

# **INSPECTION REPORT**

## **UPPERBY PRIMARY SCHOOL**

Carlisle

LEA area: Cumbria

Unique reference number: 112243

Headteacher: Mrs J Hodgson

Lead inspector: Mrs D Bell

Dates of inspection: 1<sup>st</sup> - 3<sup>rd</sup> March 2004

Inspection number: 258260

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
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
Number on roll:	305
School address:	Uldale Road Upperby Carlisle Cumbria
Postcode:	CA2 4JT
Telephone number:	(01228) 607 570
Fax number:	(01228) 607 571
Appropriate authority:	The governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr W Atkinson
Date of previous inspection:	21 <sup>st</sup> June 1999

## CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

With 329 pupils on roll, Upperby Primary is bigger than most primary schools. There are 134 boys and 143 girls in Reception to Year 6 and a further 32 boys and 20 girls attend the nursery on a part-time basis. The total number on roll has increased by almost one third since the year 2000, with 54 pupils (16 per cent) joining in the past 18 months. Almost one fifth of the pupils in the current Year 6 joined the school in that time. Almost all of the pupils come from the surrounding area, which is one of the most deprived wards in Carlisle, and all pupils are from White British backgrounds. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is above the national average. The proportion of pupils with identified special educational needs (SEN) matches the national average. However, the proportion of pupils with statements of SEN is three times higher than the national average. It is five times higher in the current Year 6. Most of the statements are for moderate learning difficulties, though they also cover speech and communication, behaviour, physical disability and autism.

The children's attainment on entry to the school is well below that expected for their age. This presents a major barrier to learning that the school is addressing through an Australian-developed 'You Can Do It' (YCDI) programme about which parents, pupils, staff and governors speak very highly. The very strong commitment of all parties to the programme is driven by the school's determination to raise standards through enabling pupils to achieve to the best of their capability. The school gained the gold 'Activemark' for physical education in 2003. It also works closely with the community development centre which is based on site. This involves workshops for parents and classes for adults and is of particular benefit to the pupils because of the support the school receives for information and communication technology (ICT). A new headteacher and deputy were appointed in September 2003.

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
16413	Mrs D Bell	Lead inspector	English Music
9981	Mr S Hussain	Lay inspector	
30935	Mrs K McArthur	Team Inspector	Foundation Stage Mathematics Physical education Religious education
16761	Mr M Hemmings	Team inspector	Science Art and design Design and technology
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## PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

### OVERALL EVALUATION

This is an **effective** school. The new headteacher has set a very clear and purposeful direction for its work and effective teaching is improving pupils' overall achievement, which is now good. The very strong teamwork amongst staff and governors is at the heart of the school's excellent commitment to inclusion, promotion of equality and concern for the needs of individuals. The school provides **good** value for money.

#### The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- Children are given a very good start in the Nursery and pupils throughout the school achieve well because, overall they are taught well.
- Standards are above the national expectation in information and communication technology (ICT), well below the national expectation in English, and below the national expectation in mathematics and science in Year 6.
- The curriculum is well planned. The school values each pupil highly and provides very good care, support and guidance for them personally and academically.
- The school's very good links with parents, other schools and the community contribute in great measure to the pupils' good achievement.
- The school is very well led and managed.
- Unsatisfactory attendance hinders the achievement of a small but significant proportion of pupils and brings the school's figures below the national average.

There has been good overall improvement since the previous inspection. The school has successfully tackled the key issues from that time and is working hard to continue the improvement in achievement and standards evident under the new headteacher's leadership. The continued drive to improve pupils' attitudes and behaviour through the YCDI programme is having a very positive effect on their learning.

### STANDARDS ACHIEVED

Achievement is **good** throughout the school. Children start school with very low levels of attainment, especially in language development, that present a major barrier to learning. They are on course to exceed the goals expected for the end of Reception in personal, social and emotional development, though they are unlikely to reach them in the other five areas of learning. Standards overall are below the national expectation in Year 2 and Year 6. In English in Year 6, they are well below, as a result of the very high proportion of pupils with statements of SEN in that year group. The results of the national tests for pupils in Year 2 in 2003 placed the school in the bottom five per cent of all schools for reading and writing, and well below the national average in mathematics. The results were well below those of similar schools in reading and writing, and placed the school in the bottom five per cent of similar schools for mathematics. Nevertheless, the trend in the school's results for this age group is above the national trend, reflecting the good progress the pupils make from a very low starting point. There is little difference between the attainment of boys and girls. The results for pupils in Year 6 in 2003 can be seen in the following table:

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

Key: A - well above average; B – above average; C – average; D – below average; E – well below average; E\* - very

*low. Similar schools are those whose pupils attained similarly at the end of Year 2.*

The trend in the school's results in this age group is below the national trend. The high proportion of pupils joining the school in the past 18 months has affected standards. However, under the new leadership the school is very well focused on raising them, and there is evidence in this Year 6 that the strategies are working. In this age group, girls do better than boys in the national tests, an issue that the school is addressing through challenging targets that it is working hard to reach. The provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is **good** overall, with major strengths in moral, social and personal development that ensure the excellent inclusion of all pupils. Pupils behave well and have good attitudes to school and to learning, and the large majority arrive in time for the start of the school day. Attendance is unsatisfactory because a small but significant minority of parents do not co-operate well enough with the school by ensuring their children's regular, punctual attendance. This adversely affects the pupils' achievement.

## **QUALITY OF EDUCATION**

The quality of education provided by the school is **good** because the school has taken effective action to improve pupils' learning. While the overall quality of teaching is good, a significant proportion of it is very good. English and mathematics are well taught. Reading, speaking and listening skills are promoted well in other subjects. However, while satisfactory overall, even more could be done to promote writing and numeracy skills in other subjects. A major strength in teaching throughout the school is the very good management of pupils' behaviour, which very effectively promotes independence and self-esteem. Good planning and preparation, and the good use of day-to-day assessment information underpin the very strong emphasis placed on addressing pupils' individual needs. This permeates much of the school's work, very successfully ensuring the full inclusion of all pupils in all activities. This is further enhanced by the effective deployment and contribution of the support staff. Pupils learn effectively because they know what is expected of them and, increasingly, what they need to do to improve. The curriculum is well planned to meet their needs. It is enriched and enhanced by the very good range of well-attended activities outside of the normal school day. The school provides pupils with very good levels of care, support, advice and guidance. It has very good links with parents, the community and other schools. It prepares pupils very well for life beyond school.

## **LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT**

Leadership and management are **good**. The headteacher's very good leadership focuses staff and governors very effectively on improving achievement and raising standards through instilling in the pupils a desire to learn. This is working very well. Governors have a very good understanding of how to gain best value from all of their spending in order to achieve this aim. They support the school well.

## **PARENTS' AND PUPILS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL**

Parents and pupils are highly satisfied with the school and the way in which it seeks their views, responds to their suggestions, and quickly and effectively addresses any concerns they may have.

## **IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED**

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

- Provide more opportunities for pupils to use their writing and numeracy skills in all subjects.
- Build on the pupils' improved attitudes and behaviour by taking an even more rigorous approach to raising standards and improving achievement in all subjects.
- Continue to work hard at improving attendance.

## PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE MAIN INSPECTION FINDINGS

### STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

#### Standards achieved in areas of learning and subjects

Pupils throughout the school achieve well, although standards overall are below the national expectation at the end of Year 6.

#### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children are given a very good start in their education in the Foundation Stage but the low levels of literacy with which they start school impede their learning for some considerable time.
- Pupils in Year 6 reach good standards in ICT but standards in English, mathematics and science are, overall, below the national expectation.
- Achievement is improving as a result of the very positive improvement in pupils' confidence, self-esteem, attitudes and behaviour.
- Pupils use their speaking, listening and reading skills well throughout the curriculum but they still do not use their writing and numeracy skills well enough in other subjects.

#### Commentary

1. Achievement is good overall. The headteacher's very good leadership and the school's very strong commitment to enabling all pupils to achieve as well as they can has led, over the past two years, to the very successful implementation of the 'You Can Do It' (YCDI) programme. The programme's emphasis on raising pupils' self-esteem, giving them the confidence to succeed and developing in them the positive attitudes and good behaviour that are conducive to effective learning is one of the major contributors to the pupils' overall good achievement. It has also enabled the considerable number of pupils joining the school to settle quickly and become equally-valued members of the school community.
2. The children's attainment on entry to the nursery is well below that expected for their age but the very good start they are given in the Foundation Stage helps them to make very good progress. The majority of children are on course to exceed the goals expected for the end of Reception in personal, social and emotional development. However, they are unlikely to reach those goals in the other five areas of learning. The results of the national tests for pupils in Year 2 in 2003 were well below the national average in mathematics and placed the school in the bottom five per cent of all schools for reading and writing. The results were well below those of similar schools in reading and mathematics and in the bottom five per cent of similar schools for writing.

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
reading	12.5 (13.8)	15.7 (15.8)
writing	10.4 (12.0)	14.6 (14.4)
mathematics	14.3 (15.4)	16.3 (16.5)

*There were 33 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year.*

3. The trend in the school's results in this age group is above the national trend overall, reflecting the good progress pupils make from a very low starting point. The standards seen in the work of the pupils currently in Year 2 are below the national expectation in reading, writing and mathematics, reflecting their improved achievement and the growing impact of the school's efforts to help the pupils understand that they really can succeed.



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

Standards in:	School results	National results
English	24.2 (25.2)	26.8 (27.0)
mathematics	23.2 (23.0)	26.8 (26.7)
science	25.5 (26.3)	28.3 (28.6)

*There were 36 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year.*

4. The well-documented information about last year's Year 6 showed that over one fifth of the pupils joined the school after Reception, the greater proportion (over 16 per cent) after Year 4. Many of these pupils had learning and behavioural difficulties that affected their overall progress and achievement. When compared with all schools, the national test results were well below average in English and science and in the bottom five per cent for mathematics. In English, the pupils' performance was below that of schools with similar prior attainment in Year 2; in mathematics and science, it was well below. The trend in the school's results in this age group is below the national trend and there has been a worrying downward trend in all three subjects in the past four years. However, the appointment of the new senior management team last September has brought fresh inspiration to the school. The headteacher has been particularly instrumental in focusing the whole school team on school improvement. Two years ago, as deputy headteacher, she initiated the YCDI programme to help instil in the pupils' feeling of self-worth and the ability to succeed. This is having a positive impact on pupils' learning and is evident in the improved achievement seen in their work during the inspection.
5. Standards remain well below the national expectation in English in Year 6, largely because of the high proportion of pupils with SEN in that year group, a considerable proportion of whom (nearly nine per cent) have statements of SEN. However, standards are now below the national expectation in mathematics and science. The pupils' poor reading and writing skills present a major barrier to learning in many subjects. The school is working very hard to address this and there is clear evidence of good improvement in speaking, listening and reading throughout the school, which is being consolidated in different subjects. Although some opportunities are already taken to promote writing skills in other subjects, there is scope for a more focused approach to doing so. The new management team, having very carefully analysed the test results, has recognised this and it is now a priority in the school improvement plan. Numeracy skills are promoted satisfactorily in other subjects. Discussions with pupils showed that, while they enjoy a good range of experiences in almost all subjects, many have difficulty retaining what they have been taught. The school's work on improving teaching and learning styles, and promoting pupils' thinking, reasoning and deduction skills is gradually addressing this issue. Pupils achieve well and reach good standards in ICT by Year 6 because of the combination of much improved resources, specialist teaching by very competent ICT tutors, and the close working partnership between the ICT tutors and the class teachers. Pupils gain a good understanding of how to use ICT to help their learning in other subjects, for example, mathematics and music, through their ICT lessons. However, few opportunities are yet available for them to use ICT as a natural tool for learning back in class.
6. The school sets challenging but realistic targets based on its good knowledge of the pupils' prior learning. It works purposefully towards them, ensuring that pupils have appropriate work to help them succeed. 'Booster' classes for 'borderline' pupils in Year 6 were about to start. The school is confident this will lead to improvement in the national test results this year. Indications are that this is a realistic prediction. Over time, girls do slightly better than boys in the national tests but not significantly so, and the school keeps a careful check on this. No significant differences were noted during the inspection. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress towards the targets in their individual education plans. Their work is well organised and the good liaison between outside agencies, support staff and teachers ensures that their needs are met well. The school does not have any pupils identified as gifted and talented at the present time but it keeps a close eye on its higher attainers, ensuring that overall, they achieve to the best of their capability.

## **Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities**

Pupils' personal development is promoted **very well**. Behaviour is **good** and pupils have **positive** attitudes to learning. The provision for spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is **good**. However, attendance is **unsatisfactory**. Improvement since the previous inspection has been **good**, particularly in personal development.

## **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The school's very strong commitment to raising pupils' self-esteem through the YCDI programme has had a very positive impact on pupils' attitudes, behaviour, personal development and achievement.
- The school has high expectations of all pupils in terms of behaviour and work rate to which the pupils respond well by becoming effectively involved in all school activities.
- The very good relationships evident throughout the school have created a friendly and effective learning environment for the pupils.
- Pupils willingly take on responsibilities and make a useful contribution to the daily life of the school.
- Some parents do not ensure their children's regular and punctual attendance at school. This adversely affects their children's achievements.

## **Commentary**

7. At the heart of the pupils' personal development is the YCDI programme, introduced two years ago as a result of the headteacher's clear perception of pupils' needs while she was still the deputy head. The programme emphasises that social and emotional well-being is vital if academic progress is to be made. Through the programme, pupils' moral and social development is promoted very effectively. This is especially important in this school as the children start school with poorly-developed social skills.
8. Reception children have made very good progress since last September and are on track to exceed the goals expected for the end of the Reception Year in personal, social and emotional development. They are very successfully taught to listen to and show respect for others. This prepares them very well for their work in Year 1 and beyond. Throughout the school, the drive to improve pupils' confidence, persistence, organisation and ability to get along with others has resulted in a very caring atmosphere within which pupils are beginning to flourish. The school stresses the uniqueness of each pupil and successfully leads pupils to appreciate, value and celebrate the uniqueness of others. Pupils take pride in their work and readily celebrate each other's successes. The friendly and harmonious community thus created very effectively ensures that all pupils are fully included in everything the school has to offer. It also contributes in great measure to the pupils' good attitudes to school and to learning. Pupils get on well with each other, and relate very well to adults. Through the wide range of extracurricular clubs, visits and visitors, they gain a good understanding of life in the wider community, and are very well prepared for life beyond school.
9. Behaviour is good. Pupils see the rules and sanctions as fair and understand that they are there for the benefit of all. They respond well to the high expectations set by staff in terms of relationships, conduct and mutual respect. This has a positive effect on the quality of life within the school. Pupils are polite and show genuine interest in others, initiate conversations and listen politely to responses. There were no incidents of bullying during the inspection and pupils are fully aware of the procedures to follow if bullying does occur. They show interest in how their school works. They take on a variety of responsibilities that successfully develop their confidence and self-esteem, and help them gain a sense of belonging to and taking pride in their own community. This is seen in the way pupils elected to the school council put forward

the views of their classmates on how the school can be made a better place, for example, by improving playground facilities.

10. Spiritual development is fostered well through the curriculum and the acts of collective worship. Regular 'achievement assemblies' recognise pupils' talents in and out of school and promote their sense of worth very well. The school has no pupils from minority ethnic groups but works hard to prepare pupils for life in Britain's multiracial society. In lessons, pupils hear and discuss stories, music and art from a range of cultures and they have a good number of opportunities to work with visiting musicians, authors and poets, often from different cultural backgrounds. In religious education lessons, appropriate emphasis is placed on teaching pupils about the beliefs and traditions of other faiths and cultures.

#### ***Ethnic background of pupils***

Categories used in the Annual School Census
White – British

#### ***Exclusions in the last school year***

No. of pupils on roll	Number of fixed period exclusions	Number of permanent exclusions
333	1	1

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

11. Although unauthorised absence is improving, attendance is unsatisfactory because a significant minority of parents do not ensure that their children attend school as they should, and do not inform the school as to why. This restricts the pupils' progress. The school recognises this and has developed a comprehensive action plan to tackle the problems. Punctuality is satisfactory.

#### ***Attendance in the latest complete reporting year (%)***

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
School data	4.3	School data	1.8
National data	5.4	National data	0.4

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

## **QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL**

The school provides a good quality education for its pupils. Teaching is good, the curriculum is well planned, pupils are very well cared for and they receive very good academic and personal support and guidance. The school has a very good partnership with parents, and parents and pupils are highly satisfied with what it does for them.

### **Teaching and learning**

The quality of teaching is good. It is much improved since the previous inspection and contributes in great measure to the pupils' good achievement, their confidence and self-esteem and their good attitudes to learning. All of these factors are now having a positive effect on standards, which are on an upward turn across the school.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Teaching is very good in the Foundation Stage and good in the rest of the school.
- Thorough planning and preparation underpins the school's very strong commitment to creating a learning environment in which the learning needs of individual pupils are well met.
- Teachers manage pupils' behaviour and personal development very well, instilling in them a feeling of self-worth and the confidence to succeed.
- In English and mathematics, assessment procedures are good and are used effectively in planning. However, the quality of marking varies between the two subjects.

- Assessment procedures are satisfactory in other subjects, though they are not yet securely enough linked to the levels identified in the National Curriculum programmes of study.

## Commentary

### **Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 37 lessons**

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very poor
0 (0%)	11 (30%)	18 (48%)	7 (19%)	1 (3%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)

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

- The quality of teaching is a strength of the school and contributes in great measure to the pupils' good achievement. English and mathematics are taught well. Teachers work very hard to build up the pupils' basic skills in these two subjects. Speaking, listening and reading skills are promoted well, and mathematical skills satisfactorily, in other subjects. However, opportunities are missed to promote writing skills effectively in subjects such as geography and religious education. Teachers plan well for ICT, working closely with the ICT tutors to provide a rich experience for the pupils. Good attention is paid to using ICT to enhance learning in other subjects during discrete ICT lessons in the suite. However, ICT is not yet used as a natural tool for learning when the pupils are back in their classrooms.
- The planning and organisation of lessons are very good in the Foundation Stage and good in the rest of the school. Lessons are very well prepared from a secure knowledge base and a good understanding of the needs of the pupils. Teachers use subject-specific vocabulary very well, checking that the pupils understand new words and use them correctly when explaining their work. This is gradually helping to address the issue of the pupils' low levels of vocabulary when they start school, which affects their learning for some time. Discussions with pupils indicate that they find it difficult to retain what they have learned. The teachers understand this very well and take every opportunity to reinforce learning and vocabulary. Support assistants make a good contribution to pupils' learning, working effectively from the clear directions provided by the teacher.
- In all age groups, teachers assess and record pupils' progress well in English and mathematics, and satisfactorily in other subjects. They use the information effectively to plan stimulating activities that meet the needs of all groups of pupils. Pupils have challenging but achievable targets for English, mathematics and personal development and they know what to do to achieve them. Occasionally in lessons, more-able pupils are not given hard enough work to do, as happened in history. However, the good emphasis placed on thinking, reasoning and deduction skills in this subject benefits the pupils greatly. Teachers make sure that the pupils understand the learning objectives for each lesson and they help pupils to check, at different parts in the lesson, how well they are progressing towards them. This results in good productivity and pace in most lessons. In some classes, the pupils are required to write the learning objectives in their books. Where this works well, the teacher is sensitive to the needs of the less-able pupils and writes the objectives in their books for them, adapting the wording to suit the pupil's understanding. However, where pupils struggle to write, it cuts down on the amount of time they have to do their subject-based work, as was seen in mathematics, and affects their overall progress. In the one unsatisfactory lesson observed during the inspection, pupils did not learn well enough because the learning activities were not appropriate for their different stages of learning and had not been planned well enough to build one on another. A good range and quality of homework is set regularly and consolidates pupils' learning in class.
- The teachers' very strong commitment to the YCDI programme is the driving force behind the improvements in teaching and learning throughout the school. It manifests itself in the very high emphasis placed on ensuring all pupils have equal opportunity to do as well as they can, and are fully included in all that the school has to offer. The very good management of pupils'

behaviour, even when it becomes disruptive, has created a very effective learning environment in which pupils are beginning to flourish well. The strong teamwork and good levels of enthusiasm evident among the staff are transmitted to the pupils who report that they enjoy school and want to learn, and feel their teachers work hard for and with them.

## The curriculum

The range of curricular opportunities is **good**. Opportunities for enrichment, including extracurricular activities, are **very good**. Accommodation and resources are **good**.

## Main strengths and weaknesses

- The YCDI initiative has had a very positive impact on the curriculum and on the school.
- The school makes good provision for pupils who have special educational needs.
- Internal improvements to the building have made it a much better place to work and learn.

## Commentary

16. The curriculum meets all statutory requirements and is organised well to provide broad, balanced and worthwhile experiences for all pupils. The commitment to educate the whole child and a concern for individual pupils to do their best is paramount to the school and is driven by the headteacher's very good leadership of it. Curricular planning takes good account of mixed-age classes, ensuring that work is not repeated unnecessarily and that pupils' learning moves forward. The school rightly continues to review its long-term planning to make further connections between subjects. National and commercial schemes of work are used appropriately, providing a sound base for teachers' planning and preparation. The school has sufficient teaching and support staff all of whom work very well together to provide a good quality education for the pupils.
17. Good provision is made for pupils with SEN and statutory requirements are met well. The pupils are identified early and skilled staff provide effective support for them, including those who have statements. The good communication between all concerned, including external agencies, aids pupils' progress. The external agencies are right to compliment the school on the good advice, guidance and support being given to this group of pupils. Individual education plans are up to date and pupils are set measurable and achievable targets for improvement that are clearly linked to their assessed needs. They are taught individually and in small groups in or away from class as appropriate, and this meets their learning needs effectively.
18. The very good provision for pupils' personal, social and health education is a strength of the school. It contributes in very great measure to the improved attitudes and behaviour of the pupils, and their improving achievement. The school ensures, very successfully indeed, that all groups of pupils are fully included in all that it has to offer. It promotes equality of opportunity very well and pays good attention to the promotion of race equality. Very good links with local secondary schools enhance the physical education programme and help to smooth transition from primary to secondary school. The school provides a rich and varied programme of extension activities for pupils of all ages. Lunchtime and after-school clubs operate every day and include sports, art and drama. Visits to places of interest and visitors to school are also used effectively to enrich and enhance the curriculum, giving pupils many experiences they otherwise would not have.
19. The accommodation and resources are good and are used effectively to promote learning. The building is safe, attractive and well maintained. The issues raised at the last inspection have been fully resolved and the school is now a quiet, well organised and purposeful place in which to learn. Effective use is made of all available space inside the building, which is suitably enhanced by good displays of pupils' work and commercial materials. Further improvements rightly continue to be made to outdoor facilities. The school library is rightly identified as a priority to be updated and refurbished in the near future.

## Care, guidance and support

The school provides **very good** care for pupils and **very effective** support, advice and guidance based on the monitoring of their personal and academic development. This represents good improvement since the last inspection.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Induction arrangements are very good.
- Pupils have very good, trusting relationships with adults in school.
- The school makes very good use of the YCDI programme to guide pupils in their personal development.
- The school has very effective arrangements to seek, value and act on pupils' views.

### Commentary

20. Reception children and their parents are very effectively and very sensitively introduced to school and to the well-established learning routines. The school has taken in a good number of new pupils in the past 18 months, many of whom have learning or behaviour difficulties, and has helped these pupils to settle in and learn well. As one pupil put it 'I had behaviour problems before I came here but this school makes me feel good and I don't have those problems any more.' The school involves all pupils very well in relevant aspects of its work and development. Consequently pupils are happy, they feel valued and are given every opportunity to learn and achieve well. Child protection procedures are good and effective arrangements keep staff informed about policy and procedures in this area. Risk assessments are carried out as required for general health and safety matters and the governing body is effectively involved. Accident and emergency procedures are good. There has been good improvement in these areas since the last inspection.
21. The strong family ethos felt in the school results in very good relationships at all levels. Pupils are valued as individuals and staff work very well together to support all pupils in their academic and personal development. Assessment information is used effectively to inform teaching and to give pupils very good advice, support and guidance as to how to do better both personally and academically. The school works effectively with specialist support agencies such as the educational psychologist, the hearing impaired and behaviour support services and the education welfare officer. This ensures that pupils with special educational needs receive the support and guidance they need to learn and make progress. The YCDI programme is a major contributor to the effective monitoring of pupils' personal development. It is very effective in raising pupils' self-esteem through developing the key skills of 'confidence', 'persistence', 'organisation' and 'getting along'. Special assemblies are linked to the YCDI lessons enabling pupils to develop a strong awareness of the importance of the key skills in all aspects of their lives. The initiative very strongly underpins the school's excellent approach to the full inclusion of pupils so that they are empowered to learn effectively.
22. Many opportunities are provided for pupils to make their views known to staff and become involved in the daily life of the school. For example, they raise issues through the school council and become increasingly mature in the way they do so as they grow older. The school values their opinions and responds well to their suggestions. This makes the pupils feel valued and is successfully instilling in them a sense of pride in themselves and their school.

### Partnership with parents, other schools and the community

The school has **very good** links with parents, the community and other schools and colleges. This too represents very good improvement since the previous inspection.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- The school involves parents very well by seeking, valuing and acting on their views.
- Parents are provided with very good written information.
- Parents make a good contribution to their children's learning at school and at home, although a few do not make enough effort to ensure the regular attendance of their children.
- The school has established many good links with the community that enrich learning.

### **Commentary**

23. The school welcomes parents at all times as partners in the education of their children. The headteacher and staff are always happy to meet with parents to discuss any individual concerns or complaints. Parents are rightly pleased at how approachable the headteacher and staff are, and about how seriously their views and suggestions are taken.
24. The school provides very good information to parents about its policies, provisions and pupils' standards and progress. They also receive good guidance about the curriculum, topics of study and how they can support their children's learning. Reading diaries, homework diaries and YCDI 'earn your stars' booklets are especially helpful and informative. Pupils' annual reports give concise information about how well they are doing and what they need to do to improve further. The parents of pupils with SEN are kept fully informed of their children's progress. They are effectively involved in the reviews of individual education plans and in the annual reviews for pupils with statements of SEN. A good number of parents attend consultation sessions, open days and celebrations. Many parent helpers give their time generously to the school, listening to readers, helping in the Nursery, accompanying swimming and supporting the Friday sports club. A small minority of parents condones absence and this lowers the overall attendance rate. The school is addressing this issue positively.
25. The very good community links include pre-school groups, churches, local businesses, the health services, universities and colleges. Very good educational links with a primary school in Australia have led to the successful implementation of YCDI. The community development centre attached to the school provides many benefits to school staff, pupils and parents especially in ICT. Many parents have taken advantage of the wide range of computer skills development courses on offer and are better able to help their children as a result. Pupils develop their sporting skills well through the many sports clubs and the effective links with the local high school, which is a sports college. This also includes a summer school and learning opportunities throughout the year in swimming and dance. There are very good mechanisms in place for the transfer of pupils to secondary schools. This eases transition for the pupils, and was evident in the discussions with pupils in Year 6. The school puts much back into the community by fundraising for charities and good causes or by engaging in other activities for the benefit of the community. For example, pupils are involved with the Upperby Institute and organisations within the local community. In addition, plans are well under way for the school to have some new building work so that it can participate in a 'Sure Start' project. This is aimed at extending the work of the school further through supporting parents and pupils to make learning more effective.

### **LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT**

Leadership and management of the school are **good** overall, with strengths in the leadership of the headteacher. They have improved significantly since the previous inspection.

#### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The headteacher provides very purposeful leadership that is securely based on her very perceptive understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses.
- Governance is good. The governors know their school well and successfully ensure that statutory requirements are met.

- All staff and governors are highly committed to raising pupils' achievement and self-esteem and are doing so effectively through the innovative YCDI programme.
- Self evaluation procedures are good and are used well to plan for further improvement.
- All staff with management roles carry them out effectively. However, some co-ordinators are new to their roles and have not yet developed a firm view of standards in their subjects.

## Commentary

26. The headteacher and deputy headteacher have been in post for a term and a half, and have the full support of the governing body, staff, pupils and parents. Already, the headteacher's very good leadership and high aspirations are clearly reflected in the school mission statement and the school improvement plan. It is evident too in the strong teamwork and very effective learning ethos which includes a shared commitment to raising standards through pupils' personal development. The headteacher is ably supported by an effective deputy head and the senior management team. The innovative YCDI programme provides a strong, secure foundation for the shared aims, and this shows in pupils' good attitudes, behaviour, and commitment to their school. The attention given to the promotion of equal opportunities and to the full inclusion of all pupils in all activities is excellent.
27. The governors have a good understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses and use this effectively to support the senior management team, and to question and challenge them. Governors are fully committed to raising standards. They have effective links with subject co-ordinators and with each class, which contribute to their good understanding of the school's performance. The chair of governors frequently visits the school. A good number of governors have attended training to increase their knowledge, and all governors carry out their duties in an organised way. They bring a good range of expertise and experience to the school, which they use effectively through a system of committees that meet regularly to plan and review the work of the school.
28. The management of the school is good. The school evaluates its own performance well and acts on the outcomes. This has resulted in the sharp focus on raising standards. The senior management team and subject co-ordinators regularly review their work and check teaching and learning, and the outcomes contribute to the school improvement plan. All co-ordinators have a good understanding of how to lead and manage their subjects but several are new to the role, and as yet do not have a firm view of standards and achievement. Nevertheless, good management has ensured that they are allocated time to gain this knowledge and understanding. Literacy and numeracy have correctly been made priorities, and time for other subjects is clearly identified in the current monitoring cycle. The provision for professional development is good. Performance management is in place for all staff and there is a strong emphasis on developing the skills and utilising the talents of all members of staff to the benefit of the pupils. A useful handbook and good induction procedures support new members of staff. Financial management is good and fully supports initiatives in the school development plan, for example, the investment in the YCDI programme. The school budget is carefully monitored, and the principles of best value are rigorously applied to all budgetary decisions.

## Financial information

### *Financial information for the year April 2002 to March 2003*

Income and expenditure (£)	
Total income	610,411
Total expenditure	598,937
Expenditure per pupil	2,170

Balances (£)	
Balance from previous year	534
Balance carried forward to the next	12,008



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

### **AREAS OF LEARNING IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE**

Provision in the Foundation Stage is **very good**, similar to that at the time of the previous inspection.

29. The quality of teaching and learning is very good overall. When children enter the Nursery, their attainment is well below that normally seen for their age, particularly in the key areas of personal, social and emotional development and in their vocabulary and speaking skills. They are well on the way to exceeding goals expected for the end of their Reception Year (the early learning goals) in personal, social and emotional development. They are unlikely to meet the goals in all other areas of learning but are likely to be close to doing so. This represents very good achievement, which is due to the very good provision and high-quality teaching and learning experiences offered to all the children. Children with special educational needs are supported well, and fully included in the wide range of activities offered. Leadership and management are very good. All staff contribute to the well-planned learning activities. They work very well as a strong team and have established a warm, calm atmosphere, in which all children and parents feel welcome and valued. There are very good links with parents, and the 'communication station' is a valuable way of exchanging information between home and school. The outdoor area for Nursery children lacks soft play space, garden area and suitable storage facilities, and there is no outdoor learning area for children in Reception. This restricts the children's access to well-structured outdoor learning opportunities.

### **PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT**

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

#### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Teaching and learning are very good.
- Very strong emphasis is placed on developing children's personal, social and emotional skills, thus developing in them good attitudes to school, to each other and to learning.
- Very good induction procedures help children to settle happily in school and to move confidently on to the next stage of their education.

#### **Commentary**

30. Very good teaching in a warm, secure atmosphere ensures that children quickly become eager to learn. They achieve very well, responding very positively to all the experiences they meet at school. Useful pre-school 'play day' visits and information booklets help parents and children feel confident about starting Nursery. Children visit the Reception classes and know the teachers. On arriving at school each day, nursery children select three activities, and record them on their 'planning boards' with their parents. They complete their chosen tasks well, and show increasing ability to concentrate. This system continues into the Reception classes, making an effective link between the classes. Children gain a good sense of self worth, responsibility and independence. The very good relationships between the staff and children are developed very well through 'circle time' when children play games such as 'pass the smile'. They work and play well together, take turns and share equipment happily. They help each other willingly. For example, one boy found another's name card for him and sounded out the letters to help him read it. Children understand the difference between right and wrong because they are taught to be responsible for their actions. The children are well on the way to exceeding the early learning goals in this area by the end of Reception.

### **COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY**

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

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Teaching and learning are very good. The staff provide very good opportunities for language development.
- The majority of children in the Reception class recognise and write their name, although a minority have immature speech development, and many have very limited vocabulary.
- A very good selection of books and materials encourages pupils to read and write.

### **Commentary**

31. When they start Nursery the majority of the children have poor oral skills. Staff take every opportunity to encourage the children to discuss their activities, successfully widening their vocabulary and knowledge of language. A science investigation was used well for this purpose when the children were asked to feel and describe the texture of soil and snow. Children are always asked to explain how they know things and are given time to do so. For example, when involved in a lively blindfold game to identify each other, one child replied 'I know by the bobbly hair'. Children in the nursery enjoy stories and handle books well and know that print runs from left to right. They soon recognise their names on the 'teddy bear' name boards used for self-registration each day. Most children in the Reception classes hear and identify accurately the first sound in a word. With help, more-able children can build up three letter words. Some write a simple sentence, but the less-able children are only just beginning to make marks on paper. The writing tables are a popular choice. The majority are unlikely to meet the early learning goals in this area of learning, though they are likely to be close to doing so. This represents very good achievement.

## **MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT**

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

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Teaching and learning are very good.
- Good equipment, activities and displays of numbers help children to learn very well.

### **Commentary**

32. Staff make very good use of humour, attractive resources and lively activities to make learning fun. In the Nursery, children enjoy many rhymes and songs that help them sequence and remember numbers. A very good range of resources make learning practical, and children are successfully taught the vocabulary of mathematics. In the Reception classes, children count to ten and back, and some count to 20. They are beginning to combine different amounts for early addition. More-able children roll three dice and count the spots to find the total. They recognise who has thrown the highest number. A small number of children write numbers accurately but are less certain of digits beyond ten. Less-able children need support when counting and matching different amounts up to five. Achievement is very good. By the time they move from Reception, though the majority are unlikely to meet the early learning goals, they are likely to be close to doing so, having made very good progress since they started school.

## **KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE WORLD**

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

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Teaching and learning are very good and provide the children with a rich variety of experiences that compensate in great measure for their very limited general knowledge.
- The outside areas provide limited opportunities for outdoor learning.

### **Commentary**

33. Children bring little prior knowledge and experience to school but the rich variety of activities provided for them considerably broadens their knowledge and understanding of the world. A good range of plants, bulbs and flowers in the classroom helps the children to learn about growth and the changing seasons. Outside, there is little provision for children to garden. They learn to watch and care for the fish in the Nursery. Regular science investigations involve practical experiences, such as feeling the texture of snow or soil, or baking biscuits. All children have access to computers and enjoy using good quality programs. In Reception, most children control the mouse well, and can follow basic on-screen prompts. A varied programme of visitors and visits supports the curriculum well. These include the park-keeper, a young lamb and a baby who came to be bathed in the nursery. Nursery children visit a farm park, and build on their knowledge with a second visit when in the Reception classes. Again, although they are unlikely to meet the early learning goals, they achieve very well and are close to doing so by the end of Reception.

## **PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT**

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

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Teaching and learning are very good.
- Children use the large space in the school hall for physical education lessons well but Reception children have limited access to outdoor play facilities.

### **Commentary**

34. The children's very good attitudes and behaviour ensure that they use all equipment confidently and safely. The outdoor area is well resourced with good-quality wheeled toys and climbing apparatus. Children move, ride and climb with good control and co-ordination. Reception class children have limited time in which to use the large outdoor equipment and this restricts the physically challenging opportunities available to them. They enjoy physical education lessons in the hall, and Nursery children first learn successfully to take responsibility for changing out of their shoes before moving on to wearing their physical education kit. Some children have poor control skills when using small equipment or modelling with clay or play-dough. However, in the Reception classes, most children use scissors safely and handle pencils and brushes competently. Children achieve well in this area of learning. However, they are unlikely to meet the early learning goals for the end of Reception, though most are likely to be close to doing so.

## **CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT**

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

## **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Teaching is very good.
- Very well planned role-play activities encourage imaginative activities and language development.

## **Commentary**

35. A strong feature of creative activities is the very effective interaction between adults and children. All staff and volunteer helpers take every opportunity to encourage the children to talk about what they are doing. The children try hard to describe the shapes and textures of their clay models of sausages or snakes, although they are limited in their ability to go beyond this by adding descriptive words. Adults dress up and join in role-play activities, thereby encouraging the children's creative play and language development, and children enjoy acting out visits to, for example, the vet or the doctor. Nursery children really enjoyed using thick brushes and water to paint bold lines on the outside walls and pavement. The children respond well to music, sing and clap and enjoy playing small instruments. However, they are not yet aware of rhythm or beat or how to change these elements of music. Few are likely to meet the early learning goals in this area but many are likely to come close to doing so. All children achieve very well.

## **SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 1 AND 2**

### **ENGLISH**

Provision is **good**. Pupils achieve well although standards are still well below those expected for pupils' ages in Year 6. They are below the expectation for pupils in Year 2.

## **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The pupils' very low literacy skills on entry to the school hinder their learning overall in all subjects.
- The pupils' good behaviour and attitudes are having a positive effect on their achievement and as a result standards are improving, albeit slowly.
- Good teaching, leadership and management of the subject, with strengths in the planning and organisation of pupils' work, contribute in great measure to the pupils' good achievement.
- Speaking, listening and reading skills are promoted very well throughout the school but more attention could be given to promoting writing skills in all subjects.

## **Commentary**

36. Weaknesses in literacy, and especially in the pupils' vocabulary and ability to express themselves, present a major barrier to learning in English and in other subjects when they start school. Although improved attitudes and behaviour are helping pupils to catch up and their achievement is good, standards overall remain well below the national expectation in Year 6. A considerable proportion of Year 6 pupils (nearly nine per cent) have statements of SEN to support their literacy development. This explains the standards seen in the current Year 6.
37. Speaking skills are weak because throughout the school pupils lack the vocabulary they need to engage in day-to-day conversation or to express themselves clearly in writing. Teachers work very hard to help pupils improve their vocabulary and provide many opportunities for pupils to talk together in order to organise their thoughts prior to sharing them with the whole class. Pupils very much enjoy this approach which is evident also in the practice of having spelling partners so that they may help each other. Good teaching, based on the teachers' secure subject knowledge, effective planning and a strong commitment to giving pupils the

confidence to succeed, ensures that all pupils have many good opportunities to speak, listen and read. This boosts their self-esteem and develops in them the good attitudes to learning evident throughout the school.

38. Spurred on by their teachers' very good example, guidance and support, pupils in all year groups read their work to the rest of the class. They do so confidently, listening attentively to others and respecting each pupil's right to receive support and guidance when they hesitate over words, or show nervousness as they read. This gives even the lower attainers the confidence to try and underpins the school's excellent commitment to the full inclusion of all pupils, including those with special educational needs. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 recognise letter sounds and use the knowledge to read new words. With support, they use pictures to predict and infer meaning from text. The practice of reading poetry together, seen in Years 3 to 6, contributes in good measure to pupils' fluency and expression in reading, although the volume tailed off each time pupils came upon unfamiliar words. This was noticeable too in one assembly where the quality of the pupils' singing deteriorated rapidly when the pupils came to an unfamiliar verse in a hymn. Pupils use non-fiction books appropriately and know how to find information in them quickly. However, they lack the breadth of reading experience normally found by Year 6 and this inhibits their learning despite the school's best efforts with homework and separately timetabled guided reading sessions. Overall, while reading skills are below the national expectation in Year 2, they remain well below in Year 6.
39. A similar picture emerges in writing. Handwriting and letter formation are under-developed by Year 2 and spelling, though recognisable from the letter combinations used, is weak. Average and higher attainers are beginning to structure writing into story form and higher attainers use punctuation correctly in their work. However, lower-attaining pupils struggle with letter formation and frequently forget to add capital letters and full stops. Pupils in Years 3 to 6 re-tell stories satisfactorily but their writing often lacks the correct punctuation. In extended writing, average-attaining pupils mix up tenses and pronouns and lower attainers do not understand how to join sentences using connecting words. While the developing use of creative language in poetry is good, most writing lacks an appropriate range of vocabulary. The quantity of writing is often there, but, except in the work of higher attaining pupils, the quality is lacking in terms of description and ability to engage the reader. Teachers keep good records of pupils' progress in reading, and they mark pupils' written work well. Marking is usually clearly related to the pupils' targets. Helpful strategies such as giving pupils clues as to where their weaknesses lie help the pupils to take some responsibility for improving their own work. In discussions, Year 6 pupils showed they appreciated and understood this approach and took seriously the responsibility for re-drafting their work and correcting their errors. Overall assessment procedures are good and the information is used well in planning, including at whole school level. The curriculum is kept under review and this successfully ensures that all pupils' needs are met. Teachers use the teaching assistants well to support pupils' learning, and all staff pay good heed to the support and advice they receive from outside agencies to help them teach pupils with specific learning difficulties. Although the test results show some differences between the attainment of boys and girls, no such differences were noted in the inspection.
40. English is well led and managed. The co-ordinator is very knowledgeable and provides good guidance for the pupils. She, the headteacher and the local authority literacy consultant have observed lessons and have accurately identified the weaknesses, including in writing, that are now part of the school improvement plan. Resources for English are good and are used very well in most lessons to promote learning. Improvements in provision, management, teaching and learning have led to good achievement and good overall improvement since the previous inspection.

### **Language and literacy across the curriculum**

41. Speaking, listening and reading skills are promoted well in other subjects as all pupils are encouraged to use books and the Internet to find information and to read, write and spell accurately. All pupils, including those with special educational needs, use their ICT skills

appropriately in word processing activities and present their work well in different fonts, styles and colours, sometimes combining text and graphics. There are some good examples of pupils using their writing skills in science and history. However, evidence from pupils' work shows that opportunities are missed in subjects such as geography and religious education for pupils to use their writing and extended writing skills.

## **MATHEMATICS**

Provision in mathematics is **good**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Pupils experience a well-planned range of activities and they enjoy mathematics. However, despite much hard work, standards are below the national expectation.
- Good teaching helps pupils achieve well, although teachers' marking does not always show pupils how they can improve their work.
- Teaching assistants make a good contribution to pupils' learning.
- The subject is well led and managed.

### **Commentary**

42. Children start school with very under-developed mathematical skills, knowledge and understanding. They work hard and their achievement over time is good. This is due to good teaching that captures pupils' interest and enthusiasm for mathematical activities. Standards are currently below the national expectation in Year 2 and Year 6. The range of abilities is skewed towards average/lower attainers, and few pupils in either Year 2 or Year 6 are on course to attain the higher levels in the national tests this year. Standards are beginning to improve in the younger classes, due the impact of the YCDI programme which, through increasing the pupils' confidence in their ability to succeed, has led to good attitudes to learning. All pupils are included very effectively indeed in all activities. They co-operate well and willingly help each other. Those with special educational needs make good progress because they are well supported.
43. Teachers use their good subject knowledge well to plan enjoyable, challenging and motivating activities for all pupils. This results in pupils behaving well and working hard on their tasks. Many opportunities are provided for pupils of all ages and abilities to reinforce and consolidate their knowledge and understanding of mathematical concepts during lessons, and through further activities and challenges at the end of each lesson. The analysis of test results shows that throughout the school, many pupils find it difficult to apply their mathematical knowledge to solving problems. They make simple errors using the rules of number and struggle to organise their thoughts. They do not have sufficient vocabulary to explain their answers clearly, despite the fact that staff regularly introduce them to, and consistently encourage them to use, the correct mathematical vocabulary at all times. Mental activities and problem solving situations are rightly included in all lessons, showing that the school has responded well to tackling the weaknesses found when they analysed the outcomes of tests and assessments.
44. Pupils in Year 2 are beginning to record mathematical work, but limited reading and writing skills slow down their efforts and not all pupils write numbers legibly. They recognise numbers to 100, and use addition and subtraction to calculate one more or less correctly. More-able pupils calculate ten more or less orally, but become confused when recording their answers because they are not certain of number sequences. Most Year 2 pupils multiply accurately by five and by ten. Many Year 6 pupils remain limited in their ability to read questions and record answers quickly and accurately. This slows them down in test situations. Time is usually used effectively. However, pupils are too often required to write out in full the learning intentions for each lesson. These are sometimes quite lengthy and leave pupils insufficient time to practise and consolidate their mathematical learning, especially where they find difficulty writing. More-able pupils in Year 6 have a secure knowledge and understanding of the number system, and

use this well to complete the more complex activities set for them. Middle- and lower-attaining pupils in Year 6 have a limited understanding of, for example, hundreds, tens and units, and do not always know whether to use addition, subtraction, multiplication or division to solve a problem. However, in one very good lesson, more-able pupils used their knowledge of multiplication and division well to calculate the angles of a triangle. They used protractors competently to identify and name acute and obtuse angles correctly to within five degrees. Pupils change simple fractions to decimals correctly, but find it difficult to make equivalent fractions. The regular practice of multiplication tables helps the pupils to recall number facts quickly.

45. Overall assessment and evaluation procedures are satisfactory. However, they are relatively new and, although promising, their full impact on raising achievement has yet to be seen. Nevertheless, pupils' progress in lessons is monitored well, and the information is used effectively to set targets. Most pupils know their personal targets and what they have to do to achieve them, and they are regularly reviewed. The downside is that when teachers mark pupils' work, they do not often show the pupils what they need to do to improve. Standards of presentation vary, and pupils are not always reminded to present their work clearly and carefully enough. The use of homework to support learning is satisfactory.
46. The subject is well led and managed. The knowledgeable co-ordinator has drawn up a perceptive action plan setting out strategies for improvement, which are incorporated effectively into the school improvement plan. The co-ordinator has some release time from class to monitor teaching and learning. The outcomes are used well to improve the quality of teaching by, for example, informing performance management targets and identifying relevant professional development. A key issue from the previous inspection was to raise standards which, despite the good range of strategies introduced to do so, have remained below the national expectation. Nevertheless, pupils are now achieving well and there remains a strong commitment to further improvement throughout the school, spurred on by the drive and enthusiasm of the new headteacher and senior management team. These factors have led to good overall improvement in mathematics since the previous inspection.

### **Mathematics across the curriculum**

47. Limited examples were observed of mathematics being used in other subjects. In a science investigation, pupils competently used tables and graphs to record their pulse rate before and after exercise. Pupils carefully counted musical beats to help them change direction when they performed a Scottish reel in a physical education lesson. There is a suitable range of programs to reinforce and extend mathematical skills, knowledge and understanding. These are used well as part of the pupils' work in ICT lessons.

### **SCIENCE**

The provision in science is **good**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Pupils achieve well, although standards are below the national expectation.
- Teaching and learning are good in Years 3 to 6. No direct teaching was observed in Years 1 and 2 therefore no judgement is made about teaching in this age group.
- The curriculum is planned well, with good emphasis on developing pupils' learning through practical investigations.
- Leadership and management are good.

### **Commentary**

48. Most pupils in Year 6 are on course to do better than last year in the national tests but are still unlikely to reach the standards expected for their age. A major barrier to learning is their poor literacy skills, evident in their inability to explain their ideas and communicate their findings using appropriate scientific vocabulary. Pupils' writing skills are weak, which leads to the presentation of their work being untidy and the recording of their work inaccurate. Consequently, they do not show a secure knowledge and understanding of some important scientific ideas, such as the effect of friction on moving objects. However, because of the good emphasis on practical and investigative work, most pupils can devise a test, make sure it is fair and then carry it out independently of the teacher. This was evident when pupils were investigating the factors that affect the germination of seeds. However, when drawing conclusions from their experiments, they tend to describe what they have done rather than evaluate the outcome based on prior scientific knowledge and understanding. They do not readily identify patterns in their work or interpret information effectively using their ongoing recordings during investigations.
49. Because teachers explain carefully the learning intentions for each lesson, pupils are clear about what they are to learn and what is expected of them. They speak enthusiastically about their activities in science, and in all lessons were well behaved, showing interest and curiosity in what they were doing. This has a positive impact on the quality of their work. The very good management of pupils' behaviour and successful use of praise give pupils the confidence and self-esteem to carry out their investigations. Pupils are provided with many opportunities to show initiative and take some responsibility for their own learning and they work well together during practical sessions. Assessment information is used effectively to set work that matches pupils' different learning needs. As a result, all pupils make the progress of which they are capable. Resource provision is good and teachers plan well to ensure pupils have the correct equipment to enable them to make close observations and accurate measurements during their experiments. Though no teaching was seen in Years 1 and 2, it is evident by looking at books that some pupils' work is not marked regularly enough. Throughout the school, marking is quite basic in science and does not usefully suggest to pupils how they might improve their work.
50. Leadership and management are good. The co-ordinator is a good role model for colleagues. She checks teaching and learning and has a clear view of the subject's strengths and weaknesses and how they might be tackled. The information is used effectively to plan the way forward for science. The curriculum is well planned to incorporate the four foundations of the YCDI programme. It promotes pupils' personal development very effectively alongside their scientific skills, and very successfully ensures that all pupils are fully included in all activities. Pupils are successfully encouraged to use their numeracy skills in science, as, for example, they measure their pulse rates before and after exercise and then create a line graph to show their findings. However, the use of ICT to support learning in science is still somewhat limited. Overall, there has been good improvement since the previous inspection.

## **INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY**

Provision in information and communication technology (ICT) is **good**. There has been good improvement in ICT since the previous inspection.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Standards are above the national expectation in Year 6 and achievement is very good throughout the school for all groups of pupils.
- The quality of teaching is good. The ICT tutors make a very effective contribution to pupils' achievement and to standards overall and teachers build well on this good groundwork.
- Although computers are available in all classrooms, ICT is not yet used as a natural tool for learning outside of work done in the ICT suite.

### **Commentary**



51. All classes now have timetabled lessons in this subject. Extra time in the computer suite is allocated to pupils in Years 5 and 6 to allow for study in greater depth to enable the pupils to catch up on learning they missed in earlier years when the school was not as well resourced for the subject. This has successfully raised standards and improved pupils' overall achievement. The scheme of work is based on national guidance, suitably adapted to the school's needs, and progression in learning is planned effectively so that pupils develop and extend their skills very well. Pupils' subject vocabulary is successfully promoted through the display of key words, which older pupils are now using correctly and consistently.
52. The ICT suite is not big enough to allow whole-class instruction, so introductory sessions frequently take place in classrooms and pupils are then taught in smaller groups in the suite, often by an ICT tutor. Although this means that pupils do not always have immediate 'hands-on' experience when they are taught a new procedure, they are subsequently taught by tutors with excellent technical expertise and this moves their learning on apace. Tutors and class teachers work closely together. They plan and prepare lessons thoroughly, providing mutual support and contributing in great measure to the pupils' good progress in ICT lessons. The step-by-step approach to learning supports the less confident and the more-able pupils equally well and has a positive impact on their developing competence and capability. Pupils benefit from clear instruction and explanation and tutors assess work effectively and give good feedback to class teachers. Staff intervene as necessary enabling all pupils to make good progress and allowing more-able pupils opportunities to use the more advanced features of programs and providing additional support for less-able pupils to ensure that they get the most out of lessons. Procedures for assessment are satisfactory and the information is used well to help individual pupils achieve to the best of their capability.
53. Pupils respond enthusiastically to the good teaching and are justifiably proud of their achievements. Pupils undertake a good range and produce good quality work in ICT. They have good knowledge, skills and understanding in this subject. In a constantly changing subject, ICT has been correctly identified as a continuing priority for staff development and the school makes good use of its close links with the community development centre to further this target. The co-ordinator responsible for ICT is new to the post so it is not possible to judge leadership and management at this stage. Early indications are that a sound start has been made on developing the subject further with a review of current policy and practices. Time has been set aside during the summer term for the co-ordinator to monitor teaching and learning. The quality and quantity of resources are very good, and the school is working towards improving them further with the installation of interactive whiteboards in each class to enhance whole-class teaching opportunities and the cross-curricular use of ICT.

### **Information and communication technology across the curriculum**

54. This is an area for further work and development. Although two computers are based in each classroom they are not being used often enough to increase pupils' access and give them opportunities to apply the skills learned in the computer suite. However, there are already some good examples of ICT being used to support learning in other subjects, for example, graph work in mathematics, circuit diagrams in science, word processing and putting sound effects into stories in English, composition work in music, and Internet research in history and geography.

## **HUMANITIES**

Geography and religious education were sampled because teaching was not taking place in geography during the inspection, and only one lesson was observed in religious education. Evidence

was gathered from discussions with pupils and staff, analysis of work, where available, school documentation and displays around the school. No judgements are made about overall provision in either subject.

## **Geography**

55. Geography is not being taught this term and there was very little written work in the pupils' topic books. However, the available evidence shows that statutory requirements are met and that, by Year 6, pupils have studied all the expected areas of the subject. The curriculum is soundly based on national guidance which has been appropriately organised into a two-year cycle to take account of mixed-age classes. The subject co-ordinator was only recently appointed and has not yet had time to make an impact on subject development. Resources are adequate.

## **History**

Provision for history is **satisfactory**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Pupils achieve satisfactorily, although occasionally the more-able pupils are not given hard enough work.
- Day to day assessment is good and is used well in planning. However, overall assessment is not yet linked sufficiently well to the levels of attainment in the programme of study.
- Pupils use their speaking, listening, reading and thinking skills well in history, but opportunities are missed to promote extended writing skills.

## **Commentary**

56. Achievement and standards are satisfactory and have been maintained since the last inspection. History is now taught more thoroughly as a specific subject and the scheme of work clearly identifies the content to be covered. The newly-revised guidance for teachers is securely based on national guidance and provides an adequate structure for teachers' lesson planning. The history curriculum is based on a two-year cycle that takes good account of mixed-age classes and the need to avoid repetition. Teaching and learning are good overall and are supported by the positive relationships between teachers and pupils. However, the lack of variation in the tasks set for pupils of different levels of capability means that higher-attaining pupils are not always sufficiently challenged. There are few opportunities for pupils to write independently and at length. When they are asked to write, they are usually required only to complete sentences or to answer questions in single sentences. The potential to promote writing skills through history is not being fully exploited although teachers make good use of the many opportunities to promote speaking, listening and reading skills, and to develop pupils' historical vocabulary overall.
57. Younger pupils recognise how their lives are different from people in the past. Throughout the school, pupils are developing a good sense of chronology by using time-lines and other devices to order people and events accurately. This also consolidates their number work. Pupils are successfully encouraged to use their thinking skills in history. This was illustrated well in a very good Year 5/6 lesson about the Hartley Colliery disaster where they used their reasoning and deduction skills very effectively to find the link between a given set of clues. By Year 6 most pupils take care with handwriting and presentation and make use of appropriate dates and historical terms. Teachers assess pupils' work well in lessons, and use questions and prompts effectively to extend their learning. Written work is checked regularly but there are few comments to tell pupils what they have done well or how their work could be improved. Satisfactory overall assessments take place at the end of each unit of work. However, they are not yet linked to the standards laid down in the National Curriculum.

58. The history co-ordinator was new to the role in January, so it is not possible to make a secure overall judgement on leadership and management. However, a satisfactory start has been made on reviewing long-term planning with the intention of adopting a more cross-curricular approach in this subject. There are already some good examples of history being combined effectively with subjects such as ICT and art and design. In the understandable drive to improve literacy and numeracy, there are very few references to history in the school's self-evaluation. However, history does feature in the planned programme for monitoring and evaluation in the summer term.

### **Religious education**

59. Only one religious education lesson was observed during the inspection. The available evidence shows that the school provides regular, worthwhile opportunities for learning consistent with pupils' ages. Statutory requirements are met and the school follows the locally-agreed syllabus. Pupils learn about an appropriate range of faiths and beliefs and how a religion is linked to the daily lives of its followers. This contributes to their developing understanding of other cultures. The subject co-ordinator has only recently assumed responsibility for the subject. There is currently no scheme of work to support the syllabus but she has drawn up an action plan to address this, to make links to the YCDI programme, and to review teaching, learning and provision thoroughly in this subject.

### **CREATIVE, AESTHETIC, PRACTICAL AND PHYSICAL SUBJECTS**

Art and design and design and technology were sampled during this inspection. No teaching was observed and therefore no overall judgements are made about provision in those subjects.

#### **Art and design**

60. The curriculum is well planned and provides suitable opportunities for pupils to use a wide range of materials to develop their artistic skills using different techniques. In doing so, good use is made of a study of famous artists as a stimulus for their work. There are good links to other subjects, such as history and mathematics, and the subject makes a positive contribution to the pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. The co-ordinator leads and manages the subject well and an art club and an art week significantly enrich the curriculum for the pupils. The displays of art and design work around the school are of good quality and reflect the care that pupils take in their activities, as well as the way the staff value their efforts.

#### **Design and technology**

61. A sound curriculum gives pupils opportunities to use a suitable variety of materials to develop their skills in the subject. A scheme of work was introduced after the previous inspection to ensure progression in the subject. The school's organisation means that pupils in Years 3 to 6 do most of their making activities in a week devoted to design and technology in the summer term. This arrangement is rightly under review to check whether or not it provides appropriate curricular balance. Pupils' design skills are promoted through work in art and design. There are appropriate links with other subjects, evident in the design and making of Greek vases and Egyptian sarcophagi as part of pupils' work in history.

#### **Music**

62. Provision is **satisfactory**. Only two lessons were observed, one in Year 2 and one in Year 6, but further evidence was gained from discussions with staff and pupils, the quality of singing in assembly, and from teachers' planning and records. On the basis of only two lessons, an overall judgement on teaching is not made.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Standards are satisfactory and all pupils achieve well throughout the school, although their low levels of literacy impedes the quality of their singing.
- Pupils in Year 2 have good recognition of simple musical symbols. However, they lack control when playing and handling instruments.
- Good teaching in Year 6 ensures that the pupils perform confidently and compose creatively.
- Throughout the school, pupils follow instructions and work very well together.

### Commentary

63. Standards are as expected for pupils in Year 2 and Year 6 and throughout the school all groups of pupils achieve well. Pupils sing in tune in class and in assemblies. However, the quality lapses when they come across unfamiliar words because they cannot read quickly enough to sustain the volume. They show good ability to hold their own pattern against another when performing simple two part rhythms. In a very good Year 6 lesson the pupils paid good attention to dynamics and tempo in their compositions about Victorian mills. Pupils in Year 2 recognise and follow simple musical symbols as they play. Well-planned, progressively-demanding but fun activities provide the pupils with good opportunities to work together and help each other. In both lessons observed, pupils rose to their teachers' high expectations of their behaviour and work rate by listening attentively, following instructions, helping each other and concentrating on the task in hand. The teachers' very effective use of the four foundations in the YCDI programme results in the very good use of praise, which gives pupils the confidence to speak and perform in front of others. This creates a mutually supportive atmosphere in which all pupils readily participate in musical activities and are therefore fully included in them. Musical learning, especially rhythm, is suitably enhanced in literacy lessons through performance poetry and raps, and, during ICT lessons, computer programs are used effectively to promote listening and composition skills.
64. The subject is satisfactorily led and managed. A suitable action plan is in place that sets out to monitor the effectiveness of the scheme of work, and time has been set aside for checking teaching and learning later in this school year. Through the good range of musical experiences in and outside of the normal school day, and the range of carefully-selected music from around the world to which pupils are introduced, the subject makes a good contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Overall, standards have been maintained since the last inspection.

### Physical education

Provision is **satisfactory** overall, with good provision for sports and gymnastics outside the school day.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- All pupils have good opportunities to express imaginative ideas through dance and gymnastics although there is not always enough emphasis on the development of skills.
- A good range of extracurricular sports and gymnastic activities broadens the pupils' experiences and extends their learning.
- All pupils are fully included in all physical education activities, although some do not wear appropriate kit in lessons.

### Commentary

65. In gymnastics and dance lessons, pupils express their ideas imaginatively through a range of appropriate movements. When asked to do so, they refine and improve their sequences of movements satisfactorily. Achievement is satisfactory and standards are as expected for pupils' ages. All pupils, including those with special educational needs are fully included in all lessons. Because they are successfully encouraged to do so, pupils work together willingly, and evaluate each other's work sensitively, offering useful suggestions for improvement. This contributes well to their personal and social development and is further evidence of the school's very high commitment to the full inclusion of all pupils in all activities. Pupils enjoy physical education activities. They understand the importance of preparing their bodies for exercise through warm-up activities and they move with good co-ordination, control and balance. However, they do not understand the importance of being properly dressed for physical education lessons because the teachers do not promote this strongly enough with pupils or parents. This restricts the quality of movement. However, pupils are fully aware of the need to move around safely, but are not always encouraged to space out well in the hall.
66. The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory overall. The teachers' good planning almost always ensures that all pupils are presented with suitably challenging activities that keep them fully involved and actively learning throughout each lesson. As a result, they work hard and behave well in most lessons and have good attitudes to the subject. Teachers demonstrate movements well, and all staff participate in activities to show pupils how to improve. Pupils occasionally become noisy when the teacher does not set high enough expectations for behaviour, or place enough emphasis on working to improve skills. A large number of pupils in all age groups participate in the wide range of extracurricular sports activities on offer. These enhance the physical education curriculum well.
67. The subject is led and managed satisfactorily and appropriate arrangements are made for teaching pupils to swim. Overall, there has been satisfactory improvement in all aspects of physical education since the previous inspection.

## **PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP**

Provision is **very good**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The school's very strong commitment to the YCDI programme, which permeates all lessons, is having a very positive effect on pupils' attitudes, behaviour and self-esteem.
- Pupils are very effectively taught to take responsibility for and to realise the consequences of their actions.

### **Commentary**

68. The provision for personal, social and health education and citizenship is a strength of the school and contributes in very great measure to the very good ethos and excellent inclusive practices observed throughout the school. This aspect of the school's work and the tremendous impact of the YCDI initiative are improving pupils' learning and attitudes, very effectively raising their self-esteem and spurring them on to higher levels of achievement. Staff, pupils and parents are fully committed to the initiative. They talk very positively about it and work together very well to implement it.
69. The quality of teaching is overall very good. Assemblies and specific lessons relating to persistence, confidence, organisation and getting along are reinforced in all lessons and contribute in great measure to the very good relationships evident in the school. Pupils' minds are very effectively focused on personal development and improvement. They are successfully taught a range of ways to overcome barriers to what they want to achieve as was noted in the 'road block' lesson with pupils in Years 5 and 6. Working from the pupils' own experiences, the teacher skilfully fostered in them a well-developed sense of striving for goals, working hard to

achieve them and recognising and finding ways to overcome any obstacles they might meet on the way. The pupils showed good levels of self-confidence and respect for others as they shared their hopes and dreams at the end of the lesson. Poorly developed speech and vocabulary skills limit the ability of younger pupils to express their ideas fully but they try hard to do so within the very supportive environment created for them by the staff.

70. This whole area is exceptionally well led and managed. A very structured programme is in place and all pupils' progress is very carefully monitored. In addition to what is covered in the curriculum, the school nursing team works with older pupils to teach them about sex and relationships, and about the dangers of drugs misuse. Parents are kept fully informed about all sessions. Matters of citizenship are explored in class discussions and through the elected school council, whose members take their responsibilities very seriously. As in other areas of its work, the school acts on the pupils' views. It values their opinions highly, addresses their concerns and, where possible, incorporates their ideas into the daily life of the school. Pupils are very well prepared for life beyond school.

## PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

<i>Inspection judgement</i>	<i>Grade</i>
<b>The overall effectiveness of the school</b>	<b>3</b>
How inclusive the school is	1
How the school's effectiveness has changed since its last inspection	3
Value for money provided by the school	3
<b>Overall standards achieved</b>	<b>5</b>
Pupils' achievement	3
<b>Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities</b>	<b>3</b>
Attendance	5
Attitudes	3
Behaviour, including the extent of exclusions	3
Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	3
<b>The quality of education provided by the school</b>	<b>3</b>
The quality of teaching	3
How well pupils learn	3
The quality of assessment	4
How well the curriculum meets pupils' needs	3
Enrichment of the curriculum, including out-of-school activities	2
Accommodation and resources	3
Pupils' care, welfare, health and safety	2
Support, advice and guidance for pupils	2
How well the school seeks and acts on pupils' views	2
The effectiveness of the school's links with parents	2
The quality of the school's links with the community	2
The school's links with other schools and colleges	2
<b>The leadership and management of the school</b>	<b>3</b>
The governance of the school	3
The leadership of the headteacher	2
The leadership of other key staff	3
The effectiveness of management	3

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