best to achieve the best. In all subjects and in both classes in the Foundation Stage, pupils are well supplied with exciting and useful equipment for learning.

Care, guidance and support

Pupils are **well cared for**, guided and supported by the school.

The school's care, welfare, health and safety of pupils are **good**.

There is **good** provision for support, advice and guidance based on monitoring.

The school ensures **very good** involvement of pupils through seeking, valuing and acting on their views.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teachers know pupils well and use the tracking and assessment procedures to ensure their educational and personal well being.
- The school takes pupils health and safety including child protection seriously, procedures are in place and well understood and the school works effectively with outside agencies.
- The induction system for entry into the school is well thought out and supportive of pupils, ensuring that their entry into school and move to the Junior School is as well informed as possible.
- The school regularly consults pupils about the school and their learning and incorporates these findings into school life.

Commentary

20. The school is a very safe environment and pupils are well supervised throughout the school day. Pupils are taught about their safety through the curriculum and health and safety matters are carefully monitored in the school. Child protection is well monitored with well trained staff and procedures in place. There are few accidents in the school. The school takes great care to get to know children well before they start school and as a result they settle well and are ready to learn. Pupils' assessment and targets, in which the children are involved, ensure they are well supported throughout the school, teachers know pupils well and their personal development is a high priority. The move to the Junior school is well planned so that pupils know their new teachers and classmates as well as being aware of some aspects of the academic work expected of them. Pupils are consistently asked their views on all aspects of school life including the day-to-day work, their concerns through circle time and regular consultations about school matters which affect them. The school's provision for meeting the needs of pupils with emotional and behavioural problems is very good. Teachers and teaching assistants have had specific training to ensure they are able to manage the outbursts of

individuals. While this is successful, the school is aware that the strain placed on staff as pupils mature is increasing and that regular assessment of these outbursts and their ability to cope with acute needs is necessary to ensure their well-being.

Partnership with parents, other schools and the community

The school has a **good** partnership with parents, other schools and the community.

There are **very good** links with parents.

Links with the community are **good**.

Good links exist with other schools and colleges.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The school has a very effective partnership with parents to support children's learning. However some parents fail to take advantage of this to the detriment of their children's progress.
- Parents are regularly consulted about matters that affect the day to day running of the school and the education of their children.
- The school provides parents with good levels of information about daily life in the school and their children's current learning and targets.
- The school, to support the curriculum and develop local cultural links, consistently uses the community.
- There are strong links with other schools to support planning and the professional development of teachers.

Commentary

21. The school works very closely with parents to support learning, including planned work with their children at the start of the school day. Parents are very happy with the school and confident of the provision being made for their children. The school keeps them fully informed about its day to day life and the progress of their children, including putting up targets on parents' notice boards in the classroom. There is on going consultation with parents both formally and informally and their views are taken into account. However, the help provided at home for pupils varies from home to home. The school does try to counteract this by providing information sessions for parents to inform them of the best and most effective way to help their children.
22. Links with the community are wide ranging including close links with the local Church, speakers from the safety services and extensive use of the surrounding town and amenities to support the geography, history and environmental curriculum. Taking part in community events and cultural occasions enhances pupils' personal development.
23. Links with other schools ensure that pupils can be part of sporting tournaments as provision for sport is limited by the accommodation. Inset days are set aside for teachers from the partner and feeder schools so they can work together to integrate provision. There are also strong links with other schools through the small school initiative scheme. The school also works closely with a number of training agencies and is involved in the training of teachers.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

The headteacher provides excellent leadership for the development of the school. Overall leadership in the school is very good. Management is very good; it is well focused on efficient and effective systems for bringing about improvement. The governance of the school is good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The headteacher's development of excellent teamwork.

- The headteacher's vision for the school of achieving the best for every pupil.
- Very good leadership and management of subjects notably English, mathematics and science and information and communication technology.
- Very good management of provision for pupils with special educational needs.
- Very good management of the curriculum and learning in Year 1.
- The governors' knowledge of the school and the support and challenge they offer to improve it.

Commentary

24. The headteacher provides excellent leadership for the development of the school. Since taking up post three years ago she has worked very effectively to raise standards in pupils' learning. She has been very successful in this by skilfully developing outstanding teamwork throughout the school. Her clarity of vision for the best achievement for every pupil has allowed staff new to the school to fully understand her high expectations and work towards shared goals to raise standards. The close working relationships between teachers and teaching assistants is a great strength of the school and makes a powerful contribution to the quality of learning and the high standards that pupils reach. The headteacher is very well supported in her work by the skills, expertise and dedication of the senior management team. Together, they form a very effective group who share the same high ambitions for the school and who work very effectively to achieve them.
25. The headteacher manages the school extremely well through the judicious delegation of responsibilities to subject leaders. She is very clear in what she expects of their role and gives support, advice and training to ensure that colleagues are able to rise to her high expectations. The subject leadership of English, mathematics, science and information and communication technology are all very good and the development of these areas is very well managed through careful monitoring. The Foundation Stage and other subjects are well led and managed. The result is that action plans for improvement in the school are well founded in the school's very thorough monitoring procedures, so that the agenda the school has for improvement accurately identifies the correct priorities. For example, monitoring procedures have enabled the school to detect an area of weakness in the provision for pupils in the Reception class. This has been thoroughly assessed so that appropriate support and advice could be put in place. Because of this, there has been significant progress in the quality of provision, though the headteacher recognises that there is still some way to go before it is of the same high standard as the rest of the school.
26. The headteacher provides very good management of the provision for pupils with special educational needs, ensuring that individual education plans are well written and supported by teachers' planning. She also ensures that reviews are regular in timescale and rigorous in evaluating how well pupils have progressed. The management of learning in the current Year 1 class, where there is a very high proportion of pupils with special educational needs, is worthy of mention because of the very effective way the wide range of needs is met. Through excellent teamwork and skilful curriculum planning, the deputy headteacher ensures that pupils' learning is of a high standard and that those pupils with emotional and behavioural difficulties do not detract from the learning of the majority. However, there have been occasions recently when the management of an individual pupil has placed some strain on the staff and it is not certain that current resources in the school are equal to meeting this particular pupils' developing needs. The school, rightly, has this situation under regular review. The progress of a large group of special educational needs pupils with diverse needs, is very good as a result of the teachers' determination that all pupils will achieve their best and their flexible planning to make this happen.
27. The governors have a good knowledge of the school through their visits, reports they receive and their involvement in committees to monitor developments and question standards and provision. Governors are well aware of the school's performance in national tests and are proud of the rise in standards in the last three years. They are aware of the impact of the number of pupils who have special educational needs, including those with statements, and

have been zealous in ensuring good financial management in order to maintain the good levels of support staff that the school has. Governors work hard to support the school and many make additional contribution by giving in-class support for pupils' learning. Governors ensure that all statutory requirements are met and that the school has adopted a racial equality policy. Given the high standards and the high quality of provision, the school gives good value for money.

Financial information for the year April 2002 to March 2003

Income and expenditure (£)	
Total income	297,381
Total expenditure	288,589
Expenditure per pupil	2,599

Balances (£)	
Balance from previous year	7,019
Balance carried forward to the next	8,792

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

AREAS OF LEARNING IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

Provision for children in the Foundation Stage is satisfactory overall, with good and in some respects very good provision in the Nursery.

On entry to the Nursery the attainment of most children is below that expected for their age especially in their communication and mathematical skills and in their knowledge and understanding of the world. There is a single entry in September to the Nursery and consequently a full year's difference in the maturity of each intake.

In the Nursery good relationships are soon established because of a well-planned curriculum and imaginative teaching so that children learn quickly and make good progress. The rate of progress slows in the Reception class when teaching expectations are less challenging. By the end of the Foundation Stage the majority of children do not achieve the Early Learning Goals in communication, language and literacy and mathematical development. The very good progress made earlier in the Nursery enables them to exceed the Early Learning Goals in personal social and emotional development. The majority reach the Early Learning Goals in knowledge and understanding of the world, physical development and creative development.

The recent award of the Kitemark for Excellence has provided an effective tool for improvement. The quality of teaching in the Nursery class is never less than good and is often very good. There is seamless teamwork between all staff and a very good understanding of how young children learn. Teaching in the Reception class is satisfactory overall. On occasion, expectations are not sufficiently high and the lack of pace allows children's interest to flag. The valuable contribution of the teaching assistants has a positive impact. There are good assessment procedures in the Foundation Stage especially in the early identification of children with special educational needs.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

The provision for personal, social and emotional development is **very good** in the Nursery and **satisfactory** in the Reception class.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- New entrants to the Nursery settle happily, become confident in the routines and quickly show interest in new experiences.
- Children in the Reception class persevere with activities for a reasonable period of time but lose interest when there is a lack of direction or purpose.

Commentary

28. Nursery staff know the children well because of the very effective induction programme. This builds productive relationships so that children are willing to respond to staff and to take part in learning. All staff are sensitive to the needs and anxieties of young children and create a secure but stimulating environment. Even at the earliest stage of the school year, children are willing to undertake little responsibilities. Children in the Reception class are very keen to work and become engrossed when given appropriate activities. They take responsibility for their own learning when given a choice and observe the procedures of recording in their planning books. By the end of the Foundation Stage the majority exceed the Early Learning Goals.

COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY

The provision for the development of communication language and literacy is **good** in the Nursery and **satisfactory** overall in the Reception class.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Nursery children make good progress in their communication skills especially in the quality of their speech.
- Reception children have a positive attitude to reading and take pleasure in books.
- Writing skills are not sufficiently developed to prepare children for the National Curriculum programme in Year 1.

Commentary

29. All adults in the Nursery are skilled in engaging children in discussion about their work and in building up their range of vocabulary. Children's language development has been sharpened by adults making use of prompt cards during activities. Familiarity with letter sounds is developed progressively over the year. Reception children are beginning to acquire skills in using phonics and in forming recognisable letters but expectations are undemanding and progress is slow. By the end of the Foundation Stage the majority do not attain the Early Learning Goals.

MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT

The provision for the mathematical development is **good** in the Nursery and **satisfactory** overall in the Reception class.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Early number skills are integrated into many activities in the Nursery.
- Planning for number in the Reception class lacks detail and structure.
- Children lack the expected skills in recording number when they entry Year 1.

Commentary

30. Effective teaching strategies in the Nursery ensure that children match objects and numbers up to five accurately. Counting out small items such as buttons focuses their concentration. In the Reception class children lack sufficient practice in ordering and reading numbers. Although children calculate adequately, they are uncertain about recording numbers for themselves. Learning expectations in the Reception class are sometimes undemanding and progress slows so that by the end of the Foundation Stage many do not attain the Early Learning Goals.

KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE WORLD

Provision for the development of knowledge and understanding of the world is **good** in the Nursery and **satisfactory** in the Reception class.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The innovation of the outdoor classroom enhances many aspects of the curriculum.
- Children experience a variety of visits and visitors which expands their view of the world.
- The early development of information and communication technology skills promotes progress in knowledge and understanding of the world.

Commentary

31. Information and communication technology provision reflects the latest national guidance and frequent opportunities to use computers helps children develop good levels of skill and confidence.
32. Children's awareness of their locality is promoted through frequent walks and visits such as to the park to observe seasonal changes. The high quality of resources promotes good learning. The persona dolls help children realise that people differ. Small group work in the Reception class allows children to discuss investigations freely. By the end of the Foundation Stage, most children attain the Early Learning Goals.

PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

The provision for physical development is **satisfactory** with good provision in outdoor play.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The new arrangement of the outdoor play area provides well for gross motor skills.
- Throughout the Foundation Stage children have frequent access to large play equipment.

Commentary

33. A soft play area in the Nursery encourages active play in a secure environment and the spacious accommodation for the Reception class allows for large play equipment. Manipulative skills are developed in the Nursery through frequent making activities. In the Reception class children use a range of tools and select which are appropriate to the task. Teaching and learning are good so that by the end of the Foundation Stage most attain the Early Learning Goals.

CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT

Provision for creative development is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children engage in role-play for real-life and imaginative situations.
- Throughout the Foundation Stage they explore a range of media.

Commentary

34. Planning indicates that children have frequent opportunities to explore for themselves and that skills are taught on a regular basis. Adults are willing to join in role-play and give prompts to move the activity along. The outdoor play area includes resources for imaginative play such as the stepping stone area and the quiet area under the pergola. Children sing tunefully and are ready to perform. The majority reach the Early Learning Goals by the end of the Foundation Stage.

ENGLISH

Provision is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils of all abilities achieve very well.
- All aspects of the subject are very well promoted.
- Teaching is very good.
- Assessment is very good and is well used to set targets to help pupils improve their work.

- The subject is very well led and managed.
 - Learning support assistants make a very good contribution to pupils' learning.
35. In Year 2 standards are above the average in all aspects of the subject. Pupils speak clearly and confidently. They make good use of talk to develop their ideas and explain their point of view. A very good example was seen when Year 2 pupils reported back to the class about the hazards of misusing medicines. They were able to illustrate their talk with good examples of what might happen in certain situations and how to avoid such things occurring. Pupils listen very closely to the teacher and each other and have a good recall of learning as a result. They follow stories with interest and very good concentration and this helps them with their own story writing, because they are clear about how events are structured to develop the story.
36. Reading skills are well taught and pupils have a good range of strategies to help them with new words so that they can make sense of what they read. They have many opportunities to use their reading skills such as in guided reading sessions in class, reading books for information and using the Internet for further research, as well as regular reading at home to consolidate their skills. The result is that pupils are confident readers who enjoy books and have a good understanding of their different uses. Pupils' writing skills are well developed. They have regular handwriting practice to help them improve letter formation and space their writing so that it is legible. Writing for any purpose is well planned, with the teacher giving very good support by writing with the pupils to help them see the different ways of expressing ideas. Pupils are encouraged to think hard about what they will write and have very good opportunities to discuss and develop their ideas, before they begin writing. Because of this, pupils' writing is individual and fresh, with higher attaining pupils making good use of a growing vocabulary to make their work more interesting. Lower attaining pupils and those who have special educational needs complete similar tasks to others in the class and although their pieces are shorter, they reflect the goals set by the teacher. All pupils in Year 2 produced their own version of *The Little Red Hen* using good description to set the scene, and expressions such as "neighed the horse, quacked the duck, squeaked the mouse", to add interest.
37. Pupils in Year 1 do not reach standards expected for their age, this is mainly due to the low level of attainment of pupils in this group when they joined the Nursery and because of the high level of pupils who have special educational needs. They are now making very good progress in lessons because of the well planned teaching. Standards in reading and writing have improved significantly this term. Pupils' speaking is in line with the expectation for their age and they make very good use of talk in other subjects to help their understanding. Listening is below the expectation for their age and this is a focus for improvement this term.
38. Teaching is very good. The main strengths in teaching in both classes are the high quality of planning to match the work to pupils' needs and the very good use of classroom assistants to support pupils' learning. Teachers' questioning skills are of a very high order and they are adept at modifying questions to suit each pupil so that they are all able to answer and gain in confidence. The expert support given by classroom assistants makes a notable contribution to the quality of learning and ensure that all pupils are fully included in all activities and learn well from them. They direct pupils' learning through discussions and demonstration and are careful to encourage pupils who have special educational needs to be independent. Teachers' use of daily assessment of pupils' learning is very well used to set targets for groups and individuals and this helps pupils to focus on what they need to do to improve. When writing stories, pupils are seen referring to their targets and checking their writing for full stops and capital letters in order to hit their target. Teachers make very good use of information and communication technology in the subject both as a means of helping pupils consolidate their knowledge of spelling and grammar and to present their written work in a variety of ways.
39. Leadership and management of the subject are very good. The subject leader has a very good understanding of strengths and weaknesses in the subject through her analysis of assessments and pupils' work and her regular discussions with teachers. Under her leadership standards have risen year on year and have been consistently above the national

average for the last three years. The priority given to raising standards in writing is entirely appropriate and the strategies being used are proving effective. The proportion of pupils achieving the higher level has trebled in this year's national tests.

Language and literacy across the curriculum

Teachers plan very effectively for the use of literacy in other subjects. They make very good use of talk in all other subjects to help pupils explore ideas and explain their viewpoint. They ensure that pupils have plenty of opportunities to use their reading skills when they research other subjects or follow written instructions, and they provide opportunities to write for different purposes in science, history and geography.

Mathematics

Provision is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The quality of teaching is very good.
 - Pupils achieve very well and standards are above the national average at the end of Year 2.
 - There is very good use of practical activities to consolidate pupils' understanding.
 - There is very good use of assessment in planning the next stage of learning for pupils.
 - The leadership and management of the subject are very good.
 - Learning support assistants make a very good contribution to pupils' learning.
40. Standards in Year 2 are above the average. Pupils have a good knowledge of number. In one lesson they quickly gave eighteen facts about the number 25 and were delighted to have surprised their teacher with how much they knew. Pupils show high levels of mental agility when the teacher presents challenging questions and are confident when offering answers and explanations about their working methods. They are skilled at investigating problems in the subject and relish activities such as estimating and checking the weight of different objects. They have a good knowledge of shape and make very good use of correct terminology when describing and comparing shapes.
41. Teaching is very good. Teachers place great emphasis on practical activities to ensure that pupils have a good understanding of what they learn. They make very good use of their knowledge of pupils' learning to plan a wide range of activities that will challenge the different groups in a class. Classroom support assistants provide skilled, well planned support for pupils with special educational needs which ensures that they make the same very good progress as other pupils in the class. Teachers are adept at reinforcing pupils' understanding of mathematics through their careful use of correct terminology and the activities they use to make learning memorable. In a Year 1 lesson about direction and position, the teacher included a familiar story towards the end so that pupils could hear the language they had learnt about in action. They thoroughly enjoyed joining in *The Bear Hunt* and emphasising words such *across*, *over* and *under*. The lesson ended with pupils testing their new knowledge by walking *across* the playground, *over* the bridge and *under* the arms of the classroom assistant and a pupil. Teachers mark and assess pupils' work thoroughly and give good feedback on how to improve. Teachers make use of a wide range of computer programs. Regular planned access to these ensures that pupils have the opportunity to consolidate their knowledge of number and further their understanding of mathematics. Because the subject is so well taught, pupils see it as a *fun* subject and derive much pleasure from lessons where they always work hard and enjoy success.
42. Leadership and management of the subject are very good. The subject leader has very good subject knowledge and is expert at teaching the subject. She has ensured that since she joined the school standards have risen and have remained above the national average in the last two years. She monitors standards and provision closely and responds promptly to any

perceived weaknesses. Under her leadership the subject has improved significantly both in the quality of provision for the subject and in the standards achieved. She has involved parents in a Maths Fun Day as a means of encouraging them to help their children with work in mathematics and is constantly looking for ways of improving curriculum provision to maintain the enjoyment that pupils get from the subject.

Mathematics across the curriculum

Pupils have plenty of opportunity to use their mathematical knowledge and skills in other subjects. For example, they measure and estimate proportions when drawing portraits in art lessons. They use a range of different measures in science, when they test their predictions about the relationship between different parts of the body.

Science

Provision is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching is very good.
 - The subject is very well led and managed.
 - Pupils achieve very well and reach standards above the national expectation by the end of Year 2.
 - The opportunities for learning through investigation are good.
 - The curriculum is extended well by the use of visits and visitors.
 - Learning support assistants make a very good contribution to learning in the subject.
43. Standards in Year 2 are above the national average. Pupils have a broad experience of science because the curriculum is so well planned. For example, they visit a woodland to discover the habitat of different animals and mini-beasts. They investigate what creatures live in water by examining what they fish out when pond dipping. Pupils have a good knowledge of the human body and know about the main organs and their functions and what humans need to stay healthy. They know that medicines can be harmful as well as helping the body recover from illness. In Year 1, pupils find out about the human body and develop early investigative skills by making predictions such as "The tallest person in the class will have the largest hands". Then they carry out a series of measurements to discover if they were right or wrong.
44. Teaching is very good. Pupils of all abilities make good gains in knowledge and understanding because teachers make lessons interesting through practical activity and well managed discussion. Teachers' planning is firmly based on a good knowledge of pupils' learning and takes into account different levels of knowledge and understanding so that pupils are presented with tasks that are achievable and interesting. The advantages of this very good planning are seen in Year 1 where there is a high level of special educational needs. The teacher's skills at providing a very good range of related activities for pupils to work on with minimum support allowed her to work with small groups to develop their thinking through talk. The teacher's excellent management of classroom support assistants and the high quality of their work also made a very significant impact on pupils' learning. Teachers make very good use of discussion in lessons to ensure that pupils have the opportunity to make predictions and explain their reasoning. In a Year 1 lesson, where teaching was very good, pupils of all abilities were able to make suggestions about relationships between different parts of the body and make decisions about how they would check their ideas. They worked at a very good rate and supported each other very well to discover whether or not their predictions were correct.
45. The leadership and management of the subject are very good. The subject leader is knowledgeable and enthusiastic and offers very good support and advice to colleagues. She has a very good understanding of how young children learn and has ensured that there are very good resources to support teaching and learning. Experts from outside the school extend

the curriculum for pupils through fieldwork in woodlands and the local environment. Earlier this year students from a local college visited the school to help pupils discover *How to Keep the Ice-Trolls Cool*. By planning experiences such as these the subject leader ensures that the subject is popular and that pupils derive maximum benefit from a very well planned curriculum.

Information and communication technology

The provision for **information and communication technology** is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards at the end of Key Stage 1 are above national expectations.
- There is progressive development of skills.
- Pupils make very good progress from a low base.
- There has been good improvement in resources and standards since the last inspection.
- Information and communication technology is used well to support other subjects.
- Staff are deployed well to maximise pupils' access to computers.

Commentary

46. Pupils are confident and competent users of information and communication technology. They are encouraged to use computers from their earliest days in school and respond well to the high expectations of their teachers. The majority of pupils are developing skills which are above what is expected of their age especially in word-processing and desktop publishing. They present information in graph form unaided, prepare instructions to control movement and have a good sense of audience. Computer clubs provide after school access for the oldest pupils and give them the opportunity to apply their skills.
47. The quality of teaching is good and the curriculum is well-designed and implemented. The co-ordinator has a good overview of the subject and manages it very well. The school has successfully adopted the local education authority's scheme for the external validation of pupils' attainment at the end of Key Stage 1 and is using it well to improve standards. Pupils' progress is regularly assessed both in basic skills and in the completion of units of work. The school is aware that the attainment of girls is slightly below that of boys and is taking steps this year to redress the balance. The accommodation has been improved by the provision of a computer suite. There is very good leadership and management of the subject.

Information and communication technology across the curriculum

The application of information and communication technology across the curriculum is **good**. Teachers are expected to include information and communication technology in their medium term planning for other subjects and some units of work for information and communication technology are wholly integrated into other subjects. Graphics programs are often linked with art when pupils are comparing images such as stained glass windows in different media. Research for geography is approached through CD-ROM encyclopaedia. Information and communication technology is often used in literacy when pupils edit prepared texts or write independently. Numeracy skills are promoted when pupils produce graphs to present data or use modelling programs to demonstrate sorting. Teachers are confident in the use of information and communication technology and aware of potential links between subjects.

Humanities

Geography

The provision for geography is **satisfactory**. No lessons were seen.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- There is regular teaching of the subject in blocks across each year.
- Pupils are encouraged to develop awareness of other countries through the ongoing travels of a toy bear.
- Pupils' work is recorded in a variety of ways.

Commentary

48. Scrutiny of work indicates that older pupils have an adequate understanding of another country. They list differences between Ghana and England in detail and create pamphlets to illustrate important features of village life such as collecting water from wells and pumps. The local environment is frequently used as a resource for pupils. Younger pupils record the types of housing in a variety of ways including digital photography. Research skills are encouraged through the use of information and communication technology.

History

The provision for history is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The curriculum is enhanced by a range of interesting activities and visits.
- Pupils' work is not collated in a manner which helps them appreciate their progress.

Commentary

49. Pupils develop an awareness of the difference between their lives and those in the past through the examination of artefacts and first hand evidence. Teaching approaches are imaginative and include strategies which help pupils recall events and people. There are frequent opportunities for pupils to use literacy skills such as writing reports and letters. Historical skills are advanced progressively so that older pupils are able to write independently and accurately about events such as the Great Fire of London.
50. The quality of teaching is good and promotes good progress from a low entry level. There is adequate information to assess pupils' progress. Information and communication technology is used to support learning and develop early research skills. Drama sessions such as retelling the Gunpowder plot foster the involvement of pupils of all abilities. The planning and coverage of the curriculum is sound and based on national guidelines.

Religious Education

The provision for **religious education** is **satisfactory**. Standards at the end of Year 2 are in line with the expectations of the Cumbrian Agreed Syllabus.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The school has close links with the local parish church.
- The provision for the study of another world faith is not sufficiently rigorous.
- The subject is taught regularly and major festivals are celebrated.

Commentary

51. Only one lesson was seen, but scrutiny of work indicates that the oldest pupils are familiar with the main aspects of Christianity. They know a number of parables and reach conclusions about the meanings. Pupils are familiar with the structure of Christian churches and the main festivals. Younger pupils practised the introduction to the church through Baptism and

recognise the experience of belonging to a group. The present cohort has little understanding yet of other faiths. The subject is occasionally supported by the use of information and communication technology and there have been productive links with art when pupils studied the stained glass windows of the church.

52. The curriculum is fully in place and there is regular assessment at the end of study units for the older pupils.

CREATIVE, AESTHETIC, PRACTICAL AND PHYSICAL SUBJECTS

Art

Provision for art is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards are above the expectation by the end of Year 2.
- The development of observational and drawing skills is very good.
- The quality of teaching is very good.
- There is good use of other artists' work.

Commentary

53. By Year 2 pupils achieve standards above the expectation for their age. From Year 1 pupils make good progress in their observational skills and that this is effectively built on in Year 2. Pupils have good opportunities to learn about colour through mixing and painting in the style of other artists such as Van Gogh. By Year 2 pupils have worked with a good range of materials and techniques. They have the opportunity to appraise the work of abstract artists, such as Miro, and say what they think the paintings mean.
54. In the two lessons seen there was good development of portraiture skills using different media to produce the finished work. The quality of teaching in both lessons was very good. Teachers had prepared a good range of resources to enable pupils to see how other artists had drawn portraits. In Year 1, pupils worked in paint or on the computer to draw faces which contained detail of features. Higher attaining pupils were able to create expressions of happiness or sadness on the faces they painted. They were given good opportunities to discuss their own and other's work and to compare the differences between work done on the computer and that done with paint. This evaluation made pupils look closely at the pictures they had produced to decide which they preferred and why. Pupils in Year 2 developed these observational and drawing skills by working systematically on individual features to create their self-portraits. The teacher had provided each pupil with a mirror so that they could look closely at their own features before drawing them. Very good demonstration of line drawing and shading by the teacher, helped pupils to develop a good technique to achieve a high standard of work. In this lesson pupils had the opportunity to work in crayon, charcoal and chalk and to decide which they preferred for their final drawing. Again, at the end of the lesson, pupils had the opportunity to evaluate their own and other's work to develop their confidence and critical skills.
55. Leadership and management of the subject are very good. The subject leader is enthusiastic and knowledgeable. She has a good knowledge of standards in the school and involves parents in pupils' appreciation of art by inviting them in to work alongside their children on occasion. She provides very good advice and encouragement to colleagues. Standards have improved since the previous inspection.

Design and technology

Provision for design and technology is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Skills teaching is good.

Commentary

56. One lesson was seen in Year 1 where pupils made a house with hinged doors. They were well taught and the support given by teaching assistants ensured that all pupils learnt how to score and cut card accurately. Teacher demonstration ensured that pupils were aware of what the finished product would look like and how it would function.
57. The subject is well led and managed. There is a good focus on both skills development and evaluation of work in teachers' planning and the subject leader provides good support for colleagues.

Music

Provision for music is **very good**.

Main strength and weaknesses

- Teachers have good subject knowledge and are enthusiastic.
- Standards are above the expectation by the end of Year 2.
- The provision of a musician to accompany music lessons enhances pupils' learning.

Commentary

58. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 sing well. They keep tune and time and manage to sing at speed with good diction. They know how to use their voices to make sounds effects. They whisper, hum and recite loudly and softly, fast and slow. They are able to accompany their own singing with untuned percussion instruments and to follow the teacher accurately when she conducts.
59. Teaching in the subject is very good. Teachers have good subject knowledge and they bring to this a great enthusiasm for singing and music making which the pupils find infectious. In Year 1, pupils listened closely to the pianist, in order to keep up as she increased the tempo while they were singing *The Wheels on the Bus*. They achieved this with ease because of their very good concentration, and then went on to select instruments to create street sounds to accompany their singing. Again their very good concentration allowed them to keep up with the teacher who conducted and each group entered on cue with their instruments. Pupils in Year 2 sing very well from memory and develop their sense of tempo by clapping in time with the pianist. They work very hard to produce a good accompaniment for their poem *Fireworks*, and show a very good sense of how to build crescendo towards the end of the poem. Throughout music lessons pupils' learning is very well supported by teaching assistants, who work closely with pupils who have special educational needs to ensure that they are able to take part alongside others.
60. The subject is very well led by an enthusiastic co-ordinator. She ensures that colleagues have effective support and that pupils' progress in monitored. There has been good improvement in standards since the previous inspection.

Physical education

Provision in physical education is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Good planning for the development of skills.

Commentary

61. Standards are in line with expectation by the end of Year 2. Pupils develop gymnastic skills and use apparatus with confidence. Higher attaining pupils in Year 2 move imaginatively when asked to create a sequence of movements to get on and off apparatus. Pupils in Year 1 create and perform a dance about wash day, which is linked to their recent visit to Tullie House Museum to see a Victorian household. They imitate the actions of washing and wringing and hanging out clothes and develop these actions into a sequence to create a dance.
62. Teaching in the subject is good. Teachers plan activities to ensure good opportunities for pupils to develop skills and to learn from watching each other and evaluating performance. They make good use of music and percussion instruments to help pupils focus on the quality of their movement and this helps them to improve.
63. Leadership and management in the subject are satisfactory and standards have been maintained since the previous inspection.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP

64. No circle time lessons were seen during the inspection. Pupils have good opportunities to discuss issues that are important to them and to make suggestions for how the school might be improved. In discussion, Year 2 pupils said that these opportunities were helpful in making sure that everyone understood how their actions and behaviour affected other children.

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