

# INSPECTION REPORT

**ARKHOLME CHURCH of ENGLAND PRIMARY  
SCHOOL**

Arkholme, Carnforth

LEA area: Lancashire.

Unique reference number: 119523

Headteacher: Mrs L P Gough

Lead inspector: Mr J P Sudworth

Dates of inspection: 10<sup>th</sup> – 12<sup>th</sup> November 2003

Inspection number: 260779

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:	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils:	4-11
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
Number on roll:	72
School address:	Arkholme Carnforth Lancashire
Postcode:	LA6 1AU
Telephone number:	015242 21418
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Appropriate authority:	The governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr R Webb
Date of previous inspection:	October 1998

## CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

Arkholme Church of England Primary School is a very small rural school. Its pupils are drawn from the small village of Arkholme, from other local villages and from farms, with a significant percentage arriving at school on special transport.

There are 72 pupils on roll. All the pupils are white and none have a home language other than English. The school has a stable population; only two pupils joined and one left at other than the usual time during last year. The proportion of children in the area in high social class homes is more than twice the national average and only three pupils are entitled to free school meals. There is a wide range of attainment within the small group of pupils entering the school. Children come into the Reception class with a wide range of skills but overall attainment is average, as it was at the time of the previous inspection. Because of the small year groups, individual differences in ability can lead to large percentage swings in results. One in seven of the current pupils has been identified as having special educational needs; three have a statement of special educational need and a further two need help from beyond the school.

The admission number is 14 but there are fluctuations in pupil numbers between year groups, which currently range between eight and 15. The balance between boys and girls also varies and at present ranges between one boy to eight girls in Year 1 to ten boys to four girls in Year 5.

The school received a *Schools' Achievement Award* in 2002 and again in 2003. It was awarded the *Basic Skills Quality Mark* in 2000 and this was extended in 2003. The school is contributing to the *Leadership Development Strategy in Primary Schools*. It is also involved in the *Small Schools' Fund* and in *Sure Start*.

There is a voluntary nursery on site for part of the week but this was not part of the inspection.

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
2461	Mr J P Sudworth	Lead inspector	English
			Geography
			History
			Physical education
13462	Mrs R Mothersdale	Lay inspector	
11611	Mr J Hall	Team inspector	Mathematics
			Information and communication technology
			Music
			Citizenship
			English as an additional language
31012	Mrs A Welch	Team inspector	Foundation Stage
			Special educational needs
			Science
			Art and design
			Design and technology

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## PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

### OVERALL EVALUATION

**Arkholme Church of England Primary School is a very good school.** Standards are high. Very good teaching helps pupils to achieve very well during their time in school. Pupils are challenged to aim high and they develop very positive attitudes to work. This culture of challenge and success extends to extra activities, weekly challenges and local, regional and national competitions. Pupils make very good progress in their personal development. The school is very well led and managed and, despite above average costs, provides good value for money.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- High standards in English, mathematics, science, information and communication technology (ICT), history, music and swimming.
- The very good start that children make in the Reception class.
- Very good teaching that leads to very good attitudes to work and to very good learning.
- A rich provision of extra activities.
- Very good provision for pupils' personal development.
- Highly effective leadership and management
- Excellent partnerships with parents and with other schools and colleges, and very good links with the community.
- Inadequate facilities for field games, athletics and gymnastics.

The school has made very good progress since the last inspection. It has made better than average improvement in reading, writing and mathematics by Year 2 and much better than average improvement in English, mathematics and science by the end of Year 6. The school received a *Schools Achievement Award* in 2002 and in 2003. Extensions to the building have relieved many of the accommodation problems mentioned at the last inspection but some facilities for physical education are still inadequate and this affects provision for field games, gymnastics and athletics.

### STANDARDS ACHIEVED

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

*Key: A\* - in the top five percent; A - well above average; B – above average; C – average; D – below average; E – well below average. Similar schools are those whose pupils attained similarly at the end of Year 2.*

**Pupils achieve very well overall during their time in school.** Children come into the Reception class with a wide range of skills but overall attainment is typical for the age group. They make very good progress and by the end of the Reception year they exceed the expected goals in communication, language and literacy and in mathematical development. Their personal, social and emotional development is well above expectations. There was insufficient evidence to make a judgement about their knowledge and understanding of the world or their creative and physical development.

Pupils in Years 1 and 2 achieve well. Year 2 results in 2003 were well above the national average in reading, writing and mathematics. Pupils are currently attaining above the expected standards in English, mathematics, science, ICT, history and music.

Achievement in Years 3 to 6 is good. The present Year 6 are currently attaining well above the expected standards in English, mathematics, science, ICT, history, music and swimming. Individual differences within the other small year groups mean that standards fluctuate between years.

Pupils with special educational needs make good progress in their individual skills. Pupils with statements of special educational need are very well supported and included in all activities.

The school's commitment to helping pupils to succeed is reflected also in the good range of pupils' other achievements and in the awards and competitions won by pupils in this very small school in recent years. 16 pupils had stories published in a local authority compendium of children's writing. Two years ago the school won a national Science Challenge. The judges considered the project to be 'outstanding' and commented that 'the school excelled in every area'.

**Pupils' personal development is promoted very well and their personal qualities, including their spiritual, moral social and cultural development are very good.** Attendance is very high. Behaviour is very good. Pupils' very positive attitudes to work contribute to their progress. They are extremely keen to take on responsibilities.

## **QUALITY OF EDUCATION**

**The school provides a very good quality of education. Teaching is very good.** Careful attention to individual pupils' needs contributes strongly to pupils' very good learning. Assessment is used very effectively to help pupils to improve. The curriculum is very good and pupils' experiences are enriched very well through extra activities, visits and visitors. Care, guidance and support for pupils are all very good. The school has excellent links with parents and other schools, and very good links with the local churches and with the community.

## **LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT**

**The overall leadership and management of the school are very good.** The leadership of the headteacher is excellent. She is supported by very good subject leadership. The very strong Governing Body provides very good support for staff, is excellent in its role as critical friend and contributes very well to the very efficient management of the school.

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

Most parents are extremely pleased with the standards achieved, and the wide range of activities. Pupils are very happy with the school and particularly like the friendly atmosphere.

## **IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED**

To continue the improvement the school should:

- improve the facilities for field games, athletics and gymnastics.

and, to meet statutory requirements:

- inform parents of their right to withdraw children from collective worship and religious education.

## **PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS**

### **STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS**

#### **Standards achieved in areas of learning, subjects and courses**

Children achieve very well in the Reception class and exceed the expected learning goals by the end of the year. Pupils achieve well in Years 1 to 6. Standards are above average by the end of Year 2 and well above average by the end of Year 6.

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

- Children make a very good start in the Reception class.
- The improvement in Year 2 results is better than average.
- The improvement in Year 6 results is much better than average.
- Pupils are challenged to work at a high level in English.
- Mathematics skills are developed well across the curriculum.
- A strong emphasis is given to investigative science.
- There has been very good improvement in ICT skills.
- Standards in history, music and swimming are high.
- Pupils who need extra support achieve well.

#### **Commentary**

1 Children come into the Reception class with a wide range of skills but overall attainment is typical for the age group. They make very good progress. The very strong relationships with staff help children to attain well above average standards in personal, social and emotional development. Teachers and support staff take every opportunity to develop children's language skills and, consequently, achievement in communication, language and literacy is very good. Pupils respond well to the high expectations and early reading skills are particularly well developed. Very good teaching develops children's interest in numbers. They gain an understanding of number, pattern and shape through practical activities. By the end of the Reception year they exceed the expected goals in mathematical development.

2 There are fluctuations in Year 2 test results between years because of the variations between small cohorts. Overall, reading and writing standards have risen more sharply than the national trend since the last inspection. In mathematics, standards have kept close to the national average in most years but have risen sharply this year. In 2003 the results in reading, writing and in mathematics were all well above the national average. These results were well above similar schools in reading and writing and above average in mathematics.

3 The Year 6 results in 2002 were well above the national averages in each of English, mathematics and science and the overall result placed the school in the top five percent of similar schools. In 2003 the science results and mathematics results remained well above the national average and well above similar schools. Although the overall English result was above the national average, there was a large disparity between the high results in reading and the overall average results in writing. The proportion attaining a higher level in writing was almost twice the national average but the percentage achieving the expected level was below average. This was caused by a small group of boys in this year group who performed much better in reading than in writing throughout their time in school. Progress for this cohort in English during Years 3 to 6 was well above average. There have been fluctuations in the Year 6 results between years because of the variations between small cohorts but the overall trend since the last inspection has been of much greater improvement than the national picture in English, mathematics and science.

4 Standards in speaking and listening are very good. Most pupils are confident speakers, who express their ideas very well and listen well to what others have to say. They are given very good opportunities to develop these skills in class discussions and constantly challenged to clarify their



ideas. Reading standards are high by the end of Years 2 and 6. The very effective reading programme helps pupils to acquire a love of reading. They use their fluent reading skills well to access information in other subjects and to broaden their range of vocabulary and expression. Teachers provide pupils with very good opportunities to write in both English lessons and in other subjects and challenge them very well to improve the quality of their work. Pupils take pride both in the content of their writing and in its presentation. This contributes to the high standards in handwriting, spelling and punctuation. Pupils are currently reaching above average standards in writing in Year 2 and well above average standards in Year 6.

5 Standards in mathematics are above average by the end of Year 2 and well above average by the end of Year 6. Teachers have high expectations and challenge pupils to think about their answers and to identify patterns. Pupils respond well to this and work very diligently on individual and group tasks. Every opportunity is taken to practise mathematics skills, for example working out the split between meals and packed lunches or quickly calculating in an English lesson the fraction and the percentage of a page taken up by a picture.

6 Pupils achieve well in science in Year 1 and 2 and standards are above those expected by the end of Year 2. A strength of the work in the upper juniors is that teaching is firmly rooted in an experimental and investigative approach to science. Pupils respond very well to this, make good progress and reach well above average standards by the end of Year 6.

7 Standards in ICT have risen significantly since the last inspection, because pupils have very good access to computers, have some specialist teaching and use ICT very well in other subjects. Pupils in Year 2 achieve standards above the expected level and in Year 6 standards are well above national expectations.

8 Pupils achieve very well in history so that standards are above average by the end of Year 2 and well above average by the end of Year 6. Pupils learn to interpret a wide range of historical sources. Standards in music are very good. A high number of pupils play a tuned instrument, such as the flute, clarinet and cornet, and the quality of singing is very good. Standards in swimming are high. Pupils benefit from very good teaching and extra-curricular opportunities.

9 Pupils with special educational needs achieve well. This is because teachers plan work to match their specific needs and also because they receive good support and guidance from trained learning assistants.

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
reading	18.1 (17.2)	15.7 (15.8)
writing	17.3 (14.6)	14.6 (14.4)
mathematics	17.6 (16.3)	16.3 (16.5)

*There were 14 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year*

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
English	28.1 (29.8)	26.8 (27.0)
mathematics	28.8 (29.8)	26.8 (26.7)
science	30.5 (30.7)	28.6 (28.3)

*There were 17 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year*

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

Pupils' personal qualities are very good. Attendance is very high. Pupils' attitudes and behaviour are both very good. Their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is very good overall.

## Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils enjoy coming to school.
- Very positive attitudes to learning contribute to very good levels of achievement.
- Pupils respond very well to the staff's high expectations of behaviour.
- Pupils are very willing to take on responsibilities.
- Very good opportunities are provided for pupils' to develop personal values.

## Commentary

10 Very high attendance reflects pupils' enjoyment of school. It has been consistently much better than average over the last three years. The school has effective systems to monitor absences and promotes the importance of regular attendance well. Lateness is rarely a problem.

11 Pupils are very enthusiastic about their learning. They work very hard, behave very well in lessons and demonstrate high levels of commitment to improving their work. Pupils take pride in their work and are keen to share their learning with others. There are very good relationships between pupils and adults. Teachers work hard to raise pupils' self-esteem and forge very good and trusting relationships with them.

12 Behaviour is also very good around the school. Movement around the school is orderly and pupils play very well together in the playground. This atmosphere is sustained by the consistently high expectations of teachers and a clear understanding by pupils of what is acceptable. No incidents of bullying or unacceptable behaviour were observed during the inspection.

13 Pupils are given many opportunities to take responsibility, which they take seriously. They are encouraged to show initiative, for example in setting up assemblies, and this leads to a confident and mature approach to the tasks. The family atmosphere allows older pupils within mixed-age groups to develop a sense of responsibility for helping others. For example, Year 2 pupils look after Reception children in a shared physical education lesson, and older pupils assist younger children at lunchtime. These opportunities extend beyond the school when, for example, older pupils help with a monthly luncheon club for the elderly in the neighbouring community hall.

14 The school provides very good opportunities for pupils' spiritual, moral and social development. Strong links with the church are reflected in the way prayer and reflection are natural features of the school day. The strong emphasis in the school's mission statement on responsibility, personal values and regard for others runs through all that the school does and, in consequence, pupils develop a very clear sense of right and wrong and of how to work and play harmoniously with others across a wide age range. Good provision is made for pupils' cultural development. Although the school does not have a range of faiths or cultures, teachers work very hard to give pupils opportunities to appreciate a range of cultural traditions. From discussion times and workshop sessions pupils gain a good appreciation of similarities and differences between children around the world, stories in English lessons introduce other cultures and points of view, and history and geography lessons are used extensively to broaden pupils' cultural understanding.

### **Attendance in the latest complete reporting year 97.3%**

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
School data	2.7	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.*

## Exclusions

### *Ethnic background of pupils*

Categories used in the Annual School Census
White – British
White – any other White background

### *Exclusions in the last school year*

No of pupils on roll	Number of fixed period exclusions	Number of permanent exclusions
66	0	0
6	0	0

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

## QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

The quality of education is very good.

Teaching, learning and assessment are all very good. The curriculum has very good breadth and balance and pupils benefit from a very wide range of enrichment activities. The school provides a high quality of care and guidance. The opportunities for pupils to contribute ideas are good. The links with parents and other schools and colleges are excellent and those with the community are very good.

### Teaching and learning

The quality of teaching is very good in all parts of the school. This results in very effective learning. Assessment is very good.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Lesson planning takes very good account of the range of ages and attainment.
- Pupils respond very well to the high expectations that teachers have for them.
- Pupils show very good initiative in taking responsibility for their own learning.
- Very effective marking helps pupils to improve their work.

### Commentary

#### *Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 24 lessons*

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
2	11	4	7	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.*

15 Lessons are very well planned. Teachers have very clear learning objectives for the different ages and abilities within the class and this helps the pupils to focus on their targets, particularly in English and mathematics. Explanations are very clear, often making good use of a visual or other stimulus. For example, in a Years 1 and 2 mathematics lesson, the teacher used an interactive whiteboard very effectively to allow pupils to explore how seven objects could be arranged into different combinations. In a Years 3 and 4 writing lesson the teacher's model of poetry writing provided a very effective stimulus that enthused pupils to produce high quality poems of their own. Teaching assistants provide good support to groups or individuals and the good teamwork with the teachers allows all pupils to be well supported. Very good use is made of the time available and no time is lost at a change of activity, because resources are ready to hand, the different groups of pupils know exactly what is expected of them and there are well-established routines that enable pupils to move straight on to the next step. Teachers make very good links between subjects.

Literacy and numeracy skills are developed very well across subjects such as science, history and geography and ICT is used very effectively to support learning across the curriculum.

16 Expectations are high. Teachers pitch their language at a good level and introduce technical vocabulary well. This encourages pupils to broaden their own use of language and to think carefully about the terms they use. Specialist teachers of music and ICT use their expertise well to extend pupils' skills. Teachers constantly challenge pupils to suggest solutions and to explore ideas. This encourages pupils to identify patterns in mathematics, to interpret sources in history or to discuss use of imagery in English. They use questioning very effectively both to check pupils' understanding and to push their thinking further. Pupils are expected to justify or explain answers, and to follow through their reasoning. Particularly good examples of this were seen in a science lesson with older pupils. This helps pupils to gain a very good understanding of the concepts. Teachers have high expectations of pupils' capacity to work independently. Pupils respond very well and try very hard to meet the teachers' expectations. They enjoy the success they achieve as a result and this provides them with the motivation to work hard in future lessons. There is a culture of challenge. In addition to the whole-school weekly challenge, which might, for example, be matching artists to their work, there are on-going challenges within classrooms, such as matching numbers to cartons of objects before the timer runs out or composing a tune on a glockenspiel.

#### **Example of outstanding practice**

##### **A Years 5 and 6 investigative science lesson in a very small rural school**

Throughout this excellent lesson, pupils were continually challenged in their scientific knowledge, and they left at the end, determined to research the subject even further. The teacher set high expectations for scientific procedures: predict, observe, fair test, record and question, question, question. Pupils' ingenuity was given free reign to come up with a variety of ways to measure condensation, within the limitations of primary school resources. A calibrated jug, thermometers, sawn off lemonade bottles, plastic glasses, timers and the staff room kettle, were inspirational choices for a range of exciting experiments to create mini water cycles. Throughout the lesson the teacher facilitated and supported the pupils' work in a low-key style, but at no time could pupils expect to record any finding without providing a scientific explanation for how they had arrived at that position. Skilful group mixes of pupils with different abilities, enabled the teacher to direct brainstorming in each group expertly, but never to give pupils the format of their experiment, merely to suggest a provocative train of thought, that left them to reach their own conclusions.

17 Pupils show a very good willingness to take responsibility for their learning. For example, in a Year 6 mathematics lesson, pupils were highly engaged in a discussion on calculating the perimeter of shapes. They contributed a great deal, constantly suggesting ways to arrive at a solution, prompting both each other and the teacher. Everyone involved confidently took responsibility to guide and steer the discussion. The atmosphere was stimulating and exciting, which contributed much to pupils' achievement in this lesson. Pupils settle to work quickly when they are given individual or group tasks and make very good use of the time available. They are well used to using resources independently and to making use of thesauri, and rhyming dictionaries and other reference materials. They take pride in their work, both in the content and presentation.

18 Marking is used very effectively to help pupils to improve their work. There are clear indications of what has been particularly successful and what weakened the impact of the work and suggested strategies to strengthen the next piece of writing. This is often reflected in an improvement in the pupils' work as they respond to the helpful comments. A very successful technique in the older classes is for pupils to share their work. Sometimes one pupil will write directly on to an acetate sheet, so that this can be shown on the overhead projector. Other pupils then discuss the strengths of the work and how it might be improved. They make very constructive comments during such sessions and gain a very good understanding of the factors that contribute to work of high quality. Teachers use the information gained from both formal and informal assessments very effectively in determining the targets for individual pupils in subsequent lesson planning. However, formal assessment in investigative science is sometimes too cautious, particularly in Year 2, where the higher level was not awarded to any pupil in 2003.

## **The curriculum**

The broad and balanced curriculum provides a very good range of learning opportunities. Pupils benefit from a very wide range of enrichment activities. Resources support the curriculum well overall, although there are weaknesses in accommodation.

## **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Very good account is taken of the ranges in ability and maturity within mixed-age classes.
- The many curriculum enrichment activities enhance pupils' skills.
- Good provision is made for pupils with special educational needs.
- The school benefits from the good number, expertise and experience of teachers.
- Some accommodation limitations affect provision, particularly in aspects of physical education.

## **Commentary**

19 Thorough curriculum planning caters very well for the range of learning needs across ages and abilities within teaching groups and contributes to the very good achievement. Reception children are taught in single-, two- and three-age group classes but great care is taken to plan a curriculum to meet their needs. Consequently, they achieve very well. Subject schemes of work provide for thorough coverage of the National Curriculum and the development of key knowledge, skills and understanding. Personal projects enable older pupils in particular to take their learning further and very strong links with other schools allow pupils to have additional provision in French, music, science, mathematics and ICT. Natural links are fostered between subjects and literacy, numeracy and ICT skills are developed very well across the curriculum. Opportunities are created through flexible timetabling for year groups to be taught as a single unit at times, so that they have extra practice in core skills.

20 The curriculum is enriched very well by many visitors and by visits, including a residential one for Years 5 and 6 to an adventure centre in the Yorkshire Dales. Staff members give generously of their time to provide very good extra-curricular opportunities that include sporting and musical activities, French, chess and ICT clubs. A feature of the school is its focus on challenges for pupils. These include a weekly challenge, such as matching artists to their work or identifying a range of fruits, and personal and team projects, such as the *Yellow Woods* challenge and the *Best Kept Village* schools competition. Such activities provide frameworks and motivation for pupils to practise key skills, carry out research, think creatively and present their work attractively. The teamwork and sense of achievement contribute very well to pupils' personal development.

21 The provision for pupils with special educational needs is good. Individual educational plans have suitable and achievable targets that give good guidance to teachers' planning. Teaching assistants provide good support to individuals with special needs. All staff work hard to ensure that pupils with special educational needs are fully involved in all school activities and have equal access to the full range of opportunities and experiences on offer. This is particularly the case for a pupil with physical disabilities, when, for example, he has very good support in swimming activities or helps to lead an assembly.

22 There is a very favourable staffing ratio and the teachers have a good range of experience and expertise. Specialist teachers of music and ICT use their expertise well to improve and enhance the curriculum, and, as a result, standards in both subjects are well above national expectations by the end of Year 6. There is a very good number of teaching assistants who make a significant contribution to the high standards achieved by pupils. Learning resources are good for music and ICT and satisfactory overall. The building has been improved and extended but is not without problems. There is no hall, a lack of storage space for large apparatus and equipment and the office can only be accessed through the computer suite or the Reception class. It is still shared by the headteacher and secretary making confidentiality difficult. The playing field is very small and restricts games activities. However, the school makes the best possible use of what it has and it is usual to see small groups of pupils and adults working in whatever space is available.

## **Care, guidance and support**

Provision for pupils' care, support, and guidance is very good. The school involves pupils well in the work of the school.

## **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Pupils feel confident and secure in school.
- Procedures for monitoring pupils' progress are very thorough.
- Pupils have good opportunities to contribute ideas.

## **Commentary**

23 The governors have very clear health, safety and child protection procedures which are updated regularly and risk assessments are carried out conscientiously. The carefully organised home time arrangements help to ensure pupils' safety as they rejoin their parents or the special transport. Pupils are also encouraged to be safety-conscious and the school was runner up in a recent national Safety Matters competition. The arrangements for settling children into school are very good and most have very good opportunities to spend time in the building and to meet teachers before they start. Most pupils feel very confident and secure in school and readily turn to a member of staff if they have a problem. There is a strong family ethos in the school and older pupils help with the care of younger children at playtimes and lunchtimes. This care is also very evident in the way that pupils with special needs are welcomed into the school and supported by staff and pupils so that they can play a full part in the life of the school.

24 Monitoring of pupils' progress is very thorough and careful records are kept of individual achievement as pupils move through the school. Teachers have a very good knowledge of pupils' personal development in this very small school, because they see their responses and interactions not just in the classroom situation but also in the many extra activities. All pupils with special educational needs benefit from the extra guidance they get from teachers and support assistants. Targets on their individual educational plans are regularly reviewed and revised.

25 Pupils are encouraged to express their ideas and are confident that their opinions are valued. They readily approach the headteacher or other teachers if they would like to put forward an idea or to have something changed and their ideas are taken seriously. Teachers use circle time very effectively to enable pupils to talk through issues. Pupils have been actively involved in plans to improve the school, for example, in contributing to the design and construction of the school's wildlife garden and pond. Plans are well advanced to introduce a School Council later this term.

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

The school has established excellent links with parents and with other schools and colleges. The links with the local community are very good.

## **Main strengths**

- Parents provide excellent support for their children's education.
- Excellent links with other schools broaden the curriculum very effectively.
- Very good links with local churches and with the local community contribute to pupils' development.

## **Commentary**

26 Parents are very proud of the school's achievements over recent years and feel that they are full partners in their children's education. Members of staff are committed to involving parents in the work of the school and they provide good information about the curriculum and about pupils' progress that enables parents to provide very strong support to their children's learning. This is particularly evident in the attention given to hearing their children read at home, which makes a significant contribution to the high standards that pupils achieve. Pupils' reading records are used as an effective communication system between school and home. Many parents use the half-termly curriculum newsletter to plan activities and gather books and materials that support the class topics. Parents are given very clear information about homework projects and provide excellent support,



whether it is helping Reception children to write a chapter for the class book about the adventures of a stuffed toy or encouraging older pupils in their history and science investigations. There is very good staff/parent liaison over the transport arrangements necessary in this rural area to enable children to participate in extra activities, such as the swimming and computer clubs. Several parents help in school, contributing to lessons, such as talking to a class about what the school used to be like, hearing pupils read, helping with extra-curricular activities and providing support with educational visits. A strong Parents, Teachers and Friends Association organises educational, social and fund-raising events.

27 The school enjoys excellent links with other schools. The school liaises closely with other primary schools in the Lune valley. There is regular joint in-service training for staff and successful joint bids for funding have allowed the launch of inter-school initiatives, such as ICT support. The inter-school Beacon Project has provided a very good stimulus for pupils' poetry. The strong links with secondary schools in the area allow pupils to benefit from additional opportunities. They participate in science, mathematics and ICT projects using the facilities from a local grammar school. They enjoy strong musical links with a high school, including the school band recording two tracks on a corporate CD, and they receive French lessons from a language specialist from a third secondary school. The school receives good feedback from secondary schools on the performance of former pupils. Pupils gained very good insights from a joint science investigation with other schools via the Internet and the school is also part of an inter-school webcam project. The local nursery, which is run by the school, spends three sessions each week in school and also has a joint physical education lesson with the Reception class. As a result, the children are familiar with the building and have established good relationships with school staff long before they start school. Three of the teaching staff are trained mentors for trainee teachers and the school enjoys very good links with a local college, for which it provides a very good number of placements.

28 The school benefits from very good links with the local churches. The vicar leads collective worship regularly and groups visiting local churches also contribute to assemblies. Special services are held in local churches. The school has well established links with local newspapers and with local industry, regularly participates in community initiatives, and is a focal point for some village events.

## **LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT**

The overall quality of leadership and management is highly effective. The Governing Body provides very strong support. The headteacher gives excellent leadership. The subject leaders provide very good support. The management of the school is very efficient.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The governors evaluate the school's progress and manage limited resources very effectively.
- The headteacher's leadership has created a culture of challenge and success.
- Co-ordinators provide committed leadership for their areas, despite heavy workloads.
- There is an omission in information to parents.

### **Commentary**

29 The members of the very strong Governing Body show a very good knowledge of what is happening in school and use their personal skills very well to support staff and to contribute to the very efficient management. Their appreciation of the role of challenging as well as supporting staff is excellent. The induction procedures for new governors are very effective. The very efficient organisation of governors' meetings ensures that all the necessary policies are in place and are reviewed regularly. However, in the school prospectus, parents are told that it is expected that all pupils will attend collective worship and religious education rather than being informed of their right to withdraw their children from these activities. Very effective procedures for evaluating the school's progress are built into the planning cycle and there is rigorous scrutiny of performance data. The fluctuating numbers between year groups present budgeting difficulties but through careful strategic

planning the Finance Committee manages variations in income very successfully and makes very efficient use of its resources, including flexibility in part-time appointments and in the organisation of teaching groups. The governors have achieved significant improvements to the accommodation and to ICT facilities since the last inspection. They are aware of the weaknesses in physical education facilities, and have taken the initial steps to improve playing field provision.

### Example of outstanding practice

#### The Governing Body acting as critical friend.

When the Year 6 writing results were well below the reading results, the governors' Curriculum Sub-Committee decided to devote a whole meeting to writing and invited all the other governors and all the staff to attend. The positive and constructive wording of the letter set the tone for the meeting, whose purpose was defined as:- to analyse the Year 6 results in writing in order to understand what the results were saying and also what they were not saying in this small school; to provide a forum for ideas about what additional action might be taken to improve standards in writing; and to ensure that governors were providing the necessary support and resources to enable the action and improvement to take place. From a very thorough presentation by the English co-ordinator the governors gained a very good understanding of possible explanations for the disparity in results between reading and writing in this particular year group and were able to contribute fully to a constructive discussion of the writing opportunities across the school. The ensuing action plan provides a clear focus for improvement, including measures to encourage parental support for writing and to target specific help to individuals.

30 The headteacher's excellent leadership has contributed much to the culture of challenge and success that has led to high achievement within the school. Pupils are constantly challenged to excel in their work and in extra activities. The excellent team spirit she engenders ensures that this vision is shared throughout the staff. The headteacher leads by example in the quality of her teaching and her involvement in enrichment activities. She provides a very good framework within which other staff can develop their particular strengths and expertise and provides them with the encouragement and support they need. This has allowed staff to develop confidence in their skills to provide the challenging work that is the feature of many lessons. She ensures that all pupils are able to take advantage of the opportunities the school offers and has an excellent knowledge of individual pupils' progress. She has a clear view of what the school needs to do to improve further and in her forward planning the focus is firmly on the impact on teaching and learning of any measures to be taken. This has contributed strongly to the very good improvement since the last inspection. She is providing support for other schools in the local authority through the *Leadership Development Strategy in Primary Schools*.

31 Five teachers, two of whom are part-time, share responsibilities for curriculum leadership for 14 areas. Despite this heavy workload, subject co-ordinators provide very good support overall to developments in their areas. They set high expectations, establish clear frameworks for planning and assessment, and are active in providing extra activities and challenges. Their leadership has contributed to the very good improvement since the last inspection and to the current high standards in several subjects. The special educational needs co-ordinator carries out all duties conscientiously and maintains effective contacts with staff, parents and outside agencies.

### Financial information

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

Income and expenditure (£)	
Total income	275,488
Total expenditure	263,986
Expenditure per pupil	3,259

Balances (£)	
Balance from previous year	11,180
Balance carried forward to the next	22,682

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

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

32 Provision for children in the Reception class is very good and a strength of the school. Children enter Reception in the September before they reach their fifth birthday. Their skills and achievements vary widely but overall are as expected for their age. They are taught in a single age group each morning with the exception of Wednesday when they are taught with Year 1 pupils. During the afternoons they are taught with Years 1 and 2 pupils. The difficulties imposed by this somewhat fragmented timetable are overcome by the very effective organisational and planning skills of a very strong team of well-qualified and experienced staff. The curriculum is planned with great care to provide a wide range of challenging and stimulating activities which are matched very well to all children's needs whether they are working in a single-, two- or three-age group class. The accommodation has improved since the last inspection to include a spacious classroom where resources are used well to provide a stimulating environment for young children. However, not enough use is made of the school's outdoor area in the six areas of learning and this limits the children's experiences.

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

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

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

- Very good teaching encourages children to respond to the staff's high expectations.
- Very strong relationships between staff and children promote children's confidence and encourage them to work hard.

#### **Commentary**

33 Children's personal, social and emotional development is nurtured very well and this is evident throughout the school day. Very effective teaching enables children to make such good progress that they reach a standard well beyond what is typical for their age by the end of the Reception class. Teachers and other adults in the school quickly get to know the children and use this knowledge skilfully to promote their personal growth. This is done by setting clear expectations and establishing routines and habits that will serve children well as they progress through the school and by encouraging them to take responsibility. Children respond very well to this and at this early stage in the school year are already mature in their skills to organise themselves and tidy things away and change and dress themselves competently for lessons in physical development. Relationships are very caring and this means that children trust the teachers and other staff. Because adults act as very good role models, children learn to be polite, to care for others and to share fairly and take turns. In the shared lessons with Years 1 and 2 pupils they adopt the good listening and co-operative working practices of the older pupils.

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

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

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

- Children are given very strong encouragement to develop their language skills.
- The teacher has very high expectations of children's reading and writing.

#### **Commentary**

34 Teachers and support staff take every opportunity to develop language skills and, consequently, children's achievement is very good. Very good quality teaching means that even the youngest children begin to offer contributions to discussions. One of the main reasons for this is that staff members constantly talk with children. Every activity involves asking questions and emphasising words and names. Children are encouraged to talk about themselves and to explain what they have done. In early class reading sessions all children are expected to contribute ideas in discussions about what might happen next in the story. Language is developed very effectively through role-play and resources are used very well to gain children's interest. For example, in *Crosslands Garage*, children develop their vocabulary and their conversational skills as they take on the roles of mechanic, petrol pump attendant and customer.

35 A very good feature of the teaching is that particular attention is paid to developing children's basic skills in reading and writing and to arouse their interest in books. Many activities aim to build and reinforce these skills including their understanding of initial sounds so they quickly learn to build familiar words. Higher attaining children are already reading independently and have a very good sight vocabulary. The willingness of parents to read with their children and to help them to learn new words furthers the children's progress in developing their reading skills and in their understanding of the story content. Children are taught how to form letters correctly and regular practice ensures they make a smooth transition from copying what the teacher has written to trying for themselves. As a result of the very good teaching, by the end of the Reception year many children achieve so well that they have exceeded the expected standard for their age and are working within Level 1, higher in some cases in reading, of the National Curriculum.

## **MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT**

Provision in mathematical development is **very good**

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- There is a clear focus in mathematical activities on developing key skills.
- Mathematical development is encouraged very well in other areas of learning.

### **Commentary**

36 Very good teaching develops children's interest in numbers. They gain an understanding of number, pattern and shape through practical activities such as counting objects, playing and sorting shapes into sets. Teachers use questions very well to develop children's mathematical vocabulary and concepts and to help them to begin to see patterns. A strong feature of the teaching is the daily focus on counting routines that develop children's sense of number sequence. As a result most count confidently to 20 and have a good understanding of one more and one less. Children are encouraged to record their mathematics from the start, first as pictures and then as simple sums with symbols for addition, subtraction and equals.

37 Adults take every opportunity to develop children's mathematical skills and foster the development of mathematical language. For example, during registration children count how many are present or absent, or are having a school dinner or sandwiches. During a shared reading session they counted the number of monsters on the front cover of the book. Children develop a very good understanding of mathematical terms to do with shape, space and measures through creative activities. As they choose the 'shortest' fish to glue to the 'top' of the picture and the 'longest' to the 'bottom' their awareness of size and position is fostered successfully. This very good provision for mathematical development enables most children to achieve very well and reach higher levels of attainment than those typical for their age.

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

38 Too little teaching was seen to make an overall judgement of provision or standards. However, a very effective feature of the provision, seen in photographic evidence, is the strong

emphasis on taking children out and about, not only in the local area, but further afield, for example, by taking the public bus into Lancaster. Here children shopped in a supermarket to buy food for a 'healthy' picnic, and, in contrast, sampled an 'unhealthy' lunch at McDonalds. They were given the responsibility of ordering and paying for their lunch on their own. Other visits include Carnforth Sorting Office and a local garage. Children have many opportunities to use computers and consequently they gain confidence rapidly as they use the mouse to select, for example, objects beginning with 'm'.

## **PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT**

39 It was not possible to make an overall judgement of provision or standards. Reception children join Years 1 and 2 for a weekly dance lesson in the Community Hall but also take part in separate physical development sessions, sometimes with children in the local nursery. In the one session observed the Reception children were well integrated into lesson with Years 1 and 2. There was a wide span of attainment in the quality of children's movement but overall the standard at this early stage in the year was average. There are many opportunities for children to develop skills in handling tools, including pencils, scissors and glue sticks. However, an area for development is to increase the use of the outdoor area by planning activities across all the areas of learning.

## **CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT**

40 It was not possible to make an overall judgement of provision or standards. Planning denotes a good range of interesting activities. The work on display indicates that standards are as expected.

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

### **ENGLISH**

Provision in English is **very good**

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

- Pupils are given very good opportunities to develop their speaking and listening skills.
- Pupils' enjoyment of books and reading is fostered very effectively.
- Pupils enjoy writing.
- Teachers have high expectations of pupils.
- The subject co-ordinator leads the subject very effectively.
- Pupils have very good opportunities to write in other subjects.

#### **Commentary**

41 Teachers develop pupils' speaking and listening skills very effectively. In all parts of lessons they use a very good range of vocabulary, including technical terms such as 'imperative' and 'empathy', when talking to the pupils and they constantly encourage pupils to find better ways of expressing ideas. This helps pupils to build up the range and quality of their vocabulary and to achieve very well. For example, Year 2 pupils confidently posed questions to a visitor about how the school has changed and a Year 4 pupil gave a very well expressed five-minute book report and then fielded questions from other pupils confidently. As a result, by Year 6 most pupils are confident speakers, who express their ideas very well and listen well to what others have to say and are very assured when expressing their ideas in discussions.

42 Pupils achieve very well as they build on the very good start to reading that they gain in the Reception class. By the end of Year 2 standards are well above average and by Year 6 reading standards are very high. The very effective phonics programme and structured reading scheme provide a very good framework in the early years. Many pupils acquire a love of reading from an early age. They are encouraged to pick up a book and continue with their reading whenever they have a spare moment. By Year 4 pupils are presenting detailed book reports to their classmates,

reading excerpts fluently and with very good expression, and passing on their own enthusiasm to their classmates. The school encourages pupils to read at home every night and parents give very good support to this. Some parents also read regularly to their children to help to foster their love of books. The few pupils who find reading more difficult are given very good support and make good progress. Older pupils read novels avidly, such as Philip Pullman's *His Dark Materials* trilogy, and enjoy discussing the ideas in them. They use their reading skills very well to work on personal projects and are able to retrieve information efficiently from books or from electronic sources.

43 Standards in writing are above average in Year 2 and well above average in Year 6. Pupils achieve well through a good range of writing opportunities. By Year 2 several are fluent and expressive writers for their age, already starting to use complex sentences. They have a good command of punctuation and spelling and their handwriting is well formed. Their progress is helped by very effective marking which sets clear targets for improvement. Teachers have very good subject knowledge and their enthusiasm for the subject is infectious. For example, pupils in a Years 3 and 4 lesson were enthused by the teacher's very good presentation of a poetry model and settled very quickly to their own work, some producing 20 lines of poetry, much composed directly onto the computer. They made very good use of thesauri and rhyming dictionaries to help them find interesting words and phrases. By Year 6, pupils choose vocabulary and expressions carefully to interest the reader and use clauses well to give a flow to their writing. In Years 3 to 6, teachers involve pupils very effectively in evaluating their own work. For example, they sometimes ask a pupil to present their work to the rest of the class. Pupils make very constructive comments about classmates' work and learn very well from this process the factors that contribute to good writing. This complements the very good marking so that pupils develop a very clear understanding on how they can improve their work. Pupils are encouraged to share their writing and 16 pupils had stories published in a local authority compendium of creative writing.

44 The quality of teaching is very good. Teachers have a very good understanding of how pupils develop language skills and their thorough lesson plans take very good account of the ages and abilities in the teaching group and the needs of individuals. They have high expectations of what pupils might achieve. They achieve a good balance between recognising and rewarding the efforts pupils have made and challenging them to improve next time. Pupils strive to meet these high expectations and this leads to very good learning. Pupils take very good responsibility for their work, making very productive use of the time available, when they are set tasks. They have the maturity to work independently and take pride in the quality and presentation of their work.

45 The leadership of the subject is very good. Planning for the subject is very thorough. There is a very clear assessment programme. Test results are analysed carefully so that teachers can see where emphasis needs to be placed. The quality of teachers' planning and pupils' work has been monitored and the co-ordinator has a clear view of the strengths of the subject. The school has identified that writing is not as strong as reading in some cohorts and an action plan to tackle this has been drawn up.

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

46 There are very good opportunities for pupils to participate in discussion in several subjects. Teachers challenge pupils to clarify and extend their ideas and this helps to develop their language skills. Pupils use their reading skills very well to find out information across the curriculum. Pupils' writing skills are also developed very well through other subjects, for example, in extended history projects. They also used their writing skills very well to present the information which won the *Best Kept Village Schools* competition.

### **MATHEMATICS**

Provision in mathematics is **very good**

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Standards of work are high.
- Very good teaching stimulates pupils' interest in their work.
- ICT is used well to support mathematics.
- The co-ordinator provides very good subject leadership.
- Good opportunities are provided to practise mathematics across the curriculum.

## Commentary

47 Both the work seen during the inspection and national test results for Year 2 and 6 pupils demonstrate high standards. Both boys and girls achieve well. By Year 2 pupils are working above the expected range for their age. At this early stage in the school year most pupils already order numbers up to 100 and understand subtraction as the reverse of addition. Higher attaining pupils readily recall addition and subtraction facts up to 20. Very good progress is made as pupils move through the school, and by the time they are in Year 6 their standards of attainment are well above average. They make very good use of their skills in using and applying mathematics. For example, they calculate the amount and cost of materials, such as the glue and wood, needed to equip a room with skirting board.

48 The quality of teaching and learning is very good. Teachers have very high expectations of what pupils should achieve in the quality and quantity of their work. Their very good knowledge of the subject is demonstrated in the high quality of discussions, prompting and questioning which increase understanding very well. Very good lesson planning caters for all pupils in mixed-year classes. This has a positive impact on pupils' learning throughout the school. Teachers often include stimulating activities that engage pupils very well in their work. They form very good relationships with pupils, which fosters enthusiasm, independence and high standards of behaviour from pupils.

49 Pupils throughout the school make frequent use of computers to practise their skills in the classroom, particularly to enhance their understanding of numbers. Year 6 pupils make very good use of spreadsheets. For example, when they are carrying out a survey of traffic, pupils interpret the resulting charts and graphs, using them to explain their findings.

50 Leadership of the subject is very good. There is a very clear grasp of the issues involved in maintaining high standards when teaching is in mixed-year classes. Close individual monitoring of pupils' progress through the thorough assessment procedures and prompt action to provide support at whatever level needed, are both features which contribute significantly to pupils' achievement.

## Mathematics across the curriculum

51 Pupils use mathematics a lot in their work in other subjects, which helps pupils to understand how mathematics can be used in practical situations. For example, pupils use computer generated graphs and charts to show the changing temperature of an ice cube over time. Good use of measuring skills is also evident in this task. In geography, pupils use their knowledge of decimals and scale when developing their map skills. There are many opportunities for pupils to use their measuring skills in art and design and in design and technology.

## SCIENCE

Provision in science is **good**

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Very strong teaching enables older pupils to achieve beyond the expected level.
- The rich curriculum includes a very good emphasis on investigative work.
- There are very good opportunities for environmental work.
- Very strong subject leadership has contributed to the rise in standards.
- Formal assessment of scientific enquiry in Year 2 needs development.

## Commentary

52 Pupils achieve well in science. Standards have risen since the last inspection and are now above average by the end of Year 2 and well above by the end of Year 6. Improvements to teaching, planning and the curriculum have all played their part in raising standards. No lessons were observed in Years 1 and 2 but analysis of work indicates that standards are above those expected and that pupils achieve well. Teaching is good overall in Years 3 to 6, although excellent teaching was observed in Years 5 and 6.

53 A strength, particularly in the upper juniors, is that teaching is firmly rooted in an experimental and investigative approach to science. This ensures that pupils not only enjoy their lessons but by Years 5 and 6 know how to carry out an investigation, make and test predictions, decide if tests are valid and use the correct terminology as they record their results. This approach, together with challenging activities, ensures that pupils' achievement is consistently very good in Years 5 and 6. Under the co-ordinator's guidance, this approach is being adopted in the remaining classes. As a result, standards have risen here, albeit at a slower rate, and pupils now achieve well. Another strong feature of the teaching is the links made with ICT and mathematics, particularly the latter.

54 Since the last inspection, the science curriculum has been enriched by the development of the school grounds including a pond and wildlife area. This is used very well by all classes. For example, pupils in Years 1 and 2 recently recorded the habitats of mini beasts identified in the area. Pupils in Years 5 and 6 played a substantial part in the design, construction and costing of the materials of the project and are rightly very proud of their achievement. Strong links with several secondary schools not only augment the science curriculum but also prepare pupils very effectively for the transfer to the next stage of education.

55 Leadership and management in science are very good. The co-ordinator has been very effective in raising standards by reorganising the curriculum with a particular focus on planning for two age groups in a class. Long gaps between coverage of some aspects of science are compensated for through booster classes and the use of homework. His monitoring of pupils' books has led to a greater emphasis on the enquiry aspect of science and the need for a more uniform way of recording across the school. He is aware that more work needs to be done on assessment of experimental and investigative science, particularly in Year 2, where assessment was too cautious to award the higher level to any pupil in national tests in 2003. Staff and pupils were particularly proud when they won a national science challenge two years ago.

## INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

Provision in information and communication technology is **very good**

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards have risen significantly since the previous inspection.
- Very effective teaching leads to high levels of skills development.
- A very good provision of equipment is readily accessible throughout the school.
- The co-ordinator's leadership has contributed very effectively to improvements in the subject.

## Commentary

56 Standards of attainment seen during the inspection are a significant improvement from the time of the previous inspection. Pupils in Year 2 achieve well to attain standards above the expected level. They have a good understanding of how to present their work using a combination of word-processing and art programs. Older pupils achieve very well and by Year 6 standards are well above national expectations. Pupils have a high degree of skill and confidence in their ICT capability. For example, a significant majority of pupils in Year 6 construct pages linked to a home page as the basis for either a book presentation or website. They demonstrate a high level of skill and



understanding for their age in this activity. Since the previous inspection, resources for the subject have been considerably enhanced and teachers have continued to improve their subject skills. Standards have risen significantly because pupils are able to have very good access to computers and very good planning ensures that pupils study all the required elements of ICT.

57 The quality of both specialist and class teaching is very good. Teachers have high expectations of what pupils can achieve. Very good subject knowledge allows the specialist teacher to explain points confidently and to devise interesting activities that help pupils to sustain a high level of effort and learning. Very good planning in class lessons ensures that pupils have substantial opportunities to use ICT both as a direct subject and to support their learning in other subjects. Very efficient use of the available resources enables pupils to acquire new knowledge and skills at a rapid pace.

58 The leadership and management of the subject are very good. The coordinator has a firm grasp of the issues and a clear view on the future development of ICT. Due to very effective monitoring of teaching, planning and pupils' work she has a good overview of the subject, and this ensures consistency and progression of teaching and learning throughout the school. Pupils' developing skills are assessed carefully, as they move through the school. Resources are used to maximum effect to give pupils substantial opportunities to experience ICT in wide variety of contexts.

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

59 Pupils have good opportunities to use their ICT skills outside of direct teaching sessions. The frequent access for individual pupils to use computers and the confident way teachers link ICT into other subjects contributes strongly to the high quality of pupils' learning in ICT. Opportunities for developing skills include the use of research skills in history, enhancement of mapping skills in geography, presentation of diagrams as well as data analysis in science and development of numeracy skills in mathematics. In some English lessons pupils draft their writing directly onto the computer, making good use of the edit facilities.

## **HUMANITIES**

60 **Religious education** was inspected separately by an inspector approved by the Blackburn Diocese.

61 Only one lesson was seen in **geography** at the beginning of a topic and there was insufficient evidence of previous work at this stage of the year to make judgements about standards or the quality of teaching and learning. Planning documents indicate good coverage of the National Curriculum requirements in the subject and a good focus on key geographical skills. There are effective procedures for assessment. The school scheme follows a two-year cycle to cater for the mixed-age classes and careful records are kept of what topics individual year groups have studied. A good range of fieldwork experiences contribute significantly to pupils' understanding of geographical concepts. There were very good aspects to the teaching and learning in the one lesson seen, particularly pupils' capacity to work independently and to research information, but the pace slackened at times and overall the lesson was satisfactory.

### **History**

Provision in history is **very good**

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Standards are high.
- There is a very effective focus on the development of historical skills.
- A good variety of enrichment activities helps to give pupils good insights into the topics studied.

## Commentary

62 Standards are above average by the end of Year 2 and well above average by the end of Year 6. This represents very good achievement. In Years 1 and 2 pupils gain good insights into how everyday life has changed over the last half century in a range of aspects. Year 6 pupils show a very good knowledge of the Victorian Age. They complete detailed individual or group research on particular aspects of the period, using a wide range of sources, and their findings are so well presented that other pupils can use them as a resource. The high quality of this work reflects the high expectations that are set and the enthusiasm generated for the subject that encourages pupils to make significant efforts outside school time.

63 Teaching and learning are both very good. Only one lesson could be seen but there was ample evidence of very effective teaching and learning in the sample of work from the previous half-term and from talking to pupils. Strengths of the teaching are the quality of questioning and the focus on key historical skills. From Year 1 pupils are encouraged to look at evidence, such as old photographs and souvenirs, and to talk about what these tell them about the past. They learn about history by preparing questions for a former pupil about what the school was like for the previous generation. Older pupils are presented with a wide range of historical sources, including paintings, objects, documents, statistics and maps. Skilful questioning draws them to interpret the evidence and come to their own conclusions. They are challenged to justify opinions and consider all the evidence. This helps to make them aware that there are differing views on some issues, for example, the coming of the railways, and that affects the information that people record. They develop very good research skills and take into account the nature of the sources they use.

64 The subject is well led. There is a clear structure for the coverage of topics and development of skills as pupils move through the school. Pupils' progress in key skills is carefully assessed. The good range of visits to museums and other places of interest and the use of visitors and special activities help to stimulate pupils' enthusiasm for the subject.

## CREATIVE, AESTHETIC, PRACTICAL AND PHYSICAL SUBJECTS

65 No **art and design** lessons were observed. It is evident, however, from teachers' planning and the range of work on display that standards are in line with national expectations. This is similar to the situation at the time of the previous inspection. Pupils in Years 3 and 4 capture the style of Paul Klee in their abstract paintings while pupils in Years 5 and 6 use Turner's work as a stimulus for their mood and atmosphere paintings. They experiment with Picasso's abstract work including '*Guernica*'. In the Years 1 and 2 class pupils using a computer art program drew pictures of the school. Some of these were of a high quality, because of the accuracy of detail and proportion.

66 Only one **design and technology** lesson was observed in Years 1 and 2. Evidence comes from planning documents and discussions with pupils and with teachers. Design and technology is taught every other half term so very little work was available for scrutiny. However, samples of work from the previous Year 6 pupils were available and indicate that standards are in line with national expectations. Pupils incorporate diagrams and labels into their designs and draw side and top elevations, for example, of slippers. They make detailed evaluations of their work including any adjustments they have made and what they would change next time. In the lesson observed, teaching was satisfactory. Pupils had a number of opportunities to improve their cutting and gluing skills and to use paper fasteners to make a hinge. However, for much of the time the teacher did too much for them, particularly in terms of planning and designing with the result that the finished products, mouse finger puppets and moving monsters, were very similar apart from the decoration. Design and technology is a focus for improvement in the current School Improvement Plan.

## Music

Provision in music is **very good**

## Main strengths and weaknesses

- All pupils are given substantial opportunities to develop musical skills.
- The quality of singing is high.
- Extra activities enrich pupils' musical experiences.

## Commentary

67 Pupils achieve very well in music. Standards are above those expected for the age group in Year 2, and well above expectations by Year 6. There is considerable enthusiasm amongst pupils for musical activities throughout the school and they have many opportunities to participate in making music. In a Year 2 lesson pupils represented sounds with symbols, recognising mood and effect. They read from their notation and performed together on simple instruments. Their enthusiasm and interest were very high and contributed significantly to creating a hugely enjoyable atmosphere in which learning was rapid. Very substantial numbers of pupils from Years 3 to 6 play a tuned musical instrument. Learning to play recorders forms the basis in Year 3 and from Year 4 many pupils progress to other instruments, such as the flute, clarinet and cornet. By the time they are in Year 6, a very high proportion of pupils read music and play an instrument.

68 Group singing is of a high quality. In an excellent example of this the headteacher very skilfully harnessed the pupils' abundant enthusiasm when teaching a new song to the whole school. She sang the song solo with the words displayed on the wall. Pupils needed no encouragement to join in first time through. Using good articulation, skilful gestures and a repeating chorus, the teacher built up pupils' confidence very quickly. The pupils were soon smiling at each other and the teacher, as they strove to live up to the very high expectations that she has of them. By the end of this relatively short activity, pupils clearly understood the shape and structure of the melody and most older pupils were moving their hands and arms spontaneously, matching gestures to rhythm, words and melody. Pupils project their voices very well so that they produce a good volume while retaining the tunefulness of the singing.

69 The quality of teaching is very good and teachers communicate their own enthusiasm. The subject benefits from the very strong leadership of the co-ordinator who has a very high level of subject knowledge. This is used to very good effect to provide interesting, varied activities and resources that maintain pupils' interest and very skilfully develop their understanding and knowledge at a rapid pace. Pupils have the opportunity to take part in extra musical activities, which contribute to their enjoyment of music and to the enhancement of their skills. Regular activities include the band and three recorder groups and pupils also have opportunities to perform at a musical evening or in the school production. There are many musical links with a local secondary school which has arts college status and the school band recorded two tracks on a corporate CD.

## Physical Education

Provision in physical education is **satisfactory**

## Main strengths and weaknesses

- Effective teaching of mixed-age classes leads to very good pupils' attitudes.
- Standards in swimming are high.
- The good range of additional opportunities encourages pupils' interest in sport.
- The limited facilities for field games, athletics and gymnastics restrict pupils' opportunities.

## Commentary

70 The provision incorporates both very good aspects and some unsatisfactory facilities. Pupils' achievement is satisfactory overall. They make very good progress in some aspects of the subject but their development of field games and gymnastic skills is constrained by the facilities available. Standards are satisfactory overall through the school. However, while standards are high

in swimming, pupils are able to display only a restricted range of skills in football lessons, because of the very limited playing space. The overall quality of both teaching and learning is good. Teachers use good subject knowledge to cater well for the wide range of ages and abilities within the teaching groups and to make the best use of the facilities available. Pupils acquire good work habits. Older pupils, for example, have developed their own warm up exercises that they undertake without prompting. They show very good consideration for others and ensure that all the pupils in the group are able to find a role in games. The two co-ordinators give very good leadership to the subject in making the most of the limited facilities and in encouraging pupils to take an active part in physical activities. In consequence, most pupils have a very positive attitude to sport.

71 The school places strong emphasis on the importance of being able to swim. Pupils benefit from very good teaching during the Years 3 and 4 swimming lessons. The headteacher has specialist teaching expertise in swimming and so the class can be split and more individual attention given. The carefully structured programme for developing skills, the encouragement and the lively pace of the sessions all contribute to the very good progress that pupils make. There is also a strong after-school swimming club, which pupils can join from the Reception class upwards. Most pupils can swim 25 metres by end of Year 4 and all achieve this by the end of Year 6. A high proportion of pupils have achieved awards beyond this.

72 Teachers give generously of their time to arrange clubs and extra activities in sport. In addition to the swimming club, there are football and cross-country clubs. Pupils compete in football, rounders, athletics, kwick cricket, cross-country and swimming competitions. Older pupils have the opportunity to take part in a residential activity that provides adventurous pursuits. These additional activities enable pupils to develop their skills, to learn teamwork and to experience a wider range of sports than is possible within the curriculum.

73 The small playing field places limitations on the games that can be played and the skills that can be developed. It is unsuitable for athletics. In the past, the school has held races half on the field and half on the playground or borrowed a farmer's field. The governors have plans to improve this situation. Indoor physical education takes place in the neighbouring village hall. This provides satisfactory accommodation for dance and movement but the school is unable to store any large gymnastic equipment at the hall and this limits pupils' gymnastic experiences. This is only partly compensated by the outdoor climbing apparatus in the school's play area and the occasional special arrangements to provide pupils with experiences on large gymnastic equipment.

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

74 Only one lesson was seen in this area of the school's work and so no judgement is made about overall provision. The school incorporates pupils' personal development as a very important part of its aims. Opportunities for pupils to express their opinions and listen to others are evident in circle time, which is planned very well. Pupils are confident when expressing themselves on issues that concern them, such as homework and what they would like to see changed. The school has an agreed policy on sex education, and the *Life Education* caravan visits the school providing a very good programme of health education.

## PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

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

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