

INSPECTION REPORT

OUGHTERSIDE PRIMARY SCHOOL

Aspatria near Wigton

LEA area: Cumbria

Unique reference number: 112138

Headteacher: Mr N Sutton

Lead inspector: Mr C Smith

Dates of inspection: 1st – 3rd December 2003

Inspection number: 259776

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:	Foundation
Age range of pupils:	4 – 11
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
Number on roll:	88
School address:	Oughterside Aspatria Wigton
Postcode:	CA7 2PY
Telephone number:	01697 320579
Fax number:	01697 323640
Appropriate authority:	The governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr S Parnaby
Date of previous inspection:	October 1998

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

Oughterside Primary School serves a rural community, twenty three miles South West of Carlisle, near the small town of Aspatria. There are 88 pupils; 43 boys and 45 girls and virtually all of them are white and English speaking. Pupil numbers are gradually falling, reflecting the decline in employment in the area. Increasing numbers of families are leaving the area, but some pupils are entering the junior classes, having received most of their education elsewhere. The rate of pupils moving in and out of the school is three times the national average. This has made it difficult for the school to set and meet its targets and results have been affected. The character of the school is changing to some extent. At the time of the last inspection, the free school meal entitlement was less than 8 per cent. Currently, the figure is 22 per cent. The incidence of pupils with special educational needs has also increased from a low 10 per cent figure in 1998 to an average figure of 25 per cent in 2003. However, only one pupil has a statement of their special educational needs. Children enter school with a wide range of levels of attainment but for the majority it is typical for their age.

The school received two national achievement awards for improved results in 2000 and 2001. The headteacher has also gained a leadership award in 1999. Reduced budgets over recent years have had a significant impact on the school. The headteacher's class teaching role has increased to four days each week. Without a secretary, he has had to attend to school administration, which has restricted time and opportunities for him to carry out his managerial responsibilities. The number of classroom assistants has been halved but a persuasive approach within the local community has secured much voluntary help in classrooms and the school is fortunate in having instructors to support the teaching of physical education, art and design and music.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
25211	Mr Colin Smith	Lead inspector	Mathematics
			Science
			Information and communication technology
			Design and technology
			Music
			Physical education
9511	Mrs Ann Longfield	Lay inspector	
23887	Mr Peter Nettleship	Team inspector	English
			Religious education
			History
			Geography
			Art and design
17685	Mrs Linda Spooner	Team inspector	Foundation stage
			Special educational needs
			English as an additional language

The inspection contractor was:

Eclipse Education (UK) Limited
 14 Enterprise House
 Kingsway
 Team Valley
 Gateshead
 Tyne & Wear
 NE11 0SR

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

OVERALL EVALUATION

Oughterside is a satisfactory school and offers sound value for money. Teaching is satisfactory overall. Pupils have good attitudes to learning, are very well behaved and achieve steadily. Leadership and management are satisfactory but more needs to be done to check and improve the school's performance.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- Pupils achieve well in history, design and technology, physical education and citizenship.
- Good teaching in the reception and in the Years 3 and 4 class accelerates pupils' learning.
- Pupils with special educational needs make good progress, although some more able pupils do not fulfil their potential.
- Upper junior pupils do not reach the standards expected in writing, science and the control aspects of information and communication technology (ICT).

Satisfactory improvements have been made since the last inspection. Teaching is better in the infant classes and standards here are much higher than they were. Standards are about the same as they were in the junior classes but pupils are achieving better in design and technology, history and physical education. However, there is still more to do to raise the achievement of the more able pupils and improve pupils' writing and their skills of scientific investigation.

STANDARDS ACHIEVED (*There were only eight pupils in Year 6 when the tests were completed in 2003. Such small numbers make the interpretation of the information unreliable.*)

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

Key: A - well above average; B - above average; C - average; D - below average; E - well below average

Similar schools are those with similar percentages of pupils eligible for free school meals

Pupils achieve steadily overall. Reception children make good progress and reach levels higher than expected in virtually all areas of learning by the end of the year. Year 1 and 2 pupils achieve steadily overall and well in reading and writing to reach good standards. Pupils make good progress in Years 3 and 4 and achieve steadily in Years 5 and 6. By the age of 11, standards are at least satisfactory in mathematics and in most other subjects but are not high enough in English, science and aspects of ICT. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress in response to the effective support they receive. However, more able pupils, particularly in Years 5 and 6, could achieve more if the work they received always contained sufficient challenge to move their learning on.

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. They show respect and understanding towards others and relate very well to their teachers and classmates. Pupils are keen to learn and well behaved. Their enjoyment of school is reflected in the very good attendance and punctuality.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION

The quality of education provided is sound and teaching is satisfactory overall. Teaching and learning in reception and in Years 3 and 4 are consistently good. In these classes, pupils achieve well because their learning is carefully assessed and the information is used well to match the work provided to their different learning needs. In Years 5 and 6, teaching and learning are satisfactory but the outcomes of assessing pupils' learning are not always used well enough to set future tasks. Consequently, the learning of the more able pupils is not extended as well as it could be, particularly in writing and in aspects of science. In all classes, teachers manage pupils well and prepare their lessons carefully. This ensures that pupils concentrate well and give of their best. New ideas are carefully explained and teachers question pupils well to probe their understanding. Parents and voluntary helpers make a significant contribution to pupils' learning and good support is provided for pupils with special educational needs. Homework is used to good effect to enable pupils to practise the skills they have learnt in school.

Pupils are very well cared for and their personal development benefits from sound support and guidance. The school maintains good relationships with parents, neighbouring schools and very good relationships with the local community. These factors are influential in the pupils' education.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Leadership and management are satisfactory. The headteacher works very hard and is resourceful in involving other adults to add to the provision in school. Financial management is very good and every effort is made to achieve cost effectiveness. Governors provide strong support for the school and are central in all decision making. However, the school still does not have efficient systems for checking how well pupils are learning in all subjects. This makes it harder for staff and governors to know where improvements are needed and to ensure that the necessary action is taken.

PARENTS' AND PUPILS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

Parents' and pupils' views are gathered, but informally rather than systematically. Parents have a high regard for the school but are right to ask for an additional parent-teacher consultation evening. Pupils are positive about the school and appreciate what teachers, assistants and helpers do for them. The school operates as a family and parents, pupils and members of the community are encouraged to become involved.

IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

The school meets all of the statutory requirements

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

- Improve pupils' investigation skills in science and standards of writing in Years 5 and 6 and ensure that all elements of ICT are covered.
- Provide more challenging work to extend the learning of the more able and gifted pupils to enable them to fulfil their potential.
- Devise manageable systems to check the work of the school, find out how well pupils are learning and remedy any weaknesses.

PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS

STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

Standards achieved in areas of learning, subjects and courses

Overall, pupils achieve steadily as they did at the time of the last inspection. However, reception children and Year 3 and 4 pupils achieve well.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Reception children achieve well to reach standards that are higher than expected for their age.
- Standards by the age of seven have been improving rapidly over recent years.
- Year 3 and 4 pupils achieve well and standards by the end of Year 4 are good.
- Small cohorts and the high turnover of pupils significantly affect the results achieved by 11 year-olds. However, pupils could achieve more in Years 5 and 6.
- Pupils achieve well in history, design and technology, physical education and citizenship.
- Pupils with special educational needs make good progress, although the learning of the more able pupils is not always extended sufficiently, particularly in English and science.

Commentary

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
Reading	17.9 (17.6)	15.7 (15.8)
Writing	17.5 (16.6)	14.6 (14.4)
Mathematics	17.7 (17.3)	16.3 (16.5)

There were 11 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year. A table of the standards in the national tests at the end of Year 6 is omitted because there were less than 10 pupils.

1 Reception children respond well to consistently good teaching. Although children's attainment is typical for their age when they enter school, by the time they reach the end of the reception year, they have exceeded the levels expected in virtually all areas of learning. Strong teaching in the key skills of reading, writing and mathematics ensures that children develop competence in recognising and handling letters, words and numbers. Children are encouraged to choose from an exciting range of activities and they learn to express their ideas in their own way. Consequently their personal, physical and creative development is good and their knowledge of the world increases rapidly.

2 Standards achieved by pupils aged seven have been rising at a far quicker rate than they have nationally. For example, results in 2003 were high in reading and writing and mathematics and were much higher than those of similar schools. The high standards achieved in the past are attributable to very good teaching. The class teacher has now moved into Year 3 and 4 and a new teacher is making a promising start in the infant class. Year 1 and 2 pupils are currently achieving steadily and making good progress in reading and writing. They are on course to reach at least above average standards by the end of Year 2.

3 Year 3 and 4 pupils are now achieving well in most subjects. The good standards that pupils achieved in Year 2 are being carried through to the end of Year 4. Strong teaching of reading, writing and mathematics enables pupils to read and write fluently and calculate and solve mathematical problems confidently. Pupils also achieve well in other subjects such as art and design and ICT, largely because the two teachers share the workload well to ensure that pupils receive good quality learning experiences in all areas.

Standards by the age of 11 vary considerably but they are not as high as they should be in writing and in aspects of science and ICT. The school gained national achievement awards for improvements in standards in 2000 and 2001 but results fell in 2002 and 2003. However, pupil mobility is on the increase and when only small numbers of pupils take the tests, the performance of one or two pupils significantly changes the picture. For example, less than half of the 13 pupils tested at the age of seven remained in the school to complete their education. Assessments made of the six remaining ones shows that their scores at seven and 11 were comparable, indicating that all of them made satisfactory progress. However, the fact that none of this group made good progress indicates that there is scope to improve the pupils' achievement further in Years 5 and 6. In Years 5 and 6 not enough emphasis is placed on gaining and improving skills. In science, for example, pupils have satisfactory knowledge and understanding of living things, materials and forces, but their ability to plan and carry out their own fair tests is weak. To a lesser extent, this is also true in mathematics, although problem solving is now receiving more attention. A significant minority of Year 6 pupils are not fluent and imaginative writers. Their powers of expression are limited partly by having to complete too many worksheets with little opportunity to express their own ideas in their own way. The issue for the school is to raise achievement in Years 5 and 6 to match the good progress made earlier.

4 Pupils' good achievement in design and technology and in physical education is boosted by a combination of some good teaching and the additional expertise provided by instructors. In these subjects, pupils achieve well and reach good standards. Pupils also achieve well in history. This is because the subject is brought to life by experiences such as re-enacting a day in the life of Ancient Rome and Victorian England. Pupils become totally absorbed and develop a good grasp of historical periods and change. Pupils also benefit from regular experiences to consider important issues such as the need for rules and healthy living. Consequently, they develop a clear understanding of what it means to be a good citizen.

5 Pupils who find learning difficult, including those with special educational needs, make good progress in every class. Teachers ensure that they receive good levels of support to help them to improve their reading, writing and mathematical skills. Throughout the school, boys and girls perform at similar levels. Pupils with aptitude, particularly in sport and the arts, are well provided for and their talents are nurtured through the good range of extra curricular activities provided. However, the achievement of the more able and gifted pupils is variable and they do not always fulfil their potential.

Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities

Attendance and punctuality are very good. Pupils' attitudes are good and their behaviour is very good. This is the cumulative result of the attitudes and values they bring from their home background, allied to the good provision the school makes for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Very good attendance and punctuality helps to raise achievement.
- Pupils' appreciation of the learning opportunities provided is reflected in their good attitudes and very good behaviour.
- The school promotes very good relationships and nurtures pupils' confidence and self-esteem. Pupils have a very mature attitude towards staff and each other.
- Pupils' personal development is promoted successfully.

Commentary

Attendance

Attendance in the latest complete reporting year (99.4%)

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
School data	0.6	School data	0.0
National data	5.4	National data	0.4

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

Ethnic background of pupils

Exclusions in the last school year

Categories used in the Annual School Census	No of pupils on roll	Number of fixed period exclusions	Number of permanent exclusions
White – British	82	0	0
White – Irish	3	0	0
White – any other White background	1	0	0
Any other ethnic group	2	0	0

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

6 Attendance is well above the national average. This reflects parents' determination to ensure that their children make the most of their opportunities to learn. Regular attendance and good punctuality are hallmarks of Oughterside Primary School and significant factors in pupils' achievements. Pupils are keen to come to school and they show an interest in school life and the range of activities provided. Pupils co-operate well and can be relied upon to work independently and take some responsibility for their own learning. They are confident and show developing self-esteem.

7 Pupils' behaviour in class, at breaks and lunch-times is very good. They show much respect for the views of others and have a very good understanding of right and wrong. The school is free from bullying, racism and all forms of harassment. At present there is no formal structure to collate pupils views although there are plans to start a school council in the New Year.

8 Pupils bring to school a good range of well-established personal and social skills acquired through their home life. The school has good arrangements to capitalise on this and makes good provision to enhance pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. There is a very well established code of conduct that gives them a clear understanding of acceptable and unacceptable behaviour, which enables them to be valued members of the school community. Carefully prepared daily acts of collective worship allow pupils to reflect on issues either by joining in prayer or sitting in moments of quiet. Pupils also celebrate the important dates in the Christian and Islamic calendar, and during the inspection they thought about the true meaning of Advent. The curriculum provides them with good opportunities to work together in pairs and teams, enhancing their insight into social interaction. It also provides many opportunities to listen with interest to visitors to school. This was evident during a Year 5 and 6 lesson about citizenship, when pupils learnt about the dangers of smoking. There are good opportunities for learning about their own and other cultures, for which they develop respect. For example, the school has established an e-mail link with a primary school in Soweto.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

The Quality of the education provided is satisfactory. The curriculum is well planned and enriched by a good range of extra curricular activities.

Teaching and learning

Overall, teaching is satisfactory. Pupils' learning is good in reception and in Years 3 and 4 but there are some weaknesses in learning in English and science in Years 5 and 6. Overall, the assessment of pupils' learning is satisfactory but the information gathered is not used as well as it could be to set future work at exactly the right levels in the upper juniors.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching and the use of assessment are consistently good in reception and in Years 3 and 4.
- Pupils are well managed and teaching methods are varied and mostly effective. As a result, most pupils are interested in their work and acquire a secure understanding of new ideas.
- There is scope to improve pupils' learning and how it is assessed in science and in writing in Years 5 and 6.
- Pupils with special educational needs are taught well but the learning of the more able pupils is not always extended sufficiently.

Commentary

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 25 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
0	2	11	12	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 only show percentages more than 30 lessons are seen.

9 Teaching in the reception class has improved since the last inspection and is good in all areas of learning. Reading, writing and mathematical skills are taught thoroughly and children benefit from the many opportunities they have to explore and learn for themselves. Activities are very well prepared, carefully structured and often exciting. For example, children's creative development received a significant boost when they were given the task of designing a pizza in the style of the artist, Kandinsky. The tasks provided are carefully tailored to match children's different learning needs and always contain an element of challenge that is within their reach. As a result of effective teaching, reception children achieve well and reach good standards in virtually all areas of learning. Teaching is also consistently good in Years 3 and 4. The two teachers operate a close partnership and approach their work imaginatively. For example, children (and teachers) dressed in Roman costume and re-enacted a festival, which included a feast. This not only deepened their understanding but also stimulated their interest in history. In Years 1 and 2 and 3 and 4, teachers usually make a concerted effort to set work that is carefully matched to pupils' different levels of understanding. As a result, pupils of all abilities are able to learn successfully.

10 Teachers have good relationships with pupils and expect them to work with concentration and application, which for the most part, they do. Pupils respond positively by working well together and independently, according to the tasks provided. Teachers reinforce these positive attitudes by marking pupils' work carefully and rewarding their efforts. Homework assignments make a valuable contribution to pupils' learning because of their good work habits and parental support. The teaching methods used are particularly effective in the infant and lower junior classes. Pupils have good opportunities to handle equipment, examine models and look at pictures and photographs. For example, they are frequently encouraged to use computers to practise their skills and extend their knowledge. This brings learning to life and provides a secure foundation for understanding. In Years

1 and 2, for example, the teacher significantly improved pupils' understanding of how to make their writing interesting by asking them to consider both the appearance and the personality of characters in a story. This enabled them to appreciate techniques used by authors to engage the interest of the reader. In Years 3 and 4, almost all activities involve some form of problem solving, which really make the pupils think. In a mathematics lesson, for example, the teacher asked how a rectangle could be made into a square. This prompted an intense discussion about right angles, opposite and equal sides and diagonal folding, which significantly increased pupils' understanding of the properties of shapes.

11 Teaching in Year 5 and 6 is broadly satisfactory. The discussion parts of the lessons are successful because they are well managed and move along swiftly. New ideas are carefully explained and teachers make effective use of questioning to probe pupils' understanding. Once the class discussions are over, teachers set the group tasks and it is here that some weaknesses arise. Although teachers assess what pupils know and can do adequately, through testing them and marking their work, they do not always take sufficient account of the information they acquire. Consequently, the work provided is not as precisely matched to pupils' different learning needs as it is in the other classes, and the learning of the more able pupils is not always extended as much as it could be, particularly in writing and science. In Years 5 and 6, a strong emphasis is placed on acquiring knowledge and understanding but insufficient time is given to improving their writing, problem solving and acquiring investigation skills in science. The inconsistencies in teaching in the different classes reflect the weaknesses in the way pupils' learning is checked and improved.

12 Many voluntary helpers have been persuaded to work in school alongside teachers and classroom assistants. In most lessons, pupils who find learning difficult, including those with special educational needs, benefit from individual or small group support. Adults talk through the tasks with them to ensure that they understand what to do and guide, rather than tell them how to record their work. This enables these pupils to learn successfully. However, when teachers plan their lessons, they do not always take into account what the more able pupils already know and can do. This is particularly the case in science. Consequently, opportunities are sometimes missed to extend the learning of the more able pupils to enable them to fulfil their potential.

The curriculum

The quality of the curriculum is satisfactory. The enrichment of the curriculum is good and accommodation and resources are satisfactory.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The provision for children in the reception class has significantly improved since the time of the previous inspection.
- Provision in Years 1 to 4 is also good but there is a lack of continuity in the development of writing and investigation skills in science in Years 5 and 6.
- The varied programme of experiences provided through visits, clubs and other activities, makes a strong contribution to pupils' personal development.
- The school caters well for pupils with special educational needs and those for whom English is an additional language. However, the learning needs of the more able pupils are not taken into account sufficiently in Years 5 and 6, particularly in writing and science.

Commentary

13 The curriculum for children in the Foundation Stage (reception class) now follows national guidelines. It effectively meets their learning needs and as a result, they make good progress. A well planned and carefully and organised curriculum for pupils in Years 1 to 4, ensures that they benefit from a wide range of worthwhile learning experiences. The national guidance to support teachers in their planning is broadly followed but not in every detail in all subjects. This has resulted in some inconsistencies, particularly in the opportunities provided for Year 5 and 6 pupils to learn to write fluently and imaginatively and improve their skills of investigation in science.

14 Provision for pupils with special educational needs is good. The co-ordinator works closely with parents, teachers and support staff. Individual education plans are well designed to meet pupils' learning needs. The school also ensures that other groups of pupils benefit from additional help through group education plans. These clearly identify targets for improvement are regularly reviewed to assess the progress being made. The tiny number of pupils with English as an additional language are well catered for, particularly through high quality adult support in lessons and as a result, they quickly learn to speak, read and write in English.

15 The school maintains a register of gifted and talented pupils and provides good opportunities for those with aptitude to refine their talents through sports clubs and activities in the arts. However, the tasks provided for the gifted and more able pupils are not always sufficiently demanding in Years 5 and 6, particularly in English and science.

16 The personal, social and health education programme, taught throughout the school is effective in helping pupils to develop very positive relationships and attitudes to learning. Plans to set up a school council to offer pupils more opportunities to be involved in decision-making are being considered. The school provides a wide range of enrichment activities through educational visits, after school clubs. Most notably the school takes over an entire campsite for family camping weekends. This is such a popular visit that it is regularly oversubscribed and provides a wealth of shared experiences for pupils, parents and staff. The school's links with other local schools offers pupils a good range of sporting, music and drama opportunities. Pupils in the Year 5 and 6 class learn French. This provides good opportunities for them to find out about another cultures and helps prepare them for secondary school. The building provides a well-organised and well-maintained learning environment. However, there is no outdoor learning area for reception children, which limits aspects of their physical development.

Care, guidance and support

The school ensures that pupils are very well cared for as they were at the time of the last inspection. Sound support, advice and guidance are available because teachers and support staff knows the pupils well. Although the school does not formally seek pupils' views, they are encouraged to talk about their feelings towards school and they know that their opinion is listened to and valued.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils are safe and very well looked after.
- Teachers know their pupils well and are in a strong position to guide and support them in their learning and school life, although targets for improvement could be clearer.
- Good interaction between adults and pupils foster good and trusting relationships.

Commentary

17 The school's systems for caring for pupils are well established and work efficiently. Pupils are very safe and secure because the health and safety procedures are very good and frequently reviewed. Arrangements for admission to the reception class are good. The majority of children come from the school's private nursery and because they are frequently in school they are well prepared when they start their formal education. The school has secure strategies for measuring progress and monitoring pupils' personal development. There are many good opportunities for pupils' views to be expressed and listened to during personal, social and health education discussion sessions. This puts teachers in a good position to guide pupils and help them to make the right decisions. However, there is scope to share and extend the target setting that is done well by some teachers to benefit pupils in all classes. There are good and trusting relationships between adults and pupils in the classroom and beyond it. This is equally true of relationships with lunchtime staff. As a result, pupils know that what they have to say is important and that they can rely on and trust the adults in the school, even though their opinions are not yet formally gathered.

Partnership with parents, other schools and the community

The strong links with parents and local schools and the very good links with the wider community have been maintained since the last inspection.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Parents receive good information about what is happening in school but some would like to know more about how their children are progressing.
- Parents and voluntary helpers play a vital part in classrooms and homework makes a positive contribution to pupils' learning.
- Children are well prepared for starting school. Good relationships are maintained with other schools and the school enjoys very good links with the community.

Commentary

18 A strong feature emerging from the returned questionnaires and the parents' meeting was the confidence and trust placed in the school by the vast majority of parents. A measure of parental confidence and the school's open character is reflected in the number of parents and other adults who help in the classroom, on educational visits, residential weekends and the school's summer camp. These people play a vital part in pupils' learning and help to compensate for the reduction in teachers and support staff over the past year. Parents strongly believe that their children like school and learn successfully. However, some parents would like more information about their child's progress. They are justified in asking for an additional consultation evening in the autumn term, even though they are encouraged to visit school informally to discuss their child's progress. The written reports are informative, but do not yet include targets on what their children need to do to improve.

19 The school is quick to support family values; the home gives strong support to learning through taking a keen interest in it. The impact is strong on both academic progress and on the development of social and personal skills. Children come to school ready to learn and the school capitalises well on this. There are strong links with the other small primary schools in the area, which are becoming active in jointly monitoring standards across a group of schools, for example, in writing. Pupils also benefit from the local secondary school's offer to use their sports facilities. The school has very strong links with the wider community and sees itself as being at the centre of village life. As a result, local people with particular interests and talents have been recruited to work in school and there are several voluntary helpers. This greatly enhances the range and degree of activities the school can offer and impacts positively upon pupils' learning, for example of design and technology and physical education.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

The leadership and management of the school are satisfactory

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The experienced and dedicated governors have guided the school through difficult times with their strong support and their very good financial management.
- The headteacher has a caring, sharing, inclusive approach and has been very creative in building a united and dedicated teaching team.
- The Foundation Stage in the reception class is led efficiently and creatively.
- Subject leaders are not as effective as they should be in checking the quality of teaching and pupils' learning throughout the school in order to identify and remedy any weaknesses.

Commentary

Financial information

Financial information for the year April 2002 to March 2003

Income and expenditure (£)	
Total income	265,167
Total expenditure	255,951
Expenditure per pupil	2,908

Balances (£)	
Balance from previous year	- 8075
Balance carried forward to the next	1,141

20 The governance of the school is satisfactory. The school complies with all statutory requirements. Most governors are experienced. They give freely of their time and are very ambitious for the school. They manage the school's finances very well and have guided the school successfully through a very difficult period of budgetary constraints. Governors play a central role in strategic planning. For example, the headteacher, staff and governors spend a full training day together considering the school's successes and future needs. As a result of good teamwork, they produce the improvement plan for the coming year. Governors visit the school regularly and some of them work alongside teachers, supporting pupils in lessons. This helps them to learn more about the way teachers and pupils approach their work and places them in a stronger position to share in the decision making process. Consequently, governors are well aware of the many pressures on the staff and show much consideration for their well being. Support is given in terms of advice, thoughtful criticism and practical help. Governors are kept well informed about school results and any variations from year to year. They know about the downturn in results in English, mathematics and science and have a fair grasp of the reasons for this. However, they are less aware of how well pupils are achieving in other subjects, largely because of the lack of available information within the school.

21 The leadership of the headteacher is satisfactory. He is strongly committed to involving and supporting pupils, parents, staff and governors and is determined to fulfil his many responsibilities, onerous though they are. He has rightly earned their undoubted respect. The headteacher has been very resourceful in developing a strong teaching team, backed well by well-trained classroom assistants and a volunteer force of invaluable helpers. Together, teachers, instructors, support staff and helpers provide a broad and stimulating curriculum. The headteacher's success in recent years has been recognised by the achievement and leadership awards gained from 1999 to 2001. However, recent financial constraints have created difficulties for the headteacher in combining managerial and teaching roles. In particular, the school does not have a secretary and the headteacher has to spend what little release time he has on administration. Consequently, his focus has largely been on what the school is *providing* for its pupils, rather than on measuring the *outcomes* of this provision, in terms of the quality of the teaching and the progress pupils are making through the school. Variations in standards in writing and aspects of science have not been sufficiently examined to find out precisely what needs to be improved.

22 On balance, the leadership of other key staff is satisfactory. Leadership of the Foundation Stage is good. The different areas of learning are taught well because themes are skilfully interwoven, allowing pupils to have many rich, first-hand experiences. Subject leaders share their knowledge, provide guidance for teachers and, for the most part, lead by example. One advantage of being a small school is that subject leaders meet in the staff room and talk informally about their lessons. This helps them to gain a picture of what is happening across the school. They examine results in English, mathematics and science and try to make sense of any emerging patterns. From time to time new approaches are tried, such as exchanging classes for different subjects. Subject leaders, in the past, have had opportunities to observe lessons in other classes. This has helped them to introduce the literacy and numeracy strategies effectively and improve provision in subjects such as history and design and technology. Staff have also agreed a list of 'points to look for' when subject leaders evaluate a lesson in a colleagues class to ensure that the process is fair and

constructive. However, in the recent climate of reducing resources, opportunities to release subject leaders to work alongside and support other teachers, are becoming very infrequent. Subject leaders have tended to rely too much on informal methods of checking what is happening in their subjects. Consequently, they are well aware of what teachers have *planned* but are much less aware of what has been *taught*. Not enough attention has been given to finding alternative ways of checking on how well pupils are learning. For example, pupils' written work is rarely examined to find out how well their learning progresses from class to class or to check if pupils of all abilities are being sufficiently challenged. The headteacher and staff have rightly identified monitoring teaching and learning as a training need. Clearer information on how well pupils are learning would not only help subject leaders to make adjustments to the curriculum, governors would also benefit from the flow of information.

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

AREAS OF LEARNING IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

Provision for children in the reception is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Attainment on entry to the reception is broadly average but children achieve well to reach levels higher than expected in almost all areas of learning.
- Teaching and learning are good and have improved since the previous inspection.
- Planning is carefully structured and fully meets the learning needs of all children, including those who have special educational needs.
- Children's progress is carefully assessed and the information gathered is used effectively to set the next targets for learning.
- Partnership with parents is effective in supporting learning both at home and through regular parental support in school.

Commentary

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

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

23 The children come into school eager to learn. They settle happily to the wide range of activities provided. They are very well behaved and many are quite mature in their relationships and attitudes. Most are quite willing to talk about what they are doing and are confident to ask and answer questions. They are challenged to make decisions, for example, when planning the tools and materials they would need to make and decorate pizzas. The quality of teaching in this area of learning is very good. Children achieve well to reach higher than expected levels in their personal development. The teacher has a very good understanding of the needs and interests of young children and provides many opportunities for them to learn about themselves and others. The teacher and support adults are very good role models and routines are well established so that the children know what is expected of them. Adults listen sensitively to what the children have to say and this helps them to become confident. The combination of a good balance between adult support and self-chosen activities, and a well-organised classroom, helps the children to develop good, independent learning skills.

COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY

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

24 Good teaching in this area of learning enables pupils to reach higher than expected levels in speaking, reading and writing. Children quickly develop confidence in speaking. They speak in a clear voice to the rest of the class when they explain what they are going to do in the lesson. Discussion sessions, at the end of the lesson, offer good opportunities for children to explain what they have been doing. A particular strength lies in the teacher's skills in responding to individual children. Plenty of time is given for each child to think about what they want to say to the teacher or to the rest of the class. Reading skills are promoted well through lots of opportunities for the children to talk about the story, join in with the most memorable parts and reflect on their feelings about the characters. The picture of the bear looking out to sea at the end of the story, 'We're Going on a Bear Hunt', evoked the response, "He's sad because he just wanted to be friends". The important reading skills are taught regularly and effectively. Most of the children are already reading familiar words from the early books in the reading scheme. The large majority of children are already well on the

way to achieving the early writing targets before the end of the reception year. They know a wide range of letter sounds and most are beginning to form recognisable letters. With adult support, they record different ways of thanking people in the family for their special help.

MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision in mathematical development is **good**.

25 Children achieve well and reach standards that are above the levels expected because the quality of teaching in this area of learning is good. Mathematics is made purposeful through a wide range of teaching and play activities. This makes learning effective and enjoyable. Skills and mathematical language are systematically taught. The activities provided in the lesson observed were interesting and stimulating, consequently, most of the children succeeded in classifying a number of shapes according to their properties. Children's workbooks show that the large majority of the children are already working confidently with numbers to ten.

KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE WORLD

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

26 The quality of teaching in this area of learning is good and children reach standards that are higher than expected by the end of the reception year. Children respond well to the stimulating activities provided to encourage them to explore and learn for themselves. The impact on their knowledge, skills and understanding is evident in the wide range of work in their books. For example, as part of their study of 'Little Red Riding Hood', they have drawn a simple map of her journey through the woods to Grandma's house and have identified features likely to be found on the way ~ such as the Big, Bad Wolf! Such activities build well on their previous experiences and help them achieve well. The development of technical language and language for thinking is carefully planned into activities through discussions and skilful questioning. For example, through good opportunities for practical activities, most children were able to classify sounds into those they liked and those they didn't and many could explain their reasons. Computers are always available and programs are well prepared to help children to develop ICT skills or to reinforce learning in other areas.

PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision in physical development is **good**.

27 Teaching in this area of learning is good and children reach the levels expected at the very least. The skills of using pencils, crayons and scissors are carefully taught and frequently practised. Some children are on course to exceed these levels, particularly in the development of skills that require finer, more precise movements such as using construction and art materials. Children are given quality time to explore ideas and develop their skills in lessons. Resources are carefully planned to help the children develop their physical skills. Unfortunately, there is no designated outdoor learning area, although effective use is made of the school hall for a range of physical and creative activities. In the physical development lesson observed, all of the children were confident as they moved around the hall adjusting their speed as they changed direction to avoid or to stand inside hoops set out on the floor. Their control and co-ordination skills are developing well.

CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT

Provision in creative development is **good**.

28 Teaching is good overall and it was very good in the creative development lesson observed. Children are provided with sufficient time to experiment, communicate, be imaginative and discover things for themselves. There is a good balance between children learning with adults and finding out for themselves. Good quality resources encourage the children to relate well to others as they develop language, imagination and practical skills. In the creative art lesson, children achieved very

well as they explored materials and created patterns. The lesson built seamlessly on the work done the previous week with much conversation as the children discussed the colours and shapes they were using and related this to the work of the artist, Kandinsky. Children's singing skills are typical for their age. They are keen to join in with familiar songs, they recognise a number of musical instruments and are able to keep to a simple rhythm.

SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 1 and 2

ENGLISH

Provision in English is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils with special educational needs make good progress and are well supported.
- Pupils speaking and listening skills are good.
- Good teaching in the infants and lower juniors enables pupils to achieve well.
- Year 5 and 6 pupils do not achieve as well as they could in writing, particularly the more able ones.
- Checking pupils' learning is not done well enough to identify and remedy the weaknesses in writing.

Commentary

29 Pupils with special educational needs achieve well throughout the school. The teaching staff receive strong backing from classroom assistants, as well as voluntary helpers. Pupils are kept on task and encouraged to express their ideas. Consequently, they gain greatly in confidence from the praise they receive for their efforts in reading and writing.

30 Standards of speaking and listening are above average throughout the school. Pupils listen well and this helps them to absorb information. Discussions of a high quality take place in many lessons, though on occasions they overrun and limit the work time available. Consequently, the quality of the discussion is sometimes better than the subsequent written work produced. Not enough opportunities are provided for pupils to share their ideas in pairs, prior to writing and, on completion, to consider together any possible improvements.

31 Infant pupils achieve well to reach high standards in reading and writing by the age of seven. Good teaching in the infants, and the efficient routines for extra regular practice at home, enables pupils to read with skill and enjoyment. Although good progress is made in writing, worksheets are used too often in Year 5 and 6, which limits opportunities for pupils to express their own ideas and feelings. This, in turn, restricts their creativity and partially blunts their enthusiasm.

32 Pupils achieve steadily in reading. Junior pupils read fluently, but some of the older ones find more difficulty in understanding and reading 'between the lines,' which the more complex tasks involve. They develop the skills of research and use books well, to locate and use the information for their own studies.

33 Lower junior pupils achieve well in writing and reach good standards. The challenges set are imaginatively linked to other subjects. For example, pupils wrote letters of application to work on the pretend construction of Hadrian's Wall. Their writing is neatly produced, in joined script. However, work in the upper juniors is not as creative or as well presented. Most pupils achieve steadily but the more able ones do not make as much progress as they should because there are few opportunities for them to write at length. Pupils do not develop a fluent range of writing styles for different purposes. Skills of editing and redrafting their written work are not well developed, so opportunities for analysis, discussion and improvement are missed. The quality of marking has improved since the last inspection and assessments are used to determine the levels that pupils are reaching. Some teachers set very precise targets to guide pupils in knowing how to improve their

work but this practice is not consistent throughout the school. There are weaknesses in the leadership and management of the subject. The subject leader has not had the opportunity to check pupils' work through the school, therefore some of the inconsistencies have not been identified and targeted for improvement. However, she has promoted and developed the National Literacy Strategy well, especially in the infant and lower junior classes. She has also arranged enrichment activities, such as trips to a theatre and visits by a writer and a poet to discuss their work. Through studying their styles, pupils are then able to mirror them in their own writing.

Language and literacy across the curriculum

34 Pupils develop their speaking and listening, as well as their reading and writing skills, satisfactorily in other subjects. The many 'theme' days, set in a past historical period or in some distant land, stimulate all areas of literacy. Pupils' written work is also enriched by experiences gained from educational visits and the skills of word-processing are exploited well. However, in subjects such as science, religious education and design and technology, opportunities for pupils to develop different types of writing are often missed.

MATHEMATICS

Provision in mathematics is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards are above average in the infant and lower junior classes but are not as high in Years 5 and 6.
- Pupils with special educational needs make good progress.
- Teaching and pupils' achievements are satisfactory overall and are good in Years 3 and 4.
- The subject leader has made improvements which has raised standards but checking teaching and learning throughout the school is not rigorous enough to iron out the inconsistencies.

Commentary

35 Following a successful year in the reception class, many pupils enter Year 1 with a good understanding of mathematics for their age. For example, they can already add and subtract numbers to 20 accurately. Infant pupils' number work develops at a good rate because the teacher ensures that the work provided is well matched to pupils' different learning needs. By the end of Year 2, standards are above average in most aspects of mathematics, including problem solving. This is a significant improvement since the last inspection. Year 3 and 4 pupils are also working at above average levels. They are confident mathematicians who relish challenges and apply their calculation skills competently to solve mathematical problems. However, standards are below average by the end of Year 6, although they match those of similar schools. Year 5 and 6 pupils achieve steadily but many are not confident when presented with a written problem, partly because they cannot always untangle the question. Overall, standards by the age of 11 have improved along with national trends, but fluctuate wildly because of the effect on small classes of high numbers of pupils entering and leaving school.

36 A good number of well-trained classroom assistants and voluntary helpers provide good support for pupils who find learning difficult. They help pupils to clarify their ideas and learn to use the correct mathematical vocabulary, often using ICT. This helps pupils with special educational needs to make good progress. Most pupils achieve steadily with little difference in the performance of boys and girls.

37 Teaching in Years 1 and 2 is sound and the teaching of number is good. However, there is scope to extend the learning of the more able pupils in their understanding of shape. Pupils' learning accelerates in Years 3 and 4 where teaching is at its best. Most notably, pupils learn to explore different methods and approaches and recognise that an answer can be arrived at through several different routes. For example, in a lesson aimed at improving pupils' addition and subtraction skills,

the teacher asked, "Can anyone think of any alternative methods of adding these numbers?" Pupils responded with a flurry of answers, describing how they would separate the tens and units, add the numbers vertically or horizontally or calculate mentally. This good teaching not only improves pupils' mathematical understanding it also provides a window through which teachers can assess their reasoning skills. Teaching in Years 5 and 6 is satisfactory. There were good features in the lesson observed, particularly the way in which the learning objectives were shared with the pupils and the tasks were carefully matched to their different learning needs. However, pupils' work in their books shows that the tasks are not always set at the right level and unnecessary errors sometimes appear in their work. In all classes, teachers mark pupils' work carefully, recognise their achievements and praise their efforts. Consequently, most pupils give of their best. Teachers assess pupils' learning at regular intervals. Some teachers use the information well to move pupils' learning on and set targets to help them to know what they need to do to improve. However this practice is not consistent. The subject leader sets a good example of how mathematics should be taught. However, the systems for checking on teaching and learning throughout the school are too limited and some of the weaknesses go undetected.

Mathematics across the curriculum

38 Pupils' skills in mathematics are adequately developed and extended in other subjects. In science and design and technology, for example, pupils measure and record results and use database programmes for classifying numerical information.

SCIENCE

Provision in science is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The weaknesses in science identified at the time of the last inspection have received attention but there is still more to do.
- Standards are satisfactory by the age of seven but not high enough by the age of 11.
- Pupils' knowledge and understanding of the different aspects of science is adequate but they do not have the skills to plan and carry out scientific investigations independently.
- Pupils with special educational needs make good progress but some of the more able pupils do not fulfil their potential.
- The subject leader teaches the subject well enough but the weaknesses do not receive enough attention and results at 11 are not improving quickly enough.

Commentary

39 The subject leader has made a concerted effort to plan a range of topics through which pupils' knowledge and understanding of science builds steadily as they move through school. This is an improvement on the findings of the last inspection. Pupils' skills in science have also received attention. There are more opportunities now for pupils to participate in experiments. However, more needs to be done to enable pupils to think and work scientifically. These important skills are not taught regularly or consistently enough to enable pupils to tackle scientific problems independently.

40 Infant pupils achieve steadily to reach the standards expected. Some of the teaching is good. In one infant lesson, for example, the teacher provided a range of thought provoking activities to enable pupils to investigate and classify musical instruments according to how sounds were produced. Pupils worked well together and readily agreed on their classifications. Pupils achieve steadily in Years 3 and 4 but there is some loss of momentum in Years 5 and 6. The well below average results of 2003 were distorted by very small groups of children taking the tests and the high levels of pupils moving in and out of the school. That said, standards in the investigational aspects of science are below average and are lower than they should be.

41 Teaching is satisfactory in the infant and lower junior classes but there are some shortcomings in the upper juniors. In the Year 5 and 6 class some of the work is copied. This does little to develop pupils' understanding of science or improve their writing skills. Teachers ensure that pupils gain a satisfactory knowledge of living things, materials and forces. Voluntary helpers play an important part in the process. For example, in Year 5 and 6, pupils extend their understanding of micro-organisms significantly through the work of an ex-biologist who brings microscopes and prepared slides into school. There are beneficial opportunities for pupils to conduct experiments, for example, on how to construct electrical circuits or test different materials for absorbency. Pupils learn to observe and measure results and draw conclusions. However, not enough emphasis is placed on developing scientific thinking. In the infant class, opportunities are missed to encourage pupils to predict what they think will happen before completing the practical work. In Years 3 and 4, although much interesting work is done, there are very few references in pupils' written work to carrying out fair tests. The Year 5 and 6 teacher has recently introduced planning sheets, which prompt pupils to plan and think ahead. This is exactly what pupils need but from a much earlier age. Currently, their understanding of the scientific method is weak but this should help to improve it and raise standards.

42 Pupils with special educational needs are well supported by classroom assistants and helpers. They have valuable opportunities to discuss and record their work, which enables them to make good progress. The more able pupils, particularly in Years 5 and 6, are not reaching their potential. When teachers plan lessons, not enough account is taken of what pupils already know and understand. Consequently, the more able pupils are not always challenged sufficiently and their learning is not extended as much as it could be. The subject is soundly led but there are weaknesses in the management of science. The subject leader teaches science effectively herself and recognises some of the weaknesses elsewhere. However, there is little systematic checking on the quality of teaching and learning to ensure that the weaknesses are identified and remedied.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY (ICT)

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards in ICT have improved since the last inspection in the infants but the school has not kept pace with the rate of national improvements in all aspects of ICT in the junior classes.
- There is some good teaching of ICT in the lower juniors and pupils with special educational needs benefit from programs specifically chosen to assist their learning.
- ICT is used effectively in the learning of other subjects, particularly in the infants and the lower juniors.
- The subject leader's effectiveness is limited.

Commentary

43 Infant pupils are now reaching the levels expected by the age of seven. They achieve steadily, use computers confidently and have the skills to work independently. For example, they understand how to use simple menus to select commands, enter and edit text and graphics and save or print their finished work. Pupils become increasingly competent in word processing as they move through the school. They also have a satisfactory knowledge and understanding of how to enter, sort and classify numerical information and represent the outcomes in a variety of charts, tables and graphs. These skills develop steadily because the school has now replaced the older unreliable computers with modern hardware and Internet links. Pupils are also becoming increasingly familiar with searching the Internet and sending and receiving e-mail. A useful link with a school in South Africa has been established. This gives a purpose to communicating and significantly enhances pupils' understanding of life in another culture. Pupils are beginning to combine text and graphics and important digital photographs to produce their own leaflets, for example, to advertise school events. However, in other areas of ICT, pupils make very little or no progress. The school does not possess any programmable toys or systems of control to enable

pupils to understand how computers can be used to sense and measure conditions or control events, such as operating model traffic lights. An arrangement with a local high school has been agreed, whereby Year 5 and 6 pupils can acquire these skills through specialist teaching in a purpose built computer suite, but this has not happened yet. Consequently, standards in control and sensing and pupils' confidence in using spreadsheets are not at the levels they should be. This is an issue to improve.

44 ICT lessons are not time tabled in every class and pupils' learning is not as efficient as it could be. This is partly because the school does not have an ICT suite. Each classroom has four computers but there are no large interactive teaching boards for pupils to watch. This was overcome in a good Year 3 and 4 lesson where the teacher had borrowed a projector and all pupils could learn from the image on the big screen. The lesson was successful for three reasons. The class teacher involved all of the children from the outset and frequently asked questions such as, "Any suggestions to make the presentation better?" Pupils responded with enterprising ideas such as highlight the text, underline the words and change the style to bold. Secondly, the class teacher provided a very clear step-by-step demonstration of how digital photographs could be imported into a document. Pupils were very excited to see photographs of themselves dressed in Roman costume. Thirdly, the class teacher provided a rota and written instructions to ensure every pupil could practise the new skill. In all classes teachers provide helpful guidance notes which sit alongside the computer screens as a reminder of how to operate particular programs. In the strands of ICT with which pupils are familiar, teaching is satisfactory, although it is the areas that are not taught that is the issue. There are weaknesses in subject leadership. The subject leader is aware and open about the weaker areas but does not have the resources or the time to make the necessary changes.

Information and communication technology across the curriculum

45 Classroom computers are in regular use, particularly in the infant and lower junior classes. Infant pupils practise and extend their number skills effectively and enter their work in personal folders for future reference. Lower junior pupils frequently use computers to strengthen their learning of English and mathematics but also to deepen their understanding of subjects such as science and history. The use of computers is irregular in Years 5 and 6 but at specific periods, such as after the pupils have completed their annual tests, computers are used intensively.

HUMANITIES

46 No lessons were seen in geography so no firm judgements on provision could be made. However, planning and pupils' work in the subject was scrutinised and discussions with teachers and pupils took place.

47 Standards in **geography** are broadly typical, as they were at the previous inspection. Many pupils bring a good general knowledge to the subject. Walks around the locality and traffic surveys familiarise younger pupils with their immediate environment. By Year 3, some already have far broader horizons. One pupil describes why she would like to go to Italy, "To see the lovely canals in Venice and the Leaning Tower of Pisa", with another child commenting, "Italy looks like someone is kicking a ball, because there's a little island next to it!" Studies in the Upper juniors are enriched by e-mail links with a village school in South Africa. This helps pupils to gain an accurate view of the very contrasting lives of children in a developing country.

HISTORY

Provision in history is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The learning is greatly enriched by visits and by 'theme days', when pupils are able to 're-live', at first hand, experiences of former periods.

- History studies are developed well across a range of subjects, giving the learning added breadth, richness and relevance.

Commentary

48 Imaginative teaching in history stimulates pupils' interests and encourages them to achieve well, as was the case at the time of the last inspection. This is evident amongst Year 6 pupils who have good recall of periods that they have studied during their time at the school. Role-play days, set in the times of the Ancient Egyptians, the Tudors and the Victorians have a major impact on pupils' learning. The visit to Beamish added greatly to their knowledge of the Industrial Revolution, which they were keen to discuss at length. The lower junior class had been equally fired, by the visits to Hadrian's Wall and the Tully House Museum. Following these educational visits, pupils had good opportunities to improve their research skills, letter writing, pottery, model making and drama. The studies culminated in an effective mathematics lesson on Roman numerals. This was followed by a concert for parents, including army drill, with orders in Latin, gladiator fights, savagely contested, and dances in swirling togas to Roman music. The afternoon finished with a four-course Roman banquet, designed by the pupils from original recipes.

49 A strength of the history provision is the very good teamwork forged between the teachers, the support staff and the enthusiastic team of volunteer helpers. Historical activity days provide a stimulus for pupils to improve their learning in other subjects, such as dramatising and writing about events and developing research and ICT skills. Pupils with special educational needs are fully included, groups are well supervised and teachers plan ambitious activities that make the history work interesting and fun. Historical skills are developed and pupils gain a good awareness and empathy for the conditions of life experienced by people and children in past times.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

Provision in religious education is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils gain a good understanding and a respect for followers of different faiths.
- Pupils have good opportunities to learn about Christianity and other religions but the follow up work is mainly completing worksheets, which does not help to improve their writing.
- The weaknesses are not identified and remedied because there is little systematic checking on teaching and learning throughout the school.

Commentary

50 Standards are at the levels expected in schools in Cumbria, as they were at the time of the last inspection. Pupils acquire a good knowledge of Christianity and its festivals. Infant pupils become totally absorbed in the activities provided. For example, when learning about Hinduism they act out part of the celebration of Diwali (the Festival of Light) by decorating their hands, making patterns with seeds and eating Indian foods. Such real experiences create the beginnings of an understanding of how Hindus live, celebrate and think.

51 The subject is taught sensitively, enabling pupils to gain insights into other faiths as well as into their own beliefs. This is a particularly strong feature in the upper juniors, where pupils, in discussions, show a good understanding of the Islamic faith for their age. The headteacher's expertise and respect for different faiths shines through in discussions, enabling pupils to gain a good awareness of what it is to be a Muslim. Pupils greatly enjoy these discussions but write very little. They have to rely mainly on their memories to recall the work. Despite the limited methods of recording their experiences, older junior pupils have positive and inquiring attitudes to the subject. As one girl explained, when justifying why she enjoyed the subject, "We need to get to know about other religions so we will respect them." Religious education makes a valuable contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral and cultural awareness.

52 There are weaknesses in the way the subject is led and managed. Pupils' learning is not sufficiently checked to enable the weaknesses in pupils' written work to be identified and remedied.

CREATIVE, AESTHETIC, PRACTICAL AND PHYSICAL SUBJECTS

53 The subjects of art and design, design and technology and physical education were sampled as insufficient evidence was collected on their provision to make a firm judgement. However evidence was available from school displays and past work in art and design, and pupils were observed in games lessons. In addition to this, discussions were held with teachers and pupils.

54 In **art and design** pupils are knowledgeable about the styles of a wide range of painters and designers. Pupils in Year 2 produced work of a very high quality, replicating paintings of Leonardo da Vinci, Vincent Van Gogh and Piet Mondrian. Art and design enriches the work in a wide range of subjects. For example, pupils in the lower juniors made clay lamps, model chariots and attractive mosaics as part of their Roman studies. Teaching is enhanced by the regular support provided by a qualified and very enthusiastic instructor. For example, after studying the work of Salvador Dali, upper junior pupils captured his humour, as well as his startling eccentricity, in various paintings. However, pupils do not have opportunities to develop their ideas and to practice their techniques using good quality sketchbooks. Consequently, they have no on-going record of their developing skills for future reference. Leadership in the subject is good, displaying a creativity and quality that is an example for the rest of the staff to emulate.

55 Pupils' learning in **design and technology** is better planned for than at the time of the last inspection. They now complete a series of carefully selected topics, which enables them to learn to use tools correctly and experience different types of materials, such as wood and card. Pupils enjoy designing and making and see the relevance in their work. For example, infant pupils examined various styles of carrier bags before designing and making their own. Their finished work has a well-made and neatly decorated appearance but more importantly, the bags are strong because pupils have learned how to reinforce the handles. Design and technology benefits from its links with other subjects. For example, in constructing large cardboard models, infant pupils learn about three-dimensional shapes and how to write a series of instructions. Year 3 and 4 pupils apply their scientific knowledge of electric circuits well to design and make moving models, such as dogs with flashing eyes and spinning tails and clowns with illuminated noses and rotating bow ties. The finished work is both creative and made to a good standard. Pupils often work with a well-qualified art and design instructor who encourages them to explore and experiment with ideas before selecting the final design. This approach brings boldness and freshness into their work. For example, Year 5 and 6 pupils examined a wide range of clocks and watches and sketched numerous prototypes before planning their chosen design in detail. Pupils were then instructed on how to cut and sand the wood to shape. The clocks on display reflect flair and originality and include designs based on footballs, stars and maps of the world. Although no actual teaching of design and technology was observed, pupils' designs and finished work suggests that teaching is good. There are drawbacks in pupils not keeping a record of their designs or collecting photographs of the models they make. Although pupils talk about improving their designing and making, there is a little evidence of them learning to write critically about their finished work. Without such records, it is difficult for class teachers, the subject leader and the pupils themselves to reflect on the progress they are making.

56 In **physical education**, when pupils were observed taking part in games lessons, their skills were more advanced than expected for their age. This indicates that they have been taught well and that many of the strengths noted at the time of the last inspection continue to be represented. The physical education instructor, supported by several parents, provides a very good range of extra curricular sporting activities, which includes netball, football, rugby and hockey. Many pupils attend and acquire good hand-eye co-ordination skills, which enables them to be competitive and effective in ball games. Teamwork receives plenty of attention because the school enters many inter school sporting tournaments. Pupils with good potential in sport benefit from their talents being

nurtured. In the one lesson, for example, infant pupils responded well to the teacher's advice to 'Watch the ball carefully when you throw and catch it.' Consequently, very few balls went astray during the practice session. A wide variety of different tasks were successful in helping pupils to improve their aim and gather the ball quickly. However pupils were seldom asked to comment on their own skills or those of others, which limited their knowledge of how to improve. The provision for swimming is barely adequate. The costs of transporting pupils to the pool are prohibitive and weekly lessons have had to be abandoned. However, the school organises intensive five-day courses for Years 5 and 6 pupils, every other year. Of the current Year 6 pupils, 86 per cent are able to swim the standard 25 metres. This is satisfactory because the pupils have yet to participate in the ten day swimming programme, arranged later in the school year.

MUSIC

Provision in music is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils achieve well in singing and understanding the language of music.
- They respond well when listening to different pieces of music and through this develop a good understanding of different cultures.
- Pupils have little experience of composing or using ICT in learning music.

Commentary

57 Three part lessons were observed to gather evidence. A musician, rather than a qualified teacher, takes the music lessons. Overall, pupils receive an adequate education in the subject. Teaching is satisfactory but limited in scope. Pupils gain a good knowledge of musical notation and understand the significance of crotchets and quavers in determining the time intervals in various pieces of music. As a result, they are able to count beats and rhythms, according to the time signature. Pupils also learn to sing to a good standard. Some of the songs have complex melodies, yet pupils are able to remember and repeat them well in lessons.

58 Pupils also have regular opportunities to listen to different pieces of music. In one lesson, for example, infant pupils responded well to an excerpt from 'The carnival of animals' by marching and pouncing as the music changed, to resemble the movements of a lion. The theme of the music lessons is often linked to learning in other subjects, such as the Roman 'haka' song which Year 3 and 4 pupils sing enthusiastically when pretending to engage in mock battle. In other lessons, pieces of music are chosen sensitively from different parts of the world. A Year 6 pupil, for example, commented that Jamaican music made him want to dance. The instructor added, "Yes, Calypso music has that effect." Activities such as these broaden pupils' understanding of other cultures successfully.

59 Despite these positive features, there are some weaknesses. A new subject leader has recently been appointed. She has worked hard in a short space of time to find out exactly what aspects of music are taught. She recognises that more work needs to be done in composing and has plans to introduce ICT to help this along. She also acknowledges that closer planning between the class teacher and the instructor would enable pupils to experience all aspects of the subject.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP (PSHCE)

Provision for PSHCE is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils' personal development is a priority and is well provided for through a carefully planned programme of experiences.
- Pupils' work in PSHCE is displayed around school as a good example to others.
- The school operates as a small community in which pupils have their responsibilities.

Commentary

60 The development of the provision for pupils' personal, social and health education and citizenship (PSHCE) is an ongoing priority for the school and makes a good contribution to the pupils' personal development. Weekly 'Circle Time' sessions (when pupils can discuss issues important to them) ensure that pupils can explore problems and share their thoughts. Good opportunities are provided for pupils to learn about how to keep themselves healthy and safe. This

aspect of their development is promoted through other subjects, such as the science programme of study and as part of the PHSCE programme taught throughout the school.

61 Work on display provides good examples of its importance to the school as an area for promotion. Year 1 pupils have designed, 'WANTED: A GOOD FRIEND', posters and Year 3 and 4 pupils write about the best way to deal with someone who deliberately tries to hurt someone else. Every class has its own class rules decided by the teacher and pupils together.

62 Pupils are encouraged to become good citizens. They think about the needs of others in their local community and try to improve life for the villagers, for example, through the annual village 'Spring Clean'. In classes, they discuss and agree on rules and encourage each other to abide by them. To encourage pupils to have a stronger voice and understand more about how society works, school council is being established and pupils are considering their elected representatives. Older pupils show good levels of responsibility as they help the younger children at lunchtime. The 'Family Camp', held annually at Bassenthwaite provides good opportunities for social development, where pupils plan menus, take part in a range of environmental and adventurous activities and develop team membership skills.

PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

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

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