

# INSPECTION REPORT

## LORTON SCHOOL

Cockermouth

LEA area: Cumbria

Unique reference number: 112133

Headteacher: Mr David Bell

Lead inspector: Mrs Joan Boden

Dates of inspection: 9<sup>th</sup> - 11<sup>th</sup> March 2004

Inspection number: 261593

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

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## INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Primary
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	4 to 11 years
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
Number on roll:	72
School address:	High Lorton Cockermouth Cumbria
Postcode:	CA13 9UL
Telephone number:	01900 325700
Fax number:	01900 325700
Appropriate authority:	The Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr Simon Smith
Date of previous inspection:	May 1998

## CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

Lorton is a small rural school where pupils are taught in three mixed-age classes. Reception age children are part of the Key Stage 1 class, which is taught by a teacher and a qualified teaching assistant. Key Stage 2 pupils are split into two classes. The school serves five local villages and most pupils travel by bus or car. All the pupils are of white British background and there are no pupils from homes where English is not the main language. Pupils come from a wide range of social and economic conditions. While a significant proportion of parents have professional backgrounds, others are involved in farming and the tourist industry, which are still feeling the after effects of the recent foot and mouth epidemic. When pupils start in reception, most attain what is expected at that age, although a significant minority have below average language and communication skills. About a tenth of the pupils are identified as having special educational needs (SEN), which is below average. There are no pupils with statements of SEN. Most of the pupils receiving additional help have specific learning difficulties. The school is popular and has a good reputation. While pupils rarely leave until they go to the secondary school, a significant number of pupils transfer to the school from other schools. The school received achievement awards in 2001 and 2003 for high achievement in the national tests for 11-year-olds.

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
12301	Mrs Joan Boden	Lead inspector	English Creative, aesthetic, practical and physical subjects (covering art and design, design and technology, music and physical education) The Foundation Stage Special educational needs English as an additional language
8988	Dr Joan Cross	Lay inspector	
3240	Mr David Wilkinson	Team inspector	Mathematics Science Information and communication technology Humanities (covering geography, history and religious education)

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## PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

### OVERALL EVALUATION

**This is a very good school with outstanding features.** The leadership of the headteacher is excellent. Teaching and learning are very good overall and pupils' achievement is good by the age of 7 and very good by the age of 11. Pupils' behaviour is exemplary and their attitudes to their work are excellent. Standards in English, mathematics and science at the age of 11 are well above average. The school is managed very well and it gives very good value for money.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- The headteacher gives an excellent steer to the work of the school;
- The school provides well for boys and girls of all abilities and the pupils' best interests are at the heart of everything the school does;
- Children get off to a good start in learning to read and write and in their mathematical understanding in the reception class;
- Standards in English, mathematics, science and music are well above average by the age of 11;
- The curriculum is rich and exciting and includes a very good range of out of school activities;
- The school's commitment to pupils' personal development is reflected in their excellent behaviour and attitudes to learning.

Improvement since the last inspection has been good. The areas for improvement highlighted in the last report have been tackled well. At the same time, the many strengths identified have been maintained. Other significant improvements include improved provision for children in the Foundation Stage, a richer curriculum and improvements to the accommodation.

### STANDARDS ACHIEVED

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

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

**Pupils achieve very well.** In the Foundation Stage, children make a good start and are on course to reach the goals expected by the end of reception. Reading, writing and mathematics standards are good at the end of Year 2. The pace of learning increases in the junior classes and achievement is very good for pupils currently in Year 6. The high standards of recent years in English and science are likely to be matched and standards in mathematics are also on course to be well above average. The most able pupils are achieving very well and pupils with SEN are doing well for their capabilities. The school gives music a high priority. Pupils achieve very well in this and standards at the age of 11 are well above those normally seen.

**Pupils' personal qualities, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, are exceptionally good.** Their behaviour at all times and their attitudes to their work are excellent. They thoroughly enjoy school and get on really well together. They are mature and confident and relate very well to adults. Attendance is very good and children are rarely late.

## **QUALITY OF EDUCATION**

**The school provides a very good quality of education for its pupils. Teaching is very good overall.** There is good teaching in reception and Key Stage 1, and very good and excellent teaching in Key Stage 2. In most subjects, pupils of all abilities are challenged well. Reading, writing and mathematics are taught well in Key Stage 1 and this gives the pupils a strong foundation for future learning. Teachers mark and assess pupils' work very well and give them clear pointers for improvement.

The curriculum is varied and interesting. Much of the learning is based on first-hand experiences, such as geography field trips that are planned very effectively to include several subjects. Visits and visitors are used very well to bring subjects such as history to life. Pupils use their literacy and information and communication technology (ICT) skills frequently in other subjects in Key Stage 2, but in Key Stage 1 they do not use their ICT skills often enough in other subjects. Provision in music is especially strong and pupils have very good opportunities to perform. Staff know the pupils very well. They are very caring and guide the pupils well, not only to improve their academic learning, but also in giving them excellent pastoral support.

## **LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT**

**The leadership and management of the school are very good.** The headteacher provides excellent leadership and despite the already high standards, is constantly focused on driving up standards even further. There is an excellent team spirit between all the staff and the governors. Management is very good. Teaching and learning is monitored closely and individual pupils' progress is tracked carefully. Governance is very good. The governors have a clear understanding of what the school does well and what it should do to improve. They are very supportive and fulfil their role as critical friends very effectively.

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

The parents are extremely pleased with the school. They are particularly pleased with the warm family atmosphere, where their children's learning is made so enjoyable through the rich variety of learning experiences. The pupils share their parents' opinions and are confident that their views are listened to and acted upon.

## **IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED**

The inspectors did not identify any major areas for improvement. The school is already working successfully on:

- Increasing the motivation for a small minority of reluctant writers;
- Developing pupils' ability to solve multiword problems in mathematics.

The most important thing the school should do to improve further is:

- Make sure that ICT in Key Stage 1 is given a high priority, so that the pupils can make up for the time lost during the unavoidable disruption to provision.

## PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS

### STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

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

Pupils achieve very well overall. In the reception class, progress is steady and children reach the expected standards in all the areas of learning by the time they enter Year 1. In Key Stage 1, pupils achieve well and reach above average standards in English and mathematics by the time they are 7. In Key Stage 2, they achieve very well and reach much better standards than expected in English, mathematics and science at the age of 11. There is no difference between the achievement of boys and girls.

#### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children in the reception class achieve particularly well in their personal, social and emotional development;
- Standards in reading and writing are especially strong across the school and pupils achieve really well in their written work;
- Pupils with SEN and those identified as gifted achieve well in relation to their abilities;
- Achievement in music is very good by the age of 11.

#### Commentary

1. Lorton is a small school and, consequently, the number of pupils taking national tests for 7 and 11-year-olds can vary significantly from year-to-year. This means that test results in any one year can be misleading, because they may be based on very few children. However, over a number of years, the pattern of scores can give some indication of standards. In Key Stage 1, standards in reading, writing and maths reached a very high point in 2000. Following a significant drop in 2001, standards in reading and writing have improved. In 2003, they were well above the national averages and above the averages in similar schools. Mathematics is not such a positive picture. While standards in the last three years have been in line with national averages, they have been below or well below the standards in similar schools. Inspection evidence indicates that in the current Year 2, standards are above average in both English and mathematics. Pupils are achieving better in mathematics because of the school's sharp focus on problem solving. In science in 2003, all the pupils reached the level expected for their age but none reached the higher level. Inspection evidence indicates that higher attaining pupils achieve at a satisfactory rate and are on course to reach the higher level by the end of Year 2.

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
reading	17.3 (16.8)	15.7 (15.8)
writing	16.3 (14.8)	14.6 (14.4)
mathematics	16.3 (16.6)	16.3 (16.5)

*There were 6 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	28.6 (31.7)	26.8 (27.0)
mathematics	27.0 (30.9)	26.8 (26.7)

science	30.6 (30.9)	28.6 (28.3)
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*There were 15 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year.*

2. In Key Stage 2, standards in English have been consistently high for the past four years when compared to all schools nationally. In relation to similar schools, they dropped in 2003 but nevertheless, they were still above average. In science, apart from a significant dip in 2001, standards have been consistently high when compared to all schools and to similar schools. In both subjects, pupils achieve well in relation to their prior attainment. Inspection evidence shows that the pattern of high standards is set to continue in the forthcoming tests.
3. In mathematics, standards have fluctuated between very high and average when compared to all schools nationally. In 2003, standards were in line with the national average but below average when compared to similar schools. The evidence of the inspection is that standards in the current Year 6 are well above average and pupils are achieving well. Following analysis of the most recent test results, the school has identified and tackled successfully the major weakness that pupils had, which was sifting through the information in word problems and identifying the necessary operations.
4. Overall achievement in ICT is satisfactory. In Key Stage 2, the school has kept pace with the increased national expectations and standards are in line with these. There is sound evidence that pupils currently in Year 5 are on course to exceed the expectations by the time they are 11. However, in Key Stage 1, the disruption to provision during building alterations has affected pupils' progress. Standards are currently below those expected at 7.
5. Children get off to a good start in the reception class. Most are on course to reach at least the expected levels for their age by the end of the year and some will reach them sooner. In physical development they are on course to exceed the goals. They achieve particularly well in their personal, social and emotional development considering that a significant minority live fairly isolated lives, with no pre-school experience before they start school. Their early reading and writing, and their mathematical understanding are developing very well. More could be done to extend children's speaking skills by planning and guiding their play more effectively and providing adult intervention to encourage more extended dialogue. The limited evidence seen during the inspection indicates that achievement in creative development and knowledge and understanding of the world is at least satisfactory.
6. Pupils with SEN make good progress and achieve well because they are supported well in class. Their needs are identified early and carefully constructed individual learning plans identify clear actions to take their learning forward. Teachers use these plans very effectively to match work accurately to their needs, thus enabling them to be fully included in class activities.
7. The reason that boys and girls achieve as well as they do in English and mathematics is because the school tracks all pupils individually and stretches or gives further support to those who need it. Pupils who are identified as gifted achieve very well because they are given much harder work and the school.
8. The school puts a strong emphasis on music and the excellent provision, including specialist teaching in lessons and extra instrumental tuition for all pupils, leads to very good achievement and well above average standards at the age of 11.
9. Although no lessons were seen in art and design, design and technology and physical education, inspection evidence indicates that standards and achievement are at least satisfactory in these subjects. Pupils achieve well in history and geography. The evidence from talking to pupils indicates standards above those normally seen at the age of 11. Achievement in religious education is also good. Evidence from the one lesson seen and the work in pupils' books indicates standards above those expected.

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

Pupils' attitudes and behaviour in lessons and around the school are excellent, helped by staff who promote their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development very effectively. There have been no exclusions from the school. Attendance is very good and pupils are almost always punctual.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Staff achieve an excellent and harmonious climate for learning;
- Pupils are highly motivated and very eager to give of their best;
- Exemplary behaviour, realised through extremely high expectations, ensures that everyone can concentrate on their learning and play amicably;
- Relationships are excellent throughout the school;
- Pupils are rarely absent so they are able to learn progressively.

### **Commentary**

10. Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities continue to be equally as strong as at the time of the last inspection when the school was considerably smaller in size. Pupils, many of whom travel from outlying areas by bus, are happy at school and delight in learning and playing with their friends. This includes the youngest children in the reception class who settle in quickly and feel secure because the very good induction procedures enable them to get to know the school before they start. Attendance remains well above average and pupils are keen to extend the school day by learning to play musical instruments and participating in clubs. They are enthusiastic learners who concentrate hard on their work and really want to succeed. Pupils who join from other schools settle in quickly because of the supportive, welcoming atmosphere that is all embracing and mutually respectful. Pupils mature into well adjusted individuals who are thoughtful, caring and well equipped for later life.
11. Staff are passionate about creating an environment within which pupils of different abilities and backgrounds enjoy school and thrive. Parents rightly feel that their children are very fortunate to be wonderfully well cared for, valued as individuals and stimulated to achieve very highly by great teaching and fun activities. Children are allowed to be just that; 'children', who benefit hugely from abundant enjoyable first-hand experiences and ultimate respect from all in the 'family' of the school. Pupils of all ages form firm friendships and get on really well together, helped by staff who unite in very successfully promoting self-discipline. There is no 'carrot and stick' approach in this school. Pupils are expected to behave sensibly and are trusted implicitly to do so, without any necessity for formal rules and regulations. Staff, through their own exemplary conduct, demonstrate care, concern and sensitivity towards others' feelings extremely effectively. This heavily influences pupils, who respond likewise. Staff teach pupils how best to negotiate with one another in fallouts, which helps them to be very skilled at sorting themselves out, rather than expecting adults to intervene. The trusting relationships help to put pupils in the right frame of mind for learning.
12. The pupils are delightful, friendly and courteous. Parents are unequivocal in rating their behaviour very highly and inspection findings agree with them. At playtimes, pupils are actively encouraged to socialise and play co-operatively. They have much at their disposal, including a quiet area with seating, space for impromptu football and tennis, skipping and an amazing, much loved adventure playground which parents funded. There is something for everyone, with suitable challenges for those who prefer to be more energetic. This provision significantly helps pupils to achieve their first-rate behaviour and relationships. Older pupils are very good at looking after and befriending younger ones. Very few parents indicated that their children had experienced any form of bullying or harassment, praising the staff for dealing with any concerns very effectively.

13. The school, nestling in the valley with its idyllic backdrop of the fells, is a spiritually uplifting place where pupils are listened to and helped to feel good about themselves. The school makes the most of the resources that such an area provides to support pupils' spiritual, moral and social development. A visiting artist, for example, has helped pupils come to terms with the devastating impact upon some of their families and the wider community caused by foot and mouth disease. Their superb work hangs proudly in the entrance as a lasting memorial.
14. Provision for promoting pupils' cultural development has improved since the last inspection and is now very good. Pupils learn very effectively to appreciate their own cultural heritage, often through the humanities, visits and visitors. Their awareness of other cultures is also raised very successfully through staff rightly placing great importance upon this aspect for this virtually all white, largely rural community. Older pupils, for example, experience city culture through their residential visit to Newcastle which includes a visit to a mosque. Preparations are well underway for the imminent 'Asia Week' that is to involve the whole school community in celebrating the cultural traditions of others through visiting performers and specialists. Attractive displays around school in preparation for the event are already heightening pupils' personal development successfully.
15. The school has a good policy for promoting racial harmony and equality. The staff and governors recognise that they have to work especially hard on this aspect of pupils' education because pupils do not have much contact with people of other cultures and beliefs in their day-to-day lives. The policy's effectiveness is seen in the respect that pupils show for people and their ready acceptance of people from all backgrounds.

## Attendance

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

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
School data	3.8	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.*

## QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

The school provides a very good quality of education. Teaching and learning are very good overall and the curriculum is very rich. Staff nurture pupils' personal development very effectively, so that they become socially mature and confident. There are good links with parents and excellent links with the local community.

## Teaching and learning

### *Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 20 lessons*

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
3	6	10	1	0	0	0

*The table gives the number of lessons observed in each of the seven categories used to make judgements about lessons.*

The high quality teaching seen at the last inspection has been maintained. It is very good overall. There is good teaching and learning in the Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1, and very good teaching and learning in Key Stage 2. The teaching of music throughout the school is excellent.

Teachers mark and assess pupils' work thoroughly and plan the next steps in learning accurately to meet individual children's needs.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- All the teachers adopt a lively approach and make learning interesting;
- Teachers know their subjects well, so they deliver lessons with confidence;
- Teachers have very good knowledge of what each child can do and match work accurately to take their learning forward;
- The excellent relationships between teachers and pupils create an excellent atmosphere for learning;
- Whenever possible, learning is based on pupils' first-hand experiences, and subjects are linked effectively.

### **Commentary**

16. Pupils learn quickly and achieve very well because of the very good teaching they receive. There is a constant buzz of excitement in lessons because of the lively approach that all the teachers adopt. Pupils' interest is captured from the start of lessons and only in rare cases does their attention wander. All the teachers have good subject knowledge. This is particularly marked in Key Stage 2, where teachers have been in post for longer and several specialists are employed, for example, to teach science and music.
17. A major strength in the teaching lies in the very detailed planning. Teachers are very clear about what they want pupils to learn and share this with them at the beginnings of lessons. Pupils of differing abilities are identified in lesson plans and clear strategies for supporting lower attaining pupils are set out. Pupils with SEN are supported well. Teachers focus well on the targets in individual learning plans and provide the help necessary, either through additional adult support and equipment or modified work. These pupils achieve well because their learning is planned in small, manageable steps. This means that they are building on success and this boosts their self-esteem and spurs them on. Higher attaining pupils are challenged well and they enjoy going that one step further. The joint teaching of the Year 3/4 class is successful because the headteacher and those with whom he shares the class plan the work very effectively together and have a consistent approach.
18. Teachers give clear explanations and often use appropriate visual aids and learning games to reinforce learning. They use questions well to check understanding and very often use more probing questions to draw out what pupils already know and make them think further. They also give pupils very good opportunities to explain their answers, thus deepening their understanding. In Key Stage 2, staff use ICT well to support learning in most subjects.
19. The calm approach by teachers and their strong belief that learning should be fun creates excellent relationships between them and their pupils. Pupils' behaviour and attitudes to their work are excellent because of the unspoken, but nonetheless very evident, expectation that pupils will always behave well and work hard. This enables lessons to proceed at a brisk pace and cover a lot of work because pupils are always on task.
20. Throughout the school, learning is made relevant to pupils through carefully planned educational visits and visitors to the school. Again the school makes excellent use of specialists, for example, to teach pupils about land formations and erosion from first-hand evidence on a geography field trip. Such experiences lead to good achievement.

## **Assessment**

21. The procedures for assessing and recording individual pupils' attainment and monitoring the progress they make have improved since the previous inspection and are now good. In the core subjects of English and mathematics, there is an effective whole school system of record keeping based on formal mid-term assessments. Additionally, pupils' progress in reading and spelling is monitored carefully through tests. These procedures allow the school to judge pupils' attainment, to set long-term targets for future attainment and to set short-term targets for improvement.
22. Teachers know their pupils very well. Informal assessments through careful questioning, particularly in the plenary sessions of lessons, enable teachers to adjust their planning appropriately.

## **The curriculum**

The curriculum is very good overall. The pupils receive a rich variety of learning experiences that cater very well for their interests and needs. Much of the learning is based on first-hand experiences because of the numerous visits they make to places of interest and the number of people who visit the school from the wider community, to share their talents with the pupils. The accommodation and resources are very good.

## **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The strong links between subjects in Key Stage 2 help pupils to deepen their understanding and to develop their basic skills in literacy, mathematics and ICT;
- The school draws successfully on the specialist subject knowledge of its own staff and that of the wider community to enrich pupils' learning;
- Provision for pupils with SEN and for those who are very able is good;
- Extra-curricular provision is very good and all pupils in Key Stage 2 have the opportunity to play a musical instrument;
- The accommodation and resources for learning are very good.

## **Commentary**

23. The curriculum has improved since the last inspection. The school has adapted the national strategies for literacy and numeracy well, in order to match the needs of the mixed-age groups in each class. Very good planning, particularly in Key Stage 2, ensures that the skills pupils learn in one subject are developed in other subjects. In science, for example, pupils use measuring skills in their experiments and record their findings by ordering their writing in a systematic way.
24. The curriculum for children in the Foundation Stage is good. The school has compensated well for the lack of an outdoor learning area through the provision of an adventure playground. The children have regular frequent access to this and learn to climb, swing and balance with confidence.
25. The differing abilities of pupils and their individual talents are catered for well. Pupils are challenged appropriately, such as the gifted mathematicians who have a separate programme of work that is normally taught in secondary schools. Pupils who find learning more difficult receive good support from the adults that work with them and through additional resources to support their understanding, such as the use of counting materials in mathematics to aid understanding of place value.

26. The school makes very good use of the wider community to enhance its curriculum provision for pupils. Pupils regularly visit places of interest, such as Grasmere where they learn about the tourist industry and the residential city visit to Newcastle, which alternates with the adventure activities at Barcaple. The school taps into local expertise, for example, the village blacksmith and local artists, which has inspired the pupils to produce whole school collages which are on permanent display in the entrance hall.
27. There is a very good range of extra-curricular activities for pupils including inter-school sports, the chess club and a variety of opportunities in music including recorder, violin and keyboard. These activities contribute significantly to pupils learning and to their social development.

### **Care, guidance and support**

Staff take excellent care of the pupils and support and guide them very effectively. They actively seek pupils' views and very successfully involve them in the school's work and development.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Pastoral care is first-rate;
- Staff have in-depth knowledge of pupils' personal and academic needs because they are actively encouraged to share concerns;
- Staff and governors work hard to ensure that pupils are protected from harm;
- Very good induction arrangements ensure that the pupils soon feel at ease;
- Pupils' views really matter to the staff and are taken on board.

### **Commentary**

28. These aspects continue to be strengths of the school that help pupils feel safe and secure and give them confidence in their own abilities. Trusting relationships based upon mutual respect between pupils, teachers and all the support staff underpin the exemplary degree of care and concern shown for one another.
29. Staff get to know the pupils extremely well and place them at the very heart of all they do. The process begins before the children start school when staff visit them at home and, if applicable, in their pre-school establishments. These visits enable staff to observe the children operating in settings that are familiar to them and to discuss any concerns and sensitivities that may need tackling. Parents highly value these and other arrangements to help their children settle into routines in the reception year. Pupils who join the school at other times are equally well inducted according to parents who appreciate the welcome they receive and the way that the headteacher keeps in touch about how well they are adjusting to their new school. Some of these pupils have experienced problems, such as bullying, elsewhere and make the move because of the school's deservedly good reputation for its strong ethos of care and high academic standards.
30. Staff are particularly good at picking up on pupils' emotions, seeking reasons and sharing concerns with their colleagues. Weekly staff meeting agendas, for example, prompt discussions which help the entire staff to be sympathetic to pupils' circumstances and better able to respond with appropriate sensitivity. Teachers and support staff mingle with parents who collect their children at the close of school. These informal chats enable staff and parents to be alerted to any problems or anxieties that arise.
31. Pupils who find learning or behaving more difficult, and those who are gifted and talented, are suitably supported so that they achieve as highly as everyone else.

32. Governors and staff work hard to assure pupils' welfare, health and safety. They are actively involved in minimising risks on the premises and during off site visits. Matters relating to child protection are taken very seriously by staff, who are suitably trained to be vigilant and responsive.
33. Discussion times in lessons and assemblies enable pupils to raise issues that matter to them, safe in the knowledge that staff will listen and respond suitably. Their requests for more playground equipment, for example, have resulted in the wide range of activities that they so enjoy. Pupils appreciate the kindness shown to them by their teachers. They like the individual attention that they receive and the help to improve their work. Teachers regularly monitor pupils' progress in literacy and numeracy and set them targets for development, but this is not extended to other core subjects such as science and ICT.

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

The school's partnership with parents is good and its use of the local community to raise standards and promote pupils' personal development is excellent. Very good links are established with other schools and colleges.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Parents are actively encouraged to get involved in their children's learning;
- The school provides good quality information for parents about the curriculum and their children's progress;
- The school is working on improving communication with parents whose children travel by bus;
- The school taps into local facilities and events extremely effectively to enrich pupils' learning;
- Links with the main secondary school to which pupils transfer and with other small schools are very good.

### **Commentary**

34. The school continues to enjoy a successful partnership with parents. Its popularity in the neighbourhood stems from very appreciative parents who support its life and work well. Parents get involved successfully in their children's learning through homework. They are kept abreast of topics through regular newsletters and given suitable opportunities to learn more about the curriculum through meetings in school. The parent and teacher association is very active in organising social and fundraising events, which families and the wider community attend and enjoy in large numbers. Their substantial financial donations are used wisely for the benefit of the pupils. Few parents help in lessons, an aspect of involvement that the school is seeking to improve.
35. Omissions in legally required information in the school's prospectus and governors' annual report to parents at the time of the last inspection have been rectified. The combined document is very attractively produced and gives a good insight into the learning experiences that help to make the school so special.
36. Consultations between teachers and parents about children's progress and targets for improvement are extremely well attended. Detailed, highly personal annual written reports tell parents clearly how well their children are doing in relation to national expectations. Some parents, particularly of pupils in Years 3 to 6, indicated that they would like to be better informed about progress. The evidence of the inspection is that parents are kept well informed. There is a long gap between the autumn and summer term consultations. However, parents know that they are most welcome to contact the staff if they have any queries or concerns. Many parents whose children travel to school by bus make a special point of collecting their children on a regular basis because they know that staff are always

ready to update them on their children's progress. In addition to this, the headteacher holds useful half termly 'surgeries' when parents can make an appointment for a more detailed discussion. Reading records, used mainly in reception and Key Stage 1, offer parents an effective channel for two-way dialogue with the staff. There is no equivalent, such as a homework diary, for older pupils. Parents are being consulted as to how staff might better communicate on a day-to-day basis with those who do not accompany their children to and from school.

37. The school is at the very heart of the local community, sharing the tennis club pavilion for its main hall and helping to organise the village show. Educational visits in the locality, some of which enable pupils to work closely with the education department of the National Trust, enliven pupils' learning, particularly in history and geography. Members of the local community, including a dentist, blacksmith and artist provide many other opportunities for enrichment.
38. Strong links with Cockermonth School enable pupils who transfer there to be prepared very well for transition, helped by staff and ex-pupils who visit to talk to Year 6. Several small schools in the area liaise effectively and are co-arranging the 'Asia Week'. Staff benefit from links with a local Beacon school for their own professional development and from helping to train student teachers.

## **LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT**

The leadership and management of the school are very good. The headteacher's excellent leadership is a significant factor in the pupils' very good achievement. Management is very good as is the governance of the school. The governors play a key role in running the school. These are similar judgements to those made at the last inspection.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- There is outstanding leadership by the headteacher;
- There is a very strong commitment to raising standards further and giving each child the best possible start in life;
- The headteacher, staff and governors make an excellent team;
- The governing body has a very good understanding of the strengths and weaknesses in the school and fulfils its role as a critical friend very well.

### **Commentary**

39. The headteacher's excellent leadership is at the root of the school's success. The pupils' best interests are at the heart of everything the school does. To this end, he focuses unremittingly on raising standards and ensuring that each pupil, regardless of ability, achieves the very best they can. This view is endorsed by parents, even parents whose children are no longer at the school. His open and positive approach means he has the confidence of all the staff and the governors.
40. The governors have a very good understanding of what the school does well and what it must do to improve further. The working relationship between the governors and staff is excellent. They work as equal partners in evaluating the work of the school, identifying issues and drawing up plans for improvement. A measure of the successful relationships between staff and governors is the way teachers welcome the constructive comments following governors' lesson observations, and often act on their suggestions. The warm and friendly relationships do not, however, prevent the governors from challenging the school to account for its performance, for example in national tests. They have a very clear understanding that the small cohorts can have a very significant bearing on overall performance in terms of

points, but they still seek explanations when results dip. The governor with responsibility for SEN is aware of the school's provision and makes a very good, evaluative contribution to the school's work in this area.

41. Monitoring and evaluation of pupils' performance in tests is very effective. In last year's mathematics tests for 11-year-olds, for example, it was noted that pupils had difficulty in solving complex problems. Although they could do the mathematics, they could not analyse the questions and decide on the calculations needed. This was immediately fed into the school improvement plan, with clear actions identified. This has been very successful because all the teachers have allocated time to make this a specific focus in lessons. In a lesson seen in Year 2, the highest attaining pupils could solve problems that would tax some adults.
42. Subject leaders have a very heavy workload in such a small school. However, this is eased to a large extent by the whole team approach to most subjects. English and mathematics are led and managed very well and there are very good features in the leadership and management of all the other subjects.
43. Very good use is made of teachers' individual expertise to support pupils' learning and improve the quality of the curriculum. A good example of this is in music, where pupils reach well above the standards normally reached by pupils of the same age. The Year 3/4 class is shared between the headteacher and three other part-time teachers. This works very well because the part-time teachers are chosen for their expertise, so what could be a recipe for disaster, if poorly managed, is positively beneficial.

## Financial information

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

Income and expenditure (£)		Balances (£)	
Total income	156,413	Balance from previous year	14,369
Total expenditure	170,782	Balance carried forward to the next	54
Expenditure per pupil	2,586		

44. The school makes the best use of all the funding it receives. Spending decisions are based securely on the likely impact on raising attainment. The headteacher and the governors keep a careful check on spending. They are aware that the carry forward figure in the table is much smaller than would be expected. However, increased funding is due because pupil numbers have risen significantly.

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

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

Provision in the Foundation Stage is **good**. This is an improvement since the last inspection.

#### **Commentary**

45. Although most of the children attend a nursery on a part-time basis before they start in the reception class, this not the case for all. A significant minority live in isolated areas and do not have much experience of mixing with other children or with adults outside their immediate family until they start school. Attainment varies from year to year and from child to child, but overall it is broadly as would be expected except in language development where it is slightly below expectations overall. For most of the time, the children are taught as a separate class by a support assistant under the guidance of the Key Stage 1 teacher. The curriculum is planned well to meet the needs of children in the Foundation Stage in all the areas of learning. Although there is not the space to provide a secure outdoor learning area, this is compensated for by regular supervised outdoor provision and weekly physical education lessons.
46. Although children's learning is good overall, there are times when it could be better. Sometimes teaching is not as effective as it could be because there is not enough adult guidance to activities. While it is good practice to encourage independence by allowing children to choose their own activities, there is a tendency to 'let them get on with it' rather than planning for effective adult intervention to check on learning and to stretch them.

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

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

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

- Very good induction gives children confidence and helps them to settle in quickly;
- Children achieve very well in their personal and social development.

#### **Commentary**

47. Teaching is very good and children exceed the expectations for their age in this area. The very good induction procedures mean that the children get to know their teachers and the routines of the school before they start. This leads to them settling in quickly. Adults are very sensitive to individual children's needs and help them to become independent and show initiative. Although they are always on hand to give help and support, they encourage the children to try to do things for themselves before asking for help. This increases the children's confidence as they succeed in tasks such as buttoning up their own coats or deciding for themselves how to tackle an activity. The consistent approach by adults means that the children know what is expected of them in terms of work and behaviour, and they develop mature, sensible attitudes. They enjoy each other's company and get on well together.

## COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY

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

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- The classroom has a wealth of attractive and interesting books;
- Children are encouraged to write independently for a variety of purposes;
- Opportunities are sometimes missed to develop children's learning through play.

### Commentary

48. Teaching is good and children achieve well. Most children are on course to meet the standards expected by the end of their reception year. They listen very attentively to stories and are keen to write their own versions in their specially made books. They take part confidently in conversations both with other children and with adults. However, their answers are often limited to a very few words. There is a need for more planned adult intervention into pupils' play activities, in order to extend their speaking skills through engaging them in discussion about what they are doing or finding out.

## MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision in mathematical development is **good**.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children achieve well in their mathematical development;
- The teacher uses a good range of resources to support learning.

### Commentary

49. Teaching is good and children achieve well. Most children are on course to reach the expected standard and just over a third have already reached the learning goals in this area. Overall, children have a good grasp of numbers to 20. Although lower attainers can count from memory and assemble a given number of objects, they have difficulty in counting without objects. They cannot, for example, count in their heads the number of beats on a drum. Higher attainers have made a good start on working out simple sums. They can make up and write their own sums and enjoy finding different ways of getting the same answer, e.g.  $6 + 3 = 3 + 3 + 3 = 4 + 4 + 1$ . Most children have a sound knowledge of two and three-dimensional shapes.

## KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE WORLD

It is not possible to make a judgement on provision in the area of knowledge and understanding of the world as no teaching was seen.

### Commentary

50. Children have a sound understanding that people from other cultures often have different customs and beliefs and they show respect for these. Children do not achieve as well as they might in developing their computer skills because, currently, they do not have enough regular access to computers.

## PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision in physical development is **good**.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- The children have frequent access to the 'adventure playground'.

### Commentary

51. Teaching is good and children achieve well. Most are on line to exceed the standard expected by the end of their reception year. The children have a good sense of spatial awareness and move confidently and safely. Their movements are controlled and they have good balance. A good range of resources, such as bats, balls and skipping ropes in the playground develops their hand-eye co-ordination well. This is enhanced further by activities in the classroom, such as threading beads, using hole punches, scissors and calculators, which also improve their dexterity.

## CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT

It is not possible to make a judgement on creative development as not enough teaching was seen.

### Commentary

52. Children were observed to achieve well in music. In a lesson with pupils from Years 1 and 2, they sang confidently and expressively and joined in well with the actions to songs. Artwork on display in the classroom indicates that standards are as would be expected for children of the same age. It shows that the children have good opportunities to explore a good range of art and modelling materials.

## SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 1 and 2

### ENGLISH

Provision in English is **very good**.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- High quality teaching stimulates pupils and they achieve very well in most aspects of the subject;
- Standards are well above average at the age of 11;
- The content of pupils' writing is impressive at the age of 11;
- Pupils do not always pay enough attention to handwriting, spelling and punctuation.

### Commentary

53. The very small numbers of pupils taking the national tests from year-to-year mean that reliable conclusions cannot be drawn from results because the performance of just one pupil can alter the picture significantly. In Key Stage 1, standards in reading and writing show an improvement over the past three years. Inspection evidence shows that the improvement has been sustained and that overall standards are on course to be at least above average again. In Key Stage 2, inspection findings follow the same very positive pattern of the test results over recent years. These show that standards have been consistently high for the past four years. Most pupils are on course to reach a higher standard than expected for their age in the forthcoming tests.

54. Standards in speaking and listening are above average throughout the school. Although a significant number of children start school with limited conversational skills, by the age of 11 they are very confident speakers. This is because teachers plan good opportunities for pupils to talk about their work and put forward their ideas, for example, by explaining how they have arrived at an answer in mathematics. In Key Stage 1, pupils' speaking and listening skills are nurtured very well. They listen very attentively to well chosen stories and have regular opportunities to act out the stories in groups.
55. Standards in reading are above average in Year 2. Pupils have a love of books and are content to read quietly to themselves. Most pupils read aloud fluently and interpret stories well, through lively expression. Higher attainers in particular are keen to discuss books they have read and can group them into fiction and non-fiction. Parents support their children well by sharing books with them at home. Throughout Key Stage 2, pupils are introduced to a wider range of literature and compare different styles of writing. Teachers make good links between reading and writing, encouraging pupils to try out different styles in their own writing. The pupils' good reading skills benefit their learning in other subjects.
56. Standards in writing are above average at the end of Key Stage 1 and well above average at the end of Key Stage 2. High quality teaching, typified by teachers' enthusiasm, lively approach and accurate matching of work to pupils' needs, means that pupils of all abilities make good progress as they move through the school. Pupils write well for a range of different purposes. Opening lines are particularly good at engaging the readers' attention:
- 'When we stepped through those starry doors it was like finding Fairyland.'*
- 'Cockermouth took our breath away on November 9<sup>th</sup> with an amazing display of blasting bangers, runaway rockets and much more.'*
57. Grammar, punctuation and spelling are taught well. However, in their enthusiasm to get their ideas on paper, pupils are often careless in their writing. Teachers, in their determination not to put pupils off writing, do not always put enough emphasis on presentation.
58. The subject is led and managed very well. Individual tracking of pupils is used very effectively to ensure that each one is making the progress they should. Extra support is given to those who need it while more challenging work is provided for more able pupils. The staff work very effectively as a team and the open approach means that they are all aware of what needs to be done to raise standards further.

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

59. Pupils use their reading skills very well to research information in other subjects. Writing standards are high because pupils have many good opportunities to use different forms of writing to suit the purpose of the task. Pupils turn narratives into plays, for example, and use persuasive writing to get the characters' views across. They use word processing well, for example, when making tourist brochures as part of a cross-curricular topic on Grasmere.

## MATHEMATICS

Provision in mathematics is **very good**.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- The standard of pupils' work is well above average at the age of 11;
- Pupils achieve well as they move through school, because the teaching is consistently good and sometimes very good, particularly within Key Stage 2;
- There is a consistent approach to the teaching of the subject in each of the three classes with an emphasis on developing pupils' mental numeracy skills;
- The teachers cater well for the very wide range of ability of pupils in each class;
- Pupils enjoy mathematics and work very hard in lessons;
- The school is working hard to improve pupils' ability to solve number problems.

### Commentary

60. The school's performance in the national tests can fluctuate year-on-year, due to the small number of pupils in each year group. These should be treated with caution because the individual results of one or two pupils can significantly affect the performance of the whole group. However, over the last four years the results at the age of 7 have generally been in line with the national average and at the age of 11, have fluctuated between the national average and well above it. Standards in the present Year 2 are above average and they are well above average in Year 6. The present Year 6 is a very strong cohort when compared to others in the school and contains pupils with a particular and even an exceptional flair for the subject.
61. Teaching throughout the school is good and in Key Stage 2 is sometimes very good. Established routines and the high expectations that teachers have of their pupils ensure that lessons run smoothly and proceed at a brisk pace. No time is lost to unrelated activities. The teachers captivate the pupils' attention in the oral part of lessons through a wide range of approaches. For example, the pupils in the Year 3/4 class particularly enjoyed chanting their 5 times table both backwards and forwards as the teacher paced out and altered direction along an imaginary number line. The teachers are particularly skilled at sharing and explaining the variety of methods that other pupils are using to calculate the answer to a sum. The result is that pupils make good gains in their knowledge, skills and understanding. Teachers are committed to meeting the needs of the wide range of ability found in each class. On the one hand, they will choose an easier question in oral work for the less able, while on the other hand they set much harder work for the more able. Nevertheless, the school could do more to present more 'open-ended' questions for all its pupils in order that they are more fully engaged.
62. In lessons, pupils work hard, listen attentively, behave exceptionally well and show great respect for others. For example, on the many occasions when pupils are called upon to explain their thinking, their peers listen carefully and acknowledge their contributions. Their very positive attitudes contribute greatly to their learning.
63. Standards are very similar to those at the time of the previous inspection. The subject is led and managed very well. Good use is made of performance data and the monitoring of teaching styles to determine where improvements are needed. Problem solving is an area in the national tests where pupils do not do so well. The school has identified this weakness and has a variety of strategies in place to raise standards in this area. For example, pupils are encouraged to sift out from problems the essential data required, to make jottings and then perform the calculation. In addition pupils are encouraged to set number problems themselves for others to tackle. The recently introduced books that pupils use for homework are also very challenging in this area of work. These strategies are proving effective.

## Mathematics across the curriculum

64. Good use is made of mathematics in other subjects. For example, close links are made between mathematics and science where pupils measure time and force, and then calculate averages before presenting their data using ICT.

## SCIENCE

Provision in science is **good**.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards are well above average at the age of 11;
- Teachers provide very interesting first-hand experiences often linked to practical investigations that pupils find enjoyable.

### Commentary

65. Standards at the end of Key Stage 1 are in line with the national average and the achievement of most pupils is satisfactory. More capable pupils, however, under achieve because the work does not challenge them sufficiently. More pupils at Key Stage 1 should be reaching higher than the expected level in the end of year assessments. The school has recognised the need to revise its targets for these pupils.
66. Standards within Key Stage 1 are lower than those at the time of the previous inspection but in Key Stage 2, standards are higher. However, great caution needs to be taken when looking at the results year-on-year, due to the fluctuations that can occur due to the make-up of the small number of pupils in a year group. Pupils in Key Stage 2 achieve very well and standards are well above average. They have very good factual knowledge and can plan and carry out their own investigations competently. For example, many pupils in Year 6 can explain the difference between a physical and chemical change and can give a variety of examples of such changes.
67. Pupils enjoy their science lessons, which often involve them in practical activity and first-hand experiences as, for example, when they plant seeds to observe plant growth, or investigate the force required to pull a weight along the table. These practical experiments enable the pupils to make simple scientific deductions. In one lesson, pupils predicted and then investigated which fabric would produce the least friction for the weight to slide on. Pupils in Year 4 can give correct examples of where friction is beneficial and where it is a disadvantage.
68. All the teaching is at least satisfactory, but the best teaching is in Key Stage 2, where it is consistently very good. At both key stages, the practical approach to the subject places high demands on planning and preparation which is done very well. All the teachers help widen pupils' vocabulary by the good use of scientific language and often reinforce this vocabulary with display materials. For example, pupils in Year 4 are able to give examples of invertebrates and can correctly define what the term means.
69. Children use a variety of presentation in their work, including tables, drawings, graphs and writing. While this is good, it is often let down by careless presentation and lack of attention to basic punctuation and spelling.
70. Leadership and management are satisfactory. The subject co-ordinator is very knowledgeable and has a clear commitment to maintaining high standards. However, she is only employed for one day a week and apart from teaching all day, she has two other subject responsibilities.

## **INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY**

While discussions took place with staff and pupils and teachers' plans and pupils' work were analysed, including time spent with pupils at computers, no direct teaching was seen. Therefore, no overall judgement can be made on the provision in this subject.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The disruption to provision in Key Stage 1 during building work has led to lower standards than expected at the age of 7;
- Standards at Key Stage 2 have improved since the previous inspection to meet the increased demands of the National Curriculum and are in line with those expected for pupils at the age of 11;
- In the area of communicating information by text and graphics, the pupils in Years 5 and 6 achieve very well;
- Pupils have better access to computers than at the time of the last inspection and computers are used more effectively to support pupils' learning in other subject areas.

### **Commentary**

71. In Key Stage 1, the lack of provision for a term has meant that pupils have had very limited purposeful 'hands-on' experiences at computers until recently. Consequently, keyboard skills are slower than one might expect for pupils of this age. They have also not had enough opportunities to develop the skills of saving, retrieving and amending their work in a variety of contexts. However, as a class they have collectively undertaken work to enter data into the computer and produce a graph.
72. In Key Stage 2, the opportunities to use ICT are good and the work is often set in the meaningful context of other subject topics. For example, pupils have produced their own 'Tourist Leaflets' based on the village of Grasmere. They have imported images and text from the Internet and laid them out to their own design by re-sizing work and creating borders and headlines to enhance the work. These are of a high standard, as are the multi-media presentations into which pupils have incorporated text, clipart, sound and pictures. Pupils in Years 3 and 4 are currently working well in the area of control technology, preparing instructions to create pathways based on right-angled turns. The graphic work undertaken in Years 3 and 4 is also of good quality, where pupils have undertaken work linked to the artist Picasso. The pupils have manipulated images of a violin to create unique pictures of their own.
73. Pupils talk enthusiastically about their work and show a great deal of care and respect for the resources available to them. Leadership and management of the subject are satisfactory. During the rebuilding work, the school compensated as much as possible for the lack of provision in Key Stage 1. Maximum use was made of computers in Key Stage 2, for example, when the older pupils went swimming.

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

74. At both key stages, pupils are able to access the Internet and particularly at Key Stage 2, to find information in support of their study units in subjects such as geography and history. For example, in history the pupils in Years 3 and 4 accessed the Internet to find information about Ancient Egypt. All pupils use appropriate software in mathematics and English to sharpen their basic number skills and their understanding of phonics in spelling related activities. In science and mathematics teachers often use data handling software to highlight for the pupils the trends and patterns in data that they have collected for themselves.

## **HUMANITIES**

No lessons were observed in **geography** and **history**. It is not possible, therefore, to make an overall judgement on provision. However, based on discussions with pupils and an analysis of their work, standards in both subjects are better than those seen in most schools at the ages of 7 and 11. Although there is not a lot of written work in pupils' books, discussions with pupils reveal good knowledge and understanding. Pupils in Years 5 and 6, for example, showed a particularly good knowledge of mountain landscapes.

### **Commentary**

75. In **geography** and **history**, achievement is good because provision is based mostly on first-hand experiences and teachers draw on a wide range of resources to support pupils' learning. The subjects are made relevant and interesting through, for example, visits within the locality and beyond, links with the National Park personnel, the use of video and the Internet. In history, pupils in Years 1 and 2 give satisfactory accounts of 'The Great Fire of London', why it started and the reasons for it spreading so fast. They appreciate that a positive aspect was its effect in wiping out the plague. They know about the different sources of historical material such as books, diaries, museums, photographs and the memories of older people.
76. Pupils in Years 5 and 6 have a good understanding of the features of mountain environments and realise their own mountain area is on a much smaller scale than that of other mountain ranges, such as the Pyrenees. They know, for example, about the glacial effects of the Ice Age that has influenced their own landscape. On an Ordnance Survey map, they can identify mountains, contours, streams and valleys and locate where they live. They are aware of the benefits brought to the local community through tourism and balance this against the negative effects of pollution and the erosion of paths by walkers.
77. Pupils undertake a variety of study units in each subject, following a two-year cycle. This enables them to have a wide range of experiences. For example, in history at Key Stage 2 pupils have recently studied the Ancient Greeks and Ancient Egypt, and presently pupils in Years 5 and 6 are looking at the 1950s and 1960s by following some of the events in the life of John Lennon. When discussing such periods, pupils show a good understanding of chronology and move easily from talking about the 'Battle of Marathon' to the fashion style of 'Mods and Rockers'. They clearly enjoy their studies.
78. Both subjects are led and managed well. The work is planned well and the two-year cycle ensures that the needs of children of all abilities in the mixed-age classes are met.

### **Religious education**

Only one lesson was seen. It is not possible, therefore, to make an overall judgement on provision.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Excellent teaching was seen in the one lesson observed.

### **Commentary**

79. Standards of attainment are better than those expected in the locally agreed syllabus for pupils at the ages of 7 and 11. The curriculum is well planned to enable pupils to both deepen their knowledge of religions and for them to explore parallel events and feelings in their own lives to give meaning to their studies. This use of pupils' own experiences makes a very positive contribution to their moral and spiritual development. Pupils have a good understanding of the main events in the life of Jesus and also study the beliefs and traditions of other faiths and cultures.

80. In the one lesson observed, the teaching was excellent. The Year 3 and 4 pupils were studying the Easter Story and its importance to Christians. Pupils could recall significant events from 'The Last Supper' and 'The Garden of Gethsemane'. Through drama, poetry and a Bible reading the teacher was able to create for the pupils the sense of betrayal, loneliness and sadness that Jesus felt at this time. In turn, the pupils used expressions such as, 'my eyes filled with salty tears, darkness filled my body and I was left out frozen' in order to express for themselves feelings of despair and loneliness. The teacher encouraged pupils to think about how we might meet the needs of such people and one pupil responded with the word 'forgiveness'. The Easter Story had come alive for them too.
81. The subject is led and managed well. Overall, pupils' achievement is good. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 have the chance to listen to some of the parables of Jesus such as 'The Prodigal Son' and recount the story in words and drawings. In Years 3 and 4 pupils are showing a growing awareness of the symbols of Christianity. Pupils in Years 5 and 6 demonstrate that they understand the key elements of the Islam in their booklets on the 'Five Pillars' of the faith.

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

No lessons were seen in **art and design**, **design and technology** or **physical education**.

Consequently, no judgements can be made about standards or teaching and learning in these subjects. However, pupils' past work in art and design and design and technology was examined along with photographic records. Teachers' planning in all three subjects was also examined and discussions were held with pupils. The combined evidence indicates that pupils' achievement is at least satisfactory in all three subjects.

### **Commentary**

82. In **art and design**, pupils undertake a very good range of work using a wide range of media. Work on display includes various painting techniques, clay and textile work. Pupils work on collaborative projects under the guidance of a visiting artist. These projects make a very good contribution to their spiritual, social and cultural development and involve people from the local community very well.
83. In **design and technology**, pupils evaluate commercial products before designing and making their own versions. Having made these, they test and evaluate them and suggest ways of making them better. It was not possible to judge the quality of the finished products from photographs, but written work showed that the pupils have a good understanding of the design process.
84. In **physical education**, standards in swimming are high. The school sets great store by teaching all pupils to swim and liaises very effectively with parents if it looks likely that pupils will not reach the required standard. It is very rare for pupils not to reach the standard of swimming 25 metres early on in Key Stage 2 and most pupils are confident swimmers well before they leave. Although the school does not have a hall large enough to accommodate gymnastics apparatus, pupils do not miss out on this area of learning. The school has installed an adventure playground to which the pupils have unlimited access before school and at playtimes and lunchtimes. The provision of small games equipment at lunchtime supports learning well, as do the after school clubs that provide good opportunities to develop team skills.
85. Judging by the standards achieved, leadership and management in all three subjects is at least satisfactory.

### **Music**

Provision in music is **excellent**.

## Main strengths

- All music lessons are taught by a music specialist;
- All the pupils in Key Stage 2 learn to play at least one musical instrument and the vast majority of pupils in Year 6 play two;
- Provision for extra-curricular instrumental tuition is very good.

## Commentary

86. The school gives a high priority to music and the leadership and management of the subject are exemplary. The expertise of the music teacher is a key factor in the excellent provision that leads to well above average standards by the age of 11. He is a talented musician and his long association with the school means that he knows the pupils very well because he teaches them on a regular weekly basis from when they start in Year 1. He gets the best out of pupils because of his excellent relationship with them and the fact that he makes learning so enjoyable. Pupils respond well to his sense of humour and work very hard to improve their performance. In Key Stage 1, pupils' singing skills are above average. They really enjoy interpreting songs in different moods.
87. All the pupils in Key Stage 2 are taught to play the recorder. This plays a major part in their very good achievement because it means that they can all read music just as easily as they read books. By Year 6, pupils use technical vocabulary naturally when discussing notation and know how different playing instructions affects the outcome. Pupils throughout the school have very good opportunities for extra instrumental tuition either at lunchtime or after school. In Year 6, most pupils take up this option and they work extremely hard during these sessions. The teacher keeps good records of how each pupil is doing and each one is given specific exercises to practise. These extra lessons, coupled with the pupils' enthusiasm and commitment, add significantly to learning.

## PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP

Provision for personal, social and health education and citizenship (PSHCE) is **very good**.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils are actively encouraged to talk about their feelings and emotions;
- Discussion times successfully enable pupils to share their concerns and express their opinions.

## Commentary

88. Staff use discussion times in lessons extremely effectively to resolve any difficulties that arise and put the pupils in the right emotional state for learning. The trusting relationships that are established throughout the school enable pupils to be confident to share their anxieties. They are well versed in techniques such as 'Circle Time', which encourage them to open up and express their innermost thoughts to their classmates. Staff place great importance upon teaching pupils how to keep safe and well with the help of visitors, such as fire safety officers, the school nurse and community police. The school's sex and drugs education programmes are effective. PSHCE underpins all that happens in school and results in pupils' excellent attitudes, behaviour and personal qualities.

## 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	3
Value for money provided by the school	2
<b>Overall standards achieved</b>	<b>2</b>
Pupils' achievement	2
<b>Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities</b>	<b>1</b>
Attendance	2
Attitudes	1
Behaviour, including the extent of exclusions	1
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	3
How well the curriculum meets pupils' needs	2
Enrichment of the curriculum, including out-of-school activities	2
Accommodation and resources	2
Pupils' care, welfare, health and safety	1
Support, advice and guidance for pupils	2
How well the school seeks and acts on pupils' views	2
The effectiveness of the school's links with parents	3
The quality of the school's links with the community	1
The school's links with other schools and colleges	2
<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	3
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).*