

# INSPECTION REPORT

## **YANWATH PRIMARY SCHOOL**

Yanwath, Penrith

LEA area: Cumbria

Unique reference number: 112185

Headteacher: Mr Jon Ditchburn

Reporting inspector: Mrs Sonja Öyen  
7167

Dates of inspection: 14 – 16 January 2002

Inspection number: 242897

Full inspection carried out under section 10 of the School Inspections Act 1996

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## INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Infant and Junior
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	4 - 11
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Yanwath Penrith Cumbria
Postcode:	CA10 2LA
Telephone number:	01768 242153
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Appropriate authority:	Governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr Geoff Wright
Date of previous inspection:	7 July 1997

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members			Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
7167	Sonja Oyen	Registered inspector	Foundation stage Information and Communication Technology Music	The characteristics and effectiveness of the school The school's results and pupils' achievements Teaching and learning Leadership and management
9884	Maureen Roscoe	Lay inspector		Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development Pupils' welfare, health and safety Partnership with parents and carers
30439	Malcolm Heyes	Team inspector	Mathematics Science Art and design Design and technology Physical education Equal opportunities	Quality and range of opportunities for learning
17685	Linda Spooner	Team inspector	English Geography History Religious education Special educational Needs	

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## **PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT**

### **INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL**

Yanwath Primary is a small infant and junior school that takes its pupils from the hamlet of Yanwath and the surrounding area. Since the last inspection in 1997 the number on roll has risen to 106 as an increasing number of pupils come from the town of Penrith. Pupils come from diverse social backgrounds. All are from white ethnic groups and no pupil has English as an additional language. Eight pupils (7 per cent, well below the national average) are eligible for free school meals. Most of the children in the reception year have had pre-school experience, with many having attended the independent morning nursery held in the school canteen. Although attainment on entry varies, it is generally as expected, or better, for the children's ages. Only the 17 reception year children are taught as a separate year group. The three other classes have mixed year groups and vary in size from 28 to 31. While the number of boys and girls is similar overall, there are significant differences in some year groups. Twenty-seven pupils (25 per cent, slightly above average) have been identified as having special educational needs. Of these, six, including four pupils who have statements of special educational need, receive support from external agencies for physical, specific and moderate learning difficulties. The headteacher was absent from October 2000 and resigned in November 2001. An acting headteacher was appointed from the end of the summer term 2001.

### **HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS**

Yanwath is not as effective as it should be. It is successful in providing a supportive, caring family ethos but is not providing a good quality of education or ensuring the highest standards for its pupils. Current standards for the Year 6 pupils are below average in English and science and there is considerable underachievement, not only in this year group but also throughout the school. The quality of teaching is not strong enough to bring out the best in the pupils, many of whom show a low sense of responsibility for their learning. The curriculum does not meet the needs of all pupils. The absence of established, rigorous systems to evaluate how well the school is doing and weaknesses in school and subject leadership minimise the school's potential to improve as rapidly as is needed to ensure that pupils get a fair deal. The school gives unsatisfactory value for money.

#### **What the school does well**

- Speaking skills are good; the pupils are articulate and ready to offer their opinions and views.
- The reception children develop in confidence because of the small class size and good relationships with the adults who work with them.
- The acting headteacher and chair of governors are giving good leadership in the drive to make changes and raise standards.
- The school benefits from the willingness of parents and governors to give time and expertise to provide improvements in the environment and to support in classes.
- The enthusiasm and professional attitude of the support staff add much to the pupils' learning and the ethos of the school.

#### **What could be improved**

- Standards in all subjects: pupils are not achieving as well as they should.
- The quality of teaching and the pupils' willingness to give of their best work and best behaviour.
- The assessment of what pupils know and can do in order to decide what they should learn next.
- Systems and procedures to ensure consistency in pupils' pastoral care.
- The effectiveness of governors and key staff in evaluating the work of the school, identifying what needs to be improved and making it happen.

*The areas for improvement will form the basis of the governors' action plan.*

Yanwath has a number of strengths. However, it also has considerable weaknesses in important areas. In accordance with section 13(7) of the School Inspections Act 1996, I am of the opinion, and HMCI agrees, that special measures are required in relation to this school.

## HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

The school has made very little improvement since the last inspection in 1997. It has not sustained its strengths, such as those in teaching and in the provision for pupils' personal development, and too little has been done too late to deal with the key issues and areas for improvement. There has been good improvement in the accommodation for the reception children and for teaching ICT and also in the liaison with a pre-school group held on school premises. In other regards, much has continued as it was but the school has not kept up with national developments and standards have fallen. The school was slow to clarify curriculum guidance and to agree procedures to keep track of pupils' progress and these remain key areas of concern. The school did well to maintain smooth day-to-day running in the long absence of the headteacher, but the governors and staff did not do enough to pinpoint where action was needed to raise standards. The appointment of an acting headteacher has revitalised the school and brought a sense of purpose. All have rallied to upgrade the environment of the school but the gaps in what the school knows about its own performance leave much to be done.

## STANDARDS

The table shows the standards achieved by pupils at the end of Year 6 based on average point scores in National Curriculum tests.

Performance in:	compared with			
	all schools			similar schools
	1999	2000	2001	2001
English	B	C	D	E
Mathematics	C	A	C	E
Science	B	B	E	E*

**Key**

well above average    A

above average        B

average                C

below average        D

well below average    E

Standards are below average in English and science and average in mathematics for the Year 6 pupils. Inspection evidence confirms the results of the 2001 national tests. Too many of the Year 6 pupils are not attaining the standard expected not only for their age but also for their ability. Given that most pupils' attainment is at least as expected for their age when they start school, their progress is unsatisfactory. Underachievement is also evident in other classes. Most infant pupils reach the level expected for their age but few do well, especially in reading and writing. Pupils have good oral language skills but the pace of learning is too slow in the reception and infant years and pupils are not set challenges that develop their learning. The higher attaining pupils are not being helped to attain their potential. This also typifies the junior years. Pupils of different age and attainment, including those with special educational needs, too often do the same or similar work. Disrupted teaching and learning partly explains the drop in standards in 2001. The school met its targets but these were low compared with similar schools. Science standards are lower than they were in 1997. The school's results in 2001 placed it in the lowest five per cent of similar schools. Standards are rising slightly at Year 6 because of good teaching but remain unsatisfactory in geography, history, ICT and religious education. Only in art and design, design and technology and physical education are standards satisfactory. In the infant class and the class of Year 3 and 4 pupils standards in these subjects are also satisfactory although pupils' subject knowledge is usually better than their skills. It was not possible to judge standards in music as no lessons were seen.

## PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Satisfactory; while many are willing learners too many have learnt they do not have to give their best or try their hardest.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Satisfactory; a significant number of pupils misbehave in and out of class. They show little self-discipline or awareness of social rules.
Personal development and relationships	Good; pupils enjoy friendly relationships with others of all ages and social backgrounds. Pupils confidently carry out jobs but there are few chances for them to develop their skills in making decisions, in problem solving and in organising their own learning.
Attendance	Good; pupils like coming to school.

## TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils in:	Nursery and Reception	Years 1 – 2	Years 3 – 6
Quality of teaching	Satisfactory	Satisfactory	Satisfactory

*Inspectors make judgements about teaching in the range: excellent; very good; good; satisfactory; unsatisfactory; poor; very poor. 'Satisfactory' means that the teaching is adequate and strengths outweigh weaknesses.*

The quality of teaching has fallen since the last inspection when it was judged to be “*predominantly good and sometimes very good*”. Overall, the teaching is at least satisfactory in nine out of ten lessons. It is good in one in seven and unsatisfactory in an almost equal amount. This profile is unsatisfactory when compared with national figures. The teaching is strongest for pupils in Years 5 and 6. The liveliness of the acting headteacher's teaching and his high expectations of the pupils to do better are accelerating their learning and improving their attitudes to work. In other classes, the teachers expect too little and accept work that is often not the pupils' best. The pace of teaching is frequently slow and the pupils do not exert themselves sufficiently. As a result, their learning is slower than it ought to be and they do not do as well as they should.

A common strength lies in the teachers' care, concern and interest in pupils. This does much to develop the self-confidence of all pupils, including those with special educational needs. In the reception class, this is enhanced by the smallness of the year group. In all classes, the teaching is often impeded by the forthright manner of many pupils who interrupt or go their own way. Sometimes this is tacitly condoned by the teachers. The classroom support staff manage the pupils firmly and positively. In group sessions, especially in literacy, this discipline is helping pupils to learn faster. Satisfactory teaching ensures that pupils learn to read and write and know the four rules of number, but the teaching is weaker in how to use and apply these skills to best effect, especially in writing. This is partly because of gaps in the teachers' knowledge of how to help pupils improve their work and also a lack of confidence in doing things differently. In science, art and design, design and technology, too much is directed by the teachers. The pupils have few chances to use the techniques they have learnt or to develop their skills in trying things out for themselves. The pupils come into their own when they are involved in practical activities. In ICT, many pupils are learning quickly as they latch on to procedures. In the better lessons; clear and purposeful teaching motivates the pupils but, in too many lessons, all the pupils are expected to start from the same point irrespective of what they already know and can do.



## OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Unsatisfactory; the curriculum is incoherent for the junior pupils and impedes their achievement and progression in learning. Year 6 pupils have not been taught all the necessary elements of the National Curriculum or of the syllabus in religious education.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Satisfactory; pupils' individual education plans are reviewed regularly and they receive support especially in literacy. In too many lessons the work does not reflect well enough the content of these plans and this often makes the pupils too dependent on adult support.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Satisfactory; however, not enough is done to set high standards through the quality of display or celebration of achievement and talent. Chances are missed to promote co-operation and collaboration and to ensure pupils know how to act responsibly. The school develops well the pupils' awareness of local culture and heritage, but does not do enough to promote an appreciation of cultural diversity.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Day-to-day care is satisfactory but there are gaps in the procedures to ensure pupils' welfare and to track their academic progress in order to plan the next steps in their learning.

The school is unable to meet National Curriculum requirements in gymnastics and dance, as it has no access to a suitable hall. The partnership between parents and the school is satisfactory. Parents are very supportive but do not receive enough information from the school to make it clear how they can help their children to progress.

## HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Unsatisfactory overall; the good leadership of the acting headteacher is setting the direction for the school. Key staff are not united or clearly focused on improving standards and they lack expertise in implementing changes for the better.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Many of the governors are very new to the role and inexperienced in school governance. They have a good overview of school life but do not yet meet all their responsibilities.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Unsatisfactory; although the acting headteacher and chair of governors have a very clear understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses, others have not. Governors have relied too heavily on the headteacher for information. The school is just beginning to analyse performance data and use targets to raise standards.
The strategic use of resources	Satisfactory; the school budget and additional funds are being used to support staffing, professional development and to update resources in line with school priorities. Time is not always well spent, especially in the reception class. Good use is being made of the ICT suite.

The good number of support staff and voluntary helpers enables good use of the computer suite and group work. The new classroom provides a good environment for the reception year children. Other classrooms are cramped; some rooms are poorly organised and cluttered. Recently, parents, staff and governors have worked together to brighten and tidy up the school and its extensive grounds. The school seeks best value in its purchases and consults parents on some matters but it has not compared itself critically with others to ensure that challenging targets are set.

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

<b>What pleases parents most</b>	<b>What parents would like to see improved</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• They feel comfortable approaching the school as all the staff are friendly and willing to discuss matters.</li> <li>• Their children like school as there is a family atmosphere and they know everyone.</li> <li>• The school helps their children to become mature and responsible.</li> <li>• Their children make good progress.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• They would like to see a wider range of activities outside lessons.</li> <li>• They would like to be better informed about their children's progress.</li> <li>• They would like greater consistency in the frequency and amount of homework.</li> </ul>

The inspection team agrees in large part. The parents' positive views reflect the areas that the inspection finds are stronger features of the school apart from the rate of progress where inspectors have serious reservations. The parents' concerns are also partly justified. There are inconsistencies in the communication with parents about progress and homework. The school offers a fair range of activities given its size.

## **PART B: COMMENTARY**

### **HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?**

#### **The school's results and pupils' achievements**

1. Although most pupils attain the level expected for their age, standards vary at the end of Key Stages 1 and 2 and are not high enough given the pupils' average to good attainment on entry to school. In English and science, standards are average for Year 2 pupils but below average for the Year 6 pupils. Only in mathematics are standards average for Year 2 and Year 6 pupils. Very few pupils are doing well for their age and there is evidence of underachievement in all year groups. This is a serious weakness for the school.
2. The findings confirm the school's results in the 2001 national tests when standards were highest in mathematics. Even so, Yanwath's Key Stage 1 results were only in line with the average of similar schools and at Key Stage 2 they were well below average. When compared with their Key Stage 1 results in 1997, the Year 6 pupils made poor progress during Key Stage 2 and did not reach their potential. Some caution is due in interpreting the statistics as the cohort numbers were fewer than 20.
3. In the 2001 tests for seven-year-olds, Yanwath did as well as most schools. Nearly all the Year 2 pupils reached Level 2, as expected for their age, in writing and in mathematics. In reading, all pupils reached Level 2 and teacher assessment in science also judged them to have attained Level 2. These reading and science results placed the school in the top five per cent of all similar schools. The boys did particularly well in mathematics compared with the girls and also when compared with boys nationally. They were almost two terms' progress ahead. Unlike 1997, when no pupil reached the higher Level 3, one in three pupils reached the higher Level 3 in mathematics, which was better than the national average. Far fewer did so in reading, writing and science. This lack of higher attainment kept overall standards average when Yanwath's results are compared with those of similar schools.
4. The picture was very different at Key Stage 2. Although the percentage of Year 6 pupils reaching Level 4, as expected for their age, mirrored the national average in English and mathematics, the percentage in science was well below average. In all three subjects, very few pupils reached the higher Level 5. This kept the overall results below the national average but, more seriously, placed Yanwath well below the average of similar schools in English and mathematics and placed it in the lowest five per cent in science.
5. The results in science make a stark contrast with those of 1997 when the school's overall results were above average and the Year 6 boys and girls did equally well. Since then, standards have wavered with dips and peaks. In the 2001 tests, the school's standards were actually lower than in 1997 although the national average has risen considerably. The boys' and girls' progress was more than two terms behind that of pupils nationally.

6. The staff and governors feel that the test results reflect the differing cohorts and the distortion of statistics as there are small numbers in the cohorts. Also in some year groups, there are a significant number of pupils with special educational needs. For example, in the current class of Year 5 and 6 pupils, nearly 40 per cent have been identified as having special educational needs. As in other year groups, not all these pupils are attaining the level expected for their age. Inspection evidence indicates that this is aggravated by gaps in pupils' learning in previous years and by pupils' low motivation to improve their performance.
7. The school met its targets for Level 4 attainment in English, mathematics and science, but these were low compared with targets set in similar schools. Yanwath is only just beginning to track pupils' attainment, to analyse test results and to compare itself with other schools. Governors and key staff have not used the performance data critically enough to look for points for improvement in standards or to identify factors that explain why the standards are as they are. This is a weak strand in the leadership and management of the school.
8. The 2001 test results show clearly that an insufficient number of pupils made the expected two levels progress at Key Stage 2 and that the school is not doing enough to ensure that the higher-attaining pupils achieve as well as they should. The school has not been setting targets for Level 3 and 5 attainment or looking closely enough at pupils' achievement patterns to inform teaching and curriculum decisions.
9. Inspection evidence shows that the picture is not changing. The teaching is not strong enough throughout the school to accelerate the pupils' learning and lift standards. There are several factors that contribute to this, which are well shown by tracing pupils' attainment in writing.
10. The school's own evidence shows that the children's attainment on entry to the reception class is at least as expected for their age and often better, especially in oral language and social skills. The reception children make satisfactory progress in the six areas of learning and reach the standard expected nationally at the end of the reception year, but the teaching does not extend their learning far enough, especially in writing. The higher-attaining children are not always challenged as the teacher's expectations are conservative. For example, the teaching does not promote well enough the children's early independence in writing, nor does it accelerate the children's progress. On entry to Year 1, many pupils do not attain a sufficiently high standard given their well-developed communication skills and interest in writing.
11. At Key Stage 1, the pupils make the two levels progress expected, but very few do better and too many enter Key Stage 2 still in the early stages of writing. They make satisfactory progress in Years 3 and 4, but do not make up the lost ground fast enough. In Years 5 and 6, standards in most aspects of writing are below average. The pupils often have good ideas but fare badly when they write down their ideas. Handwriting is untidy, spelling is erratic and punctuation is often slipshod. Standards do not reflect what pupils are capable of achieving. This is due to a number of factors:

- Staffing and management issues over the last two school years have disrupted the provision for Year 6 pupils, who have not benefited from a well-structured, consistent programme in English. The gaps in their knowledge about how language works and in their basic skills affect their achievement.
  - Too little has been expected of the pupils, especially the higher-attaining ones. Teacher assessment grossly over estimated the Year 2 pupils' writing attainment in the 2001 tests. This suggests that the teachers' knowledge of National Curriculum levels is insecure and that they are unsure of exactly how well the pupils are achieving. Inspection evidence indicates that not enough is being done to teach current Year 2 pupils what they need to know to attain Level 3 in writing. This is limiting the learning of the pupils, especially the higher-attaining ones.
  - The teachers do not use the pupils' work well enough to give them the information they need to decide what to teach next. The teachers accept and often praise pupils' writing when it is unwarranted and this compounds the underachievement, particularly for the higher-attaining pupils, many of whom are attaining only average standards.
  - Too little has been done in the last four years to establish clear expectations of how pupils are to present their work in their books or how it is to be displayed to celebrate achievement and raise standards by example. The teachers' own handwriting and presentation of work do not set the best example.
  - There are too few planned, structured opportunities when the pupils are expected to apply their skills and write imaginatively and expressively. Very few examples of extended stories, poetry or scripted plays were seen and teachers' planning showed insufficient use of other subjects to develop pupils' writing skills, such as presenting arguments in history or evaluating investigations in science.
  - The work with pupils with special educational needs does not always follow the recommendations in the pupils' individual education plans to help them improve in reading and writing. Too often, these pupils are expected to do the same work as others.
12. This year a lower percentage of Year 2 pupils are on course to attain or exceed Level 2 in reading and in writing compared with 2001. It is a small cohort with several pupils who are making slower progress than expected for their age. Year 6 pupils' current work also indicates that standards are not high enough for the school to reach its target for Level 4 attainment in English in the 2002 national tests. As seen in 2001, reading skills are better than writing skills.
13. Most children get off to a sound start in reading in the reception year. They like books and listen attentively to stories. The willingness of parents to help their children learn words and to hear them read is a key factor in the pupils' attainment by the end of Year 2. They read with good expression and remember what they have read. They begin to use non-fiction books to select pieces of information and use their awareness of letters to work out unfamiliar words. By the end of Key Stage 2, most pupils reach Level 4 as expected for their age. They have clear reading preferences and favourite authors. They cope well with reading in other subjects and in finding information in books or on the Internet, but are less skilled in comparing and contrasting stylistic features of different types of text. This partly explains why so few pupils do better than expected for their age. In 2001, Yanwath was well below the national average for attainment at the higher Level 5 in reading.
14. In mathematics, the school is set to attain similar results at Key Stage 1 to those in the 2001 national tests and to improve slightly at Key Stage 2. This is because the pupils are being taught well basic skills in number. Good teaching for the Year 5 and 6 pupils is accelerating their learning, not only in handling number but also in

applying it in different situations. In all year groups, the pupils achieve well when they are challenged in mental mathematics sessions and practical activities but this is not consistent. Although the Year 2 pupils confidently explain their thinking strategies, even the higher-attaining Year 6 pupils need considerable encouragement to talk about number relationships and ways to check their answers. Pupils' untidy work often accounts for errors in their workings out and the pupils are not readily using what they know to realise where they have gone wrong.

15. Similar problems arise in science where too few pupils are attaining the level expected for their age in Year 6. Only the higher-attaining pupils are working at Level 4. All have gaps in their knowledge and skills, especially in knowing how to pose scientific questions and how to find the answers. Pupils' work is poorly presented and they show only a rudimentary awareness of how to compile a scientific report and present their findings in suitable ways. This is linked to weaknesses in English and mathematics, as pupils have not been shown how to apply what they know. The current teaching emphasis on encouraging the Year 6 pupils to predict, enquire and evaluate is benefiting the higher-attaining pupils, who are more able to integrate new information with their existing knowledge. Discussion with pupils indicates that they are more used to seeing adults carry out investigations. This has constrained their achievement.
16. Standards in ICT have not kept pace with the upward rise in national standards. Unlike the good standards of 1997, they are broadly in line with those expected for Year 2 pupils and just below for those in Year 6. There is evidence of underachievement in all classes. The tasks do not always pose enough challenge for the higher-attaining pupils, who have often acquired skills and knowledge from using computers at home. Too many Year 6 pupils need to catch up in basic skills because of gaps in the curriculum in previous years. Standards are rising as pupils have regular hands-on experience and are expected to apply what they know to solve problems.
17. In art and design and in design and technology, standards are satisfactory. The good standards in art of 1997 are not evident, although some pupils achieve well in observational drawing. In geography, history and religious education, standards are broadly satisfactory at Key Stage 1 and lower Key Stage 2, but poor at upper Key Stage 2. The pupils have very limited knowledge and skills in all Three subjects, primarily because they have not been taught the required curriculum. This also explains why standards in religious education fall short of the expectations given in the locally agreed syllabus. In physical education, standards are satisfactory in those aspects the school can teach, namely pupils' awareness of fitness and health, swimming and games activities. It was not possible to judge standards of attainment in music as no lessons were seen.

## Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

18. The inspection finds a sharp decline in the attitudes and behaviour of pupils compared to the judgement of the 1997 inspection that they were very good. This area is now judged to be satisfactory. While a number in each class show high levels of interest, motivation and concentration, too many seem loath to apply themselves. This is most apparent in the class of mixed Years 5 and 6 pupils, where many do not take much responsibility for their own learning and are content to give the bare minimum. Ninety nine per cent of parents who returned the questionnaire agreed that their children like school but this high percentage was not echoed in the pupils' response to lessons. It is reflected, however, in good attendance levels.
19. Pupils' personal development overall is satisfactory. Many show good skills in deciding and organising what they want to do, but the lack of agreed policies and practices on how to promote, recognise and celebrate these skills, means pupils do not always make the best use of them in their learning or in their actions around school.
20. Pupils' attitudes to their learning are satisfactory. They are confident in answering questions, but often show a reluctance to contribute or respond to the teacher in an eager or productive way. When lessons challenge them, or when they are involved in practical problem solving, the pupils respond well to the intellectual demands and consequentially move forward in their learning. Year 3 and Year 4 pupils were totally absorbed in making a buzzer and linking circuits. Similarly, Year 2 pupils were fully engaged in finding the words they needed on a computer screen and were excited by their success, which motivated them to have another try.
21. Pupils get on well together. Good friendly relationships begin in the reception year. As all the children start in September, they quickly get used to the routines of the classroom and the day and are quick to tell each other what to do. They learn to take turns and to accept the behaviour and responses of others. In their work and play, they show a developing ability to get on with other boys and girls across the year groups.
22. A good feature of the school is the way the pupils get to know one another as "*one big family*" (parent's comment). Generally, the older pupils take good care of the younger ones, but not all pupils show courtesy to one another or to adults. In several lessons, a few pupils went a little too far in their comments, used inappropriate language and often slouched over desks or lolled in chairs.
23. Most pupils are developing patterns of careful thought and consistent effort. Significant minorities show muted enthusiasm for learning. They have a lackadaisical attitude to getting things right and little perseverance in solving problems. Their books are often untidy and their work is poorly presented. When they see a purpose in the task, such as producing a final copy for display, they take more care.

24. Pupils' behaviour in and out of class is satisfactory. To their credit, the junior pupils cope with the cramped classrooms and usually show good manners in moving around and making space for others. Not all are as thoughtful out of class; pupils stand and fall over coats, rather than pick them up from the cloakroom floor. Pupils often get over excited when involved in practical tasks and too many cannot be relied on to act sensibly when not directly supervised. They are quick to handle and fiddle with items. In the sessions with support assistants, the pupils often took liberties and disobeyed instructions or went their own way, disrupting the flow and the concentration of others. In the playground, pupils usually play co-operatively when directly supervised and are polite to adults. Good self-discipline was not always evident when pupils were out of an adult's sight, particularly when some boys engaged in inappropriate play fighting. Similarly, some pupils have difficulty in lining up sensibly, when preparing to re-enter school. They often arrive later than the others and are not as ready to settle down to learn.
25. Parents commented highly on the gains their children make in confidence as they move through the school. Pupils are often forthright in their manner and speech with adults. When given jobs, they willingly carry them out but these do not extend across the school or become progressively demanding as the pupils mature. There are too few opportunities for pupils to plan and organise their own work or to offer their views on the work of the school. When they do so, many show mature opinions and sensible ideas. This was obvious in the Years 5 and 6 pupils' thank-you letters to parents for their help on Boon Day.

#### **HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?**

26. The quality of teaching is satisfactory overall. It is not a strength of the school as judged in the last inspection. Prime factors in explaining why standards are not higher are that the teaching does not always challenge the pupils and the teachers settle for second best.
27. The teaching was at least satisfactory in 88 per cent of lessons. It was good in 15 per cent but the very good teaching seen in the previous inspection was not evident. Unsatisfactory teaching in four lessons accounts for 12 per cent of the total, but care should be taken in interpreting the statistics, as each lesson is equivalent to more than three percentage points. The overall profile is not as good as the national average and the percentage of good teaching is not high enough to ensure that the pupils learn well.
28. The teaching is satisfactory for the children in the Foundation Stage (reception year) and for pupils in the infant years. As a result, the pupils make satisfactory progress but they do not reach the potential shown in the results of the tests to assess their skills and knowledge in the first term in the reception year.
29. The teaching is also satisfactory for pupils in the junior years. It is stronger for those in Years 5 and 6, as the acting headteacher's good teaching is beginning to boost their learning and plug some of the gaps in previous learning, especially in science.



30. Different weaknesses accounted for the unsatisfactory lessons for the reception year and infant pupils when they made insufficient progress. Too little content was planned for the hour-long literacy and mathematics lessons for the reception year children. Although the initial period was focused and well prepared, the related activities planned for adult-led and independent work were not demanding enough. They were often completed well before the end of allocated time and the children then chose what to do. In some cases, this was filling time rather than a purposeful task with an expected outcome. Chances were missed to ensure that the children made the most of this time in rehearsing and applying their language and mathematical skills in practical activities or to observe the children and assess their learning.
31. In the two unsatisfactory lessons for Year 1 and Year 2 pupils, the teacher restricted the learning experiences but in different ways. In an ICT lesson, the pupils did not make enough progress as the lesson was curtailed when a printer malfunctioned. The pupils lost the chance to try what they had seen demonstrated and to save their work for printing later. In a science lesson, however, the teacher did too much herself. She decided what should be done and how and tried to cover too many aspects in a short time, so that the pupils were confused spectators rather than enquiring scientists.
32. Apart from in the reception class, the teachers are all teaching classes of mixed year groups. The teaching is not as effective as it should be to ensure that all pupils achieve their best and fulfil their potential. In several lessons, judged as satisfactory overall, there were weaknesses that, repeated over time, could limit pupils' achievement.
33. Three particular weaknesses have a direct bearing on the pupils' attitudes to work and their learning: Firstly, the learning objectives are not always specific to the lesson, nor do they take account of the different needs of the groups within the class. This was most evident in lessons in subjects other than English, mathematics and science. Nonetheless, in literacy and mathematics, the planning was often too general to give a good indication of the purpose of each part of the lesson or what the different groups were to achieve, not only in the lesson but also over the week. In too many sessions, there was not enough recognition of the need for different starting points for pupils to reflect their prior attainment or of the need to condense a task for the lower-attaining pupils if all pupils were working on the same aspect. In some plans, pupils with special educational needs were mentioned, but this was inconsistent and rarely was work planned, especially for individuals using different resources or prepared materials that reflected the content of their individual education plans.
34. Secondly, the pace of the lesson is often too slow and the pupils have learnt that they can take their time in answering questions and doing their work. In too many initial sessions of literacy hours and mathematics sessions, there was insufficient variety in pace. Pupils were not being pushed to think more quickly, to use what they knew to make intuitive but informed guesses or to explain their thinking. In literacy and mathematics, this is limiting the pupils' learning of what they need to know to tackle work successfully on their own. In spelling, for example, the pupils have not learnt spelling rules well enough so that many make avoidable errors.

35. Thirdly, discipline is not firm enough or consistent throughout the school. In too many lessons, the pupils took advantage to misbehave and be inattentive, as the teachers tacitly condoned their behaviour by ignoring it or talking over them. In a stimulating history lesson, Year 3 and Year 4 pupils were not sure what to do next as the teacher had talked over their excited chatter about being a Celt or Roman. In literacy and mathematics lessons, when pupils are expected to work quietly, the teachers often tolerated a high level of noise. As a result, the work rate of the chatting pupils and also those who were working with the teacher was slow and pupils did not always complete what they were expected to.
36. The teachers are using the guidance from the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies as well as commercial materials to plan their lessons. They prepare lessons well and are confident in what they are to teach. Nevertheless, many lessons seen lacked vitality and a buzz in pupils' learning. The teachers teach the basic skills of spelling, handwriting, grammar, punctuation and number but the teaching is not explicit enough to ensure that pupils know how language and numbers work. Consequently, the pupils do not always learn how and when to apply their knowledge. A good example is that pupils do not produce in their work the neat, joined handwriting seen in practice sessions. The classrooms are not being used as teaching and learning workshops. Although the teachers display the pupils' work and set up some displays to prompt thinking, there are few displays that remind the pupils of what they have learnt and need to remember from work in literacy hours and mathematics lessons. Similarly, the varying standards of display and the differing styles of teachers' handwriting do not provide a consistently good model for pupils.
37. Several strengths characterise the teaching overall and contribute to the pupils' learning:
- All the teachers and the support staff have good relationships with the pupils. The acting headteacher is making very effective use of humour and repartee to keep the pupils interested and to let them know when he is pleased with them or not. All the teachers find time to share news and comments with the pupils. In the reception class, the easy, relaxed chat between the children and the adults is a strong feature of the provision for their personal, social and emotional development. Comments such as *"No, that's for tomorrow but it's OK to have a little try now"* reinforce the children's willingness to try things out and to speak about what they see.
  - The lessons often start well. The teachers have good ideas that catch the pupils' interest. For example, the reception year children were intrigued by what might be in a box and keen to compare the different toy snakes inside. Similarly, Year 1 and Year 2 pupils were eager to see what happened to the ice cones that their teacher had made ready and Year 5 and Year 6 pupils enjoyed the "Bing and bong" game to test their knowledge of the seven times table. The teachers do not always make the most of the pupils' motivation, as they stick to their own agenda and miss chances to use the pupils' ideas to extend their learning. For example, the teacher missed an opportunity to test out one pupil's comment that salt melts ice as well as heat.
  - The teachers and support staff form a good partnership. The classroom assistants are often unobtrusive in the way they confidently support pupils and supervise groups. They are firm but fair in their dealings with pupils and insistent on pupils behaving properly. They prepare their own work conscientiously and take time to make games and to find relevant resources such as a glove puppet. Their smiling, positive approach aids the pupils who are less confident in their learning and those with special educational needs,

as their explanations and assistance help the pupils to succeed.

38. In other aspects of teaching there is much variety and inconsistency that reflects the lack of agreed policies and procedures to monitor the quality of teaching and learning.
39. The quality of marking varies too much. It is not being used consistently as a means of raising standards. A scrutiny of pupils' work from September showed that some work had not been marked and there was no consistent pattern in showing pupils what they had done well or where they needed to improve. One good practice started in the reception class of using a question to prompt the children to write more was not part of the marking seen in the work of the infant pupils. The marking was more helpful for the junior pupils and pupils' responses showed they took note of the comments. Although the teachers have given pupils targets to indicate what they need to do next in literacy and mathematics, they are not using them as success indicators for the pupils or to show them where they might have met or exceeded the level expected for their age.
40. This inconsistency is also mirrored in the teachers' evaluations of their own teaching and its effectiveness in helping the pupils to learn. While the teachers keep records of the pupils' learning, noting who has and who has not learnt the content, few plans show conscientious attention to recording what worked well or not in their teaching. However, during the inspection, the teachers evaluated informally and often changed their plans as a result of the pupils' responses. This was most marked in the work of the acting headteacher. In a geography lesson, he was quick to alter what he intended to do when the pupils' answers showed that they had less knowledge than he had anticipated. When he encouraged pupils to "map" their knowledge, this gave a useful indication of the gaps in their knowledge and he skilfully used questions and prompts to help all participate. The converse is less evident. When the pupils show that they are already familiar with the content, the teachers are not as flexible in raising the challenge or altering the task. This is one reason why the learning is not faster for the higher-attaining pupils.

#### **HOW GOOD ARE THE CURRICULAR AND OTHER OPPORTUNITIES OFFERED TO PUPILS?**

41. The curriculum is satisfactory for the reception year children and those in the infant years but unsatisfactory for the junior pupils. The curriculum is narrow and does not meet fully the requirements of the National Curriculum or those of the locally agreed syllabus for religious education. As in 1997, the school is unable to meet statutory requirements in physical education, as it has no suitable space for gymnastics and dance. Not enough has been done to plug this gap. The Year 6 pupils have not been taught enough geography, history or religious education to ensure that all the programmes of study for these subjects have been met. The lack of coherence in the curriculum, especially for the older Key Stage 2 pupils, reflects the absence of systems to monitor subject coverage.

42. Despite being a key issue in 1997, the school still lacks up-to-date policies for all subjects that reflect national requirements such as how the school ensures that all pupils' needs are met. The school is using subject schemes of work that have been issued nationally, but these have not been adapted to suit the needs of the school or interleaved to make the most of curricular links and school themes.
43. More emphasis is placed on developing the pupils' subject knowledge than their subject skills. Pupils are not being given enough opportunities to develop their investigative skills in mathematics and science or to apply them across the curriculum. This lack of opportunity can be seen from the reception year where the curriculum is planned to the six areas of learning but is subject oriented. For example, this term the theme of "Winter" is being used to introduce elements of science and geography. Other aspects relevant to developing the children's skills in knowledge and understanding of the world are not being included. The outdoors is being used where appropriate, such as looking at the acorns that had fallen from the school oak, but there is more focus on the teacher leading the learning than the children finding out for themselves. Much of the content is being planned against the green and grey stepping stones in national guidance, but this does not take into account the children who are not yet at these levels or those who are already ready for aspects of Level 1 of the National Curriculum. This weakness in planning typifies that seen throughout the school and is a continuing weakness since the 1997 inspection.
44. The two-year programme of themes ensures that pupils who stay in one class for two years do not repeat work. However, medium-term planning does not indicate how the needs of pupils of differing attainment are to be met. Too often, the two year groups in the same class study the same topic at the same level of difficulty. This limits the achievement of the higher-attaining pupils but also does not take the needs of the lower-attaining pupils into full account.
45. The school gives attention to developing the pupils' speaking and listening skills and includes drama as part of other subjects, such as history. The staff follow the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies, but the overall school strategy for literacy is not as effective as it should be to develop the pupils' skills in writing. Although lessons follow the recommended format of the literacy hour and for the daily mathematics lesson, they do not fully reflect recognised good practice as promoted in the guidance. As a result, the curriculum is bland and there is little to stimulate the pupils and enliven their learning. The active approach to learning in the Early Literacy and Additional Literacy Support programmes for those pupils who have not made the progress expected for their age is setting a good model.
46. Although parents raised some concern about the provision, the school has a satisfactory programme of extra-curricular activities given its size. The sporting and computer activities enrich the curriculum and are well attended by junior pupils. A proposed climbing club offers pupils the opportunity to take part in more adventurous activities and reflects local interests.

47. A satisfactory programme for personal, health and social education is in place. Activities such as circle time, when pupils have the chance to offer their views, are used to help pupils explore relationships, to develop personal relationships and consider issues that affect them as citizens. For example, Year 1 and Year 2 pupils discussed the moral issue around the dropping of litter. Such work also extends their awareness of aspects of geography. Although the governing body has made a decision that sex education and drugs awareness will not be taught, pupils are introduced to healthy living and the process of growing up as part of specialist work led by the healthy schools co-ordinator.
48. The curricular provision for pupils with special educational needs is satisfactory. They play a full part in the life of the school. When they are withdrawn from class for extra help in literacy they receive effective support through clear targets for learning and positive encouragement. The school's decision to focus almost exclusively on spelling, principally through one spelling programme, does not always meet the specific literacy needs of individuals. Similarly, in class lessons, the pupils are often given the same work as others. The teachers and classroom assistants give help but do not follow consistently the recommendations in the pupils' individual education plans.
49. The contribution of the community to pupils' learning is satisfactory. A number of visitors, such as a dental hygienist, environmental agency representative, local vicar, and Prayer Group, all make positive contributions to pupils' learning. The school makes good use of visits and fieldwork in Yanwath Village and the Rheged centre to support pupils' learning about local history and geography. The school has a good working relationship with the local nurseries and the secondary school. Not enough has been done to explore the possibilities of using others' facilities, especially in physical education. Visits to residential centres in the local area, a Buddhist temple and a cinema extend the curriculum.
50. The overall provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is satisfactory. This does not reflect the judgements of the previous inspection when the provision was considered to be a strength of the school. The school has not maintained that standard and this has led to unsatisfactory improvement in the standard of provision offered to its pupils.
51. The provision for pupils' spiritual development is satisfactory. Daily assemblies meet statutory requirements and provide opportunities for pupils to think about and reflect on themes. For example, in a Key Stage 2 assembly, the acting head teacher used the lyrics of the song played to ask the pupils '*What have you done today to make you feel proud?*' Every pupil told him about something or someone that had given him/her a special feeling. Across school life and in the curriculum, there is little planned provision to extend the pupils' appreciation of what others do and achieve or for them to feel a sense of awe and wonder in what they see and experience.
52. Much of the provision for moral and social development is informal and unplanned. The school operates as a "family" and the older pupils are expected to take care of the younger ones and to set a good example. However, there are very few systems or practices that foster this as part of the curriculum. During the inspection, the focus in assemblies on manners and attitudes was echoed in some discussions between adults and pupils. The pupils generally understand the difference between right and wrong, and have an understanding of moral and social issues, but chances are missed particularly to develop their social skills.

53. In lessons seen, although there was some partner work, there were few occasions when the teachers used collaborative group work as a way of learning. Too often, the pupils work alongside each other rather than with each other. This develops their skills in working independently on a given task but does less in developing their awareness of how to delegate, negotiate and co-operate with others. This partly explains the pupils' boisterousness when engaged on practical work. Too much is done for the pupils and there are few chances for the pupils to take the initiative and accept responsibility. Parents commented positively on how the outdoor activities as part of the residential visits for the junior pupils help to develop their ability to get on well with others.
54. The school places good emphasis on developing the pupils' awareness of their local culture and heritage, particularly as part of work in history and geography. However, less is done to develop pupils' awareness of other cultures and of the nature of the multicultural society in which they live. Limited use is made of art and design, music, literature and PSHE to develop the pupils' awareness of similarities and differences in lifestyles and cultures, or of the special nature and influence of other cultures on their own life. The school has been to a Buddhist temple in Lancaster, but such visits are rare.

#### **HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?**

55. At the time of the previous inspection the school was judged to care for its pupils well. Now the absence of policies and well-managed procedures has led to a decline in standards of pupil care. The school operates too informally; gaps in the procedures to monitor pupils' academic performance, and to ensure high quality pupil support, guidance and care, combine to make this aspect unsatisfactory.
56. All the staff show concern for the pupils and interest in them. The teaching and non-teaching staff work well together as a school family to support the pupils in most aspects of school life. This ensures that pupils are supervised at key times such as playtimes, lunchtimes and when working away from the classroom. Ninety-seven per cent of parents who returned the questionnaire agreed that the school helps their children to become mature and responsible. This is obvious in the relaxed relationships between pupils and adults. At the meeting, parents praised the way the school turns out well seen individuals. They also commented on the kindness and care shown by staff when dealing with their children and inspection evidence supports this. On a drizzly day, a teacher hurried into the playground, urging children to fasten up coats to keep warm.
57. Statutory requirements connected with health and safety matters were partially met in October when a risk assessment of the premises was conducted. The identification of other possible risks connected with curriculum areas and pupil activity in all work and recreation areas has yet to be done.
58. Since the last inspection, the school has failed to develop the systems identified then as being effective or to deal with those areas where weakness was identified. It has been too slow in formalising pastoral procedures and especially in ensuring coherent practice in assessment and its use. The 1997 inspection report commented strongly on *"the insufficient and inconsistent use of assessment information to guide future planning and ensure that lessons rigorously build on prior attainment"*. This still holds true. It is difficult to gain a complete picture of each pupil's academic progress or personal development as there are few

common sources of information.

59. The school meets statutory requirements in assessing pupils' attainment in the first term of the reception year and in conducting national tests at the end of Key Stages 1 and 2. The acting headteacher has instigated the tracking of pupils' attainment and started the process of using information from tests to set targets for improvement and to monitor the progress of individuals and groups of pupils, such as boys and girls. This is not fully understood by the teachers and anomalies such as unexpected dips and peaks in levels of attainment are not being questioned. As a result, the school is weak in evaluating its effectiveness in promoting pupils' progress and also in identifying strengths, weaknesses and key factors.
60. A good start has been made in the reception year to identify a weekly focus for assessment. Over a term this will give the teacher information about what the children can do in aspects of the six areas of learning, such as ability to throw and catch a beanbag. Other information is being recorded, such as the books the children read, but there is little to indicate how their progress is being monitored in some early learning goals such as language for thinking or those for creative development.
61. At Key Stages 1 and 2 there is a similarly incomplete and inconsistent monitoring of pupils' academic performance. The school has not identified any gifted and talented pupils. Some procedures are relatively new, such as the regular evaluation of whether pupils have met key objectives in mathematics and the use of ICT skills tracking sheets. Class assessment sheets are being tried out in science, geography, history, music and physical education but are at a very early stage of use. In English, the most effective monitoring is of pupils' progress in reading. In the best cases, the teachers identify areas of progress and areas for improvement. However, pupils' progress in writing and in speaking and listening is not monitored as thoroughly.
62. Too often members of teaching and non-teaching staff interpret in their own way systems of behaviour management, the monitoring of pupils' personal development and first-aid treatments. Long-standing customs are not reflected in policies and agreed procedures. A good example is the way the teachers follow up the absence of a pupil. As attendance is good, the school has not deemed it necessary to agree administrative monitoring procedures.
63. The measures to promote good behaviour in and around school are not fully effective and are unsatisfactory overall. The school does have a behaviour and discipline policy but it is outdated and the process of reviewing the policy has not yet been completed. The acting headteacher has identified this as an area of concern and is placing high personal emphasis on using opportunities in the classroom, in assemblies and on other occasions, such as lunchtimes, to discuss patterns of behaviour. This is helping to reset the parameters of what is acceptable behaviour in the school community and to encourage the pupils to exert self-discipline. He sets a very good model in expressing his expectations politely but firmly and using humour to deal with minor infringements. The inconsistent approach of others in dealing with pupils' behaviour undermines this. In several cases seen during the inspection, the staff tacitly condoned the pupils' unacceptable behaviour by ignoring it. On other occasions, teachers and support staff were seen speaking quietly to individual pupils to explain why their behaviour was unacceptable and how it affected others.

64. The school is not well placed to monitor trends in incidents or the causes of unacceptable behaviour, and has much to do to ensure that the concept of educational inclusion is understood by staff and pupils. Child protection matters receive satisfactory attention. The teacher responsible keeps herself up to date on child protection matters by attending case conferences and other briefing meetings. Her role, however, is under developed. Recent, relevant training has not been taken and the school does not have a policy or a set of agreed practices that are understood by all.
65. The special needs co-ordinator keeps detailed records of the progress of the pupils with special educational needs in the lessons that she teaches. These are used very effectively to inform her lesson planning and to guide the setting of new targets at review meetings. She is already planning to involve pupils in contributing to their own targets for learning in line with the guidance of the revised Code of Practice. One weakness is that the co-ordinator does not monitor rigorously how well what the pupils are asked to do in class matches the content of their individual education plans. As many pupils are identified as having special educational needs in literacy, this is an important area for improvement. The timing of some group work held away from the classroom also means that pupils miss out on subjects such as history.
66. The school meets the requirements of the statements of special educational need for the four pupils who have them. Teaching assistants provide satisfactory support in lessons and ensure that the pupils have what they need. They are attentive carers who are usually very effective in knowing how much they can expect of the pupils.

#### **HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?**

67. This area of the school's work is satisfactory overall. This shows a decline since the previous inspection when judgements were more positive.
68. The 69 parents who returned the questionnaire and 15 that attended the meeting hold generally positive views of the school. They are satisfied with the friendly care it provides for their children and the welcome they receive. The highest percentage of parents' strong agreement (65) was that they feel comfortable approaching the school with problems and questions. They appreciate the recent innovations, such as numbered newsletters, that are keeping them up to date with general school matters. A significant percentage of parents disagree that the school offers a wide range of activities outside lessons. For a school of its size, however, Yanwath offers a reasonable programme of after-school activities. It is unfortunate that, as many pupils come by bus, they are not able to take part. A smaller percentage are disappointed with the amount of information provided on progress and with the homework provided, feeling that it often does not support their children's learning because of its poor quality and irregularity. The inspectors find these concerns justified.
69. The quality of information provided for parents, especially that about pupils' progress, is unsatisfactory. The end-of-year written reports do not include sufficient specific detail about the progress that the pupils have made in every subject or where improvements can be made. Many parents commented that they find it difficult to discover just how well their children are progressing.



70. Many opportunities have been missed to consult and inform parents about important matters such as class organisation, security issues, home-school agreements, homework schedules and the outcomes of the assessment made of their children's attainment in their first term in the reception year. Parents are not consistently given information on what is being taught in each class and how they can be more involved in supporting their children in their learning. In contrast, the new school prospectus and the annual report of the governing body for parents are lively, highly readable and attractive documents which give a good overview of the life of the school. A particularly good feature of the governors' report is the inclusion of pupils' comments and work.
71. The holding of an independent morning nursery in the school canteen is ensuring that parents become familiar with the school; shared sessions with the reception class mean that the nursery children get to know the reception teacher.
72. A strong feature of the school is the way the parents volunteer their help when needed. Recent Boon Days have seen parents willingly giving time and expertise to tidy up the grounds and deal with problems in the school. This help has not only been a key factor in brightening up the school but has also shown a high level of support for the acting headteacher in his drive to make improvements. The Friends of Yanwath, likewise, provide a strong spine of support in response to the school's needs and they raise substantial funds.
73. Parents have a high level of trust in the school but are rightly concerned that the school's lines of communication with them are not as effective as they would like. To gain access to the school during school hours, it is often necessary for parents to interrupt classes as the main entrance opens into a classroom. Some parents are reluctant to do this. Others find telephone communication difficult as there are times when calls go unanswered or the response is an answering machine.
74. Many parents make a satisfactory contribution to their children's learning at home, particularly with reading. They comment on the good relationships they enjoy with school, and the excellent efforts of staff to provide work packs and to keep in touch with pupils when they were unable to attend school because of the outbreak of foot-and-mouth disease.

#### **HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?**

75. The overall quality of leadership and management is unsatisfactory. Strengths in the good leadership of the acting headteacher are offset by significant weaknesses in the quality of management by governors and key staff. Too little has been done since the last inspection to develop the skills, expertise and effectiveness of the governors and teachers in evaluating the work of the school and in taking steps to ensure that standards rise. The governors have relied on information from the school and have not held the school to full account. As a result, areas of concern have not been identified quickly enough and standards have fallen, not only in subjects, but also in other important aspects such as the quality of education. The rate and the impact of improvement since the last inspection have been poor and the four key issues remain areas for development.
76. The gaps in leadership and management expertise are partly explained by events of the last few years. The headteacher's long-term absence from October 2000 led to the hiatus in school improvement. The senior teacher managed well the

smooth day-to-day running of the school and ensured that all classes were taught. The appointment of an acting headteacher from the end of the summer term of 2001 gave a new sense of direction to the school. Parents at the meeting with inspectors commented very positively on how he has revitalised the school and brought needed stability and continuity to the teaching of the older pupils. His justified concern for the pupils is reflected in his astute and accurate commentary on the school's situation submitted to inspectors before the inspection and in the 15 priorities to guide the work of the school this year. He and the chair of governors realise the seriousness of falling standards and the factors at work. They are highly committed to making changes and the appointment of many new governors presents a good opportunity to review working practices and ensure that all are fully aware of and carry out their roles and responsibilities.

77. The five year development plan for the period 1996-2001 included elements of the four key issues from 1997 and other items, which, now carried out, have had a positive impact. For example, the full use of the schoolhouse and the building of a new classroom for the reception class have relieved some of the accommodation pressures noted in the 1997 report. However, the lack of action in key strands, including the intention *"to seek to improve standards of learning by monitoring and evaluating provision ... and monitoring and evaluating SATs results in order to see where they can be improved"* has seriously limited the governors' and the co-ordinators' ability to move the school forward. Too little was done immediately after the inspection to compile and implement curriculum policies and subject schemes of work and to agree procedures to monitor and evaluate their effectiveness. Because of this, the governors and key staff have very little information on what they do and, consequently, are in a weak position to decide the next steps.
78. The acting headteacher has been effective in fostering a greater sense of purpose and also pride in the school's appearance inside and out. The adoption of a new motto, *"Learning to live – living to learn"*, and the pupils' illustrations of what this means, also set a motivating tone. As noted in the previous inspection report, governors and parents are very supportive of the school. Their goodwill, time and expertise have contributed much to the recent tidying up of the school grounds and improvements within the school, such as new display boards and storage areas. Long-awaited work by the LEA in refurbishing the infants' toilets has also been timely.

79. The range of the accommodation remains a concern. As in 1997, the lack of access to a hall means that the school is unable to meet all the requirements of the National Curriculum for physical education. Other drawbacks lie in the layout and size of the rooms. The rooms vary in size and classrooms are only just big enough for the number in the class. The school will be hard pressed to accommodate the larger Year 4 group next year with the Year 5 pupils in the room currently used for the older pupils. In some rooms, furniture arrangements restrict lines of access and do not readily promote group work or practical activities.
80. Old and unused resources have recently been discarded, but there is still some way to go to ensure that resources are well organised and easily accessible to all and that learning space is used flexibly and efficiently. Well-established ways of doing things are limiting what pupils experience, especially in art and design, design and technology and also science. Support staff make good use of the staffroom and library for small group work in literacy. Similarly, the timetabling of the ICT suite is ensuring its frequent use, although technical problems with the equipment sometimes result in changes to teacher's plans. A major problem is that the main entrance to the school opens into a classroom and access to classrooms and the school office is through other classrooms. There is some scope to rearrange this and to minimise disruption of lessons and risk to the pupils. For example, the upstairs school office is accessible from an unused outer door.
81. The acting headteacher is balancing well the demands of teaching a class, managing the school and initiating change but at great personal cost in time. He is highly conscious of the need to keep morale high and to work with the staff to identify what needs to be done. However, as one element is started, it raises the need to deal with others as the school has so little in place to guide what it does. For example, the work done to analyse pupils' results in mathematics in the 2001 national tests identified gaps in the curriculum but there are no established practices to monitor curriculum content and the quality of teaching and learning using agreed criteria. As a result, the governors and key staff have little information to give them a clear picture of the school's strengths and areas for improvement. They also have little evidence to explain why standards have fallen.
82. The school runs smoothly but much is due to custom and practice. The school secretary deals with routine administrative matters but, like others, lacks a clear job description. All the teaching and non-teaching staff work together co-operatively, but subject leaders are working in isolation rather than as a unified team. Statutory requirements have not been and are not all being met in relation to the curriculum and legislation relating to pupils' welfare. While the work in special educational needs is well organised, governors and key staff have not evaluated the use of time and the specialist teacher's expertise to ensure that pupils' needs are met fully. The timing of some withdrawal sessions means pupils miss work in other subjects.
83. The school is making growing use of ICT in its work. Staff are using ICT to produce documents and worksheets for the pupils and to keep records of progress. The secretary has devised his own systems to assist the tracking of daily finances. The acting headteacher and chair of governors have used desktop publishing very effectively to enhance the quality of the newsletters, school prospectus and the governors' annual report to parents.
84. The governors are conscious of the need to make the school attractive to parents

and they prudently sanctioned the use of the school canteen by an independent nursery. Most of the reception year children have joined the school from the nursery. This is a good example of the governors being clear about what the community wants. Chances have been missed, however, for them to consult parents even more widely about what the school offers. In turn, governors have not compared rigorously enough the school's performance against that of other similar schools. For example, the targets set for 2001 were low compared with similar schools and there is very little evidence in the minutes of governors' meetings to show that school results have been analysed and compared with others.

85. Financial management is satisfactory. The secretary is careful in his checking of the school's finances and the governors keep a close eye on spending. They have planned a small under spend this year to bring the school back into balance after contingency funds were used to meet unexpected expenses such as those to lay a concrete floor when the school was flooded. Governors have increased the spending on support staff to improve the quality of education and to ensure that the acting headteacher has time to deal with school matters, but in many respects the spending echoes the pattern of previous years rather than being tied to school priorities for improvement. There are few agreed systems to determine the effectiveness of financial decisions taken.
86. The school gives unsatisfactory value for money. It is not as effective as it should be in ensuring that all pupils do the best they can. Standards have fallen since the last inspection to below average in English and science. Given pupils' average to good attainment on entry, there is evidence of underachievement throughout the school. The quality of the teaching is not bringing out the best in pupils and there are gaps in the curriculum. This is due to weaknesses in the leadership and management of the school, especially in the ways to evaluate the school's effectiveness.

## WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

87. In order to minimise underachievement and raise standards across the curriculum, most especially in English and science, the governors, acting headteacher and teachers should:

- (1) improve the quality of teaching and pace of learning by raising teachers' expectations of what the pupils can achieve and by challenging the pupils so that they are motivated and willing to give of their best;  
(Paragraphs 6, 10, 11, 17, 20, 23, 26, 33-35, 89, 96, 122, 128)
- (2) implement consistent, rigorous assessment procedures to ensure that the teachers know how well pupils are progressing and have relevant information to decide what the pupils need to learn next;  
(Paragraphs 11, 39, 58-61, 81, 91, 101, 124, 133, 142)
- (3) use information from the monitoring and evaluation of teaching and learning and from the analysis of the school's performance to give a clear picture of what the school needs to do to improve and how this can best be achieved;  
(Paragraphs 7, 40, 41, 75, 77, 81, 82, 125, 133, 135, 148, 153, 161, 169, 174)
- (4) strengthen the roles of the governors, teaching and non-teaching staff in their work to promote and ensure pupils' personal development and pastoral care.  
(Paragraphs 19, 25, 52-3, 55, 57-8)

In drawing up their action plan, the governors may also wish to consider the following:

- the provision to develop the pupils' awareness of other cultures;  
(Paragraphs 54, 144)
- the use of the accommodation;  
(Paragraphs 79-80, 160)
- the quality of the information to parents on how they can support their children's learning;  
(Paragraphs 69-70)
- the inconsistencies in ways to promote pupils' good behaviour  
(Paragraphs 63-4).

## PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

### Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	34
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	21

### Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Number	0	0	5	25	4	0	0
Percentage	0	0	15	73	12	0	0

The table gives the number and percentage of lessons observed in each of the seven categories used to make judgements about teaching. [When the total number is substantially less than 100, add] Care should be taken when interpreting these percentages as each lesson represents more than one [two, three, etc] percentage point[s]. [Where the total is close to or greater than 100, use only the first sentence.]

### Information about the school's pupils

#### Pupils on the school's roll

	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)		106
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals		8

FTE means full-time equivalent.

#### Special educational needs

	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs		4
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register		27

#### English as an additional language

	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	0

#### Pupil mobility in the last school year

	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	5
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	6

### Attendance

#### Authorised absence

	%
School data	4.2

#### Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.0

National comparative data	5.6
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National comparative data	0.5
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*Both tables give the percentage of half days (sessions) missed through absence for the latest complete reporting year.*

### Attainment at the end of Key Stage 1 (Year 2)

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
		2001	5	7

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	5	5	5
	Girls	7	6	6
	Total	12	11	12
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	100(100)	92(95)	92(100)
	National	84(83)	86(84)	91(90)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	5	5	5
	Girls	7	7	7
	Total	12	12	12
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	100(100)	100(100)	100(100)
	National	85(84)	89(88)	98(88)

Percentages in brackets refer to the year before the latest reporting year.

### Attainment at the end of Key Stage 2 (Year 6)

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
		2001	9	7

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	6	6	6
	Girls	7	6	6
	Total	13	12	12
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	81(90)	75(90)	75(80)
	National	75(75)	71(72)	87(85)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	6	6	6
	Girls	7	6	6
	Total	13	12	12
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	81(90)	75(80)	75(90)
	National	72(70)	74(72)	82(79)

Percentages in brackets refer to the year before the latest reporting year.



### **Ethnic background of pupils**

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	0
Black – African heritage	0
Black – other	0
Indian	0
Pakistani	0
Bangladeshi	0
Chinese	0
White	89
Any other minority ethnic group	0

*This table refers to pupils of compulsory school age only.*

### **Teachers and classes**

#### **Qualified teachers and classes: YR – Y6**

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	4.4
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	24.32
Average class size	26.5

#### **Education support staff: YR– Y6**

Total number of education support staff	4
Total aggregate hours worked per week	74

*FTE means full-time equivalent.*

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

	Fixed period	Permanent
Black – Caribbean heritage	0	0
Black – African heritage	0	0
Black – other	0	0
Indian	0	0
Pakistani	0	0
Bangladeshi	0	0
Chinese	0	0
White	0	0
Other minority ethnic groups	0	0

*This table gives the number of exclusions of pupils of compulsory school age, which may be different from the number of pupils excluded.*

### **Financial information**

Financial year	2000/01
	£
Total income	224975
Total expenditure	225200
Expenditure per pupil	2421
Balance brought forward from previous year	2925
Balance carried forward to next year	2700

### **Recruitment of teachers**

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	0
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	0
Total number of vacant teaching posts (FTE)	0
Number of vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of a term or more (FTE)	1.2
Number of unfilled vacancies or vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of less than one term (FTE)	0

*FTE means full-time equivalent.*

## **Results of the survey of parents and carers**

### **Questionnaire return rate**

Number of questionnaires sent out	107
Number of questionnaires returned	69

### **Percentage of responses in each category**

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	52	46	0	0	1
My child is making good progress in school.	41	55	3	0	1
Behaviour in the school is good.	23	67	9	0	1
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	33	46	14	4	1
The teaching is good.	39	52	4	0	1
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	26	51	14	7	0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	65	30	4	0	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	39	54	3	0	3
The school works closely with parents.	35	46	9	6	0
The school is well led and managed.	39	48	4	1	1
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	49	48	1	0	1
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	17	39	28	3	13

### **Other issues raised by parents**

The renewed sense of direction and purpose following the appointment of an acting headteacher from September 2001.

## **PART D: THE STANDARDS AND QUALITY OF TEACHING IN AREAS OF THE CURRICULUM, SUBJECTS AND COURSES**

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

88. Since the last inspection, a large classroom has been built for the reception year children who are being taught as a class of 17. Nearly all have had some pre-school education, with most attending the independent nursery held in the school canteen. When the children started school in September, their attainment varied but overall was as expected with a significant number showing knowledge and skills better than expected for their age, especially in personal, social and emotional development, communication, language and literacy and mathematical development. This is particularly noteworthy as the class has a high percentage of summer born children, including five with birthdays in July. Two children have been identified as having special educational needs and both receive support from external agencies.
89. The children are making satisfactory progress but, given the satisfactory to good level of children's knowledge and skills in September, their rate of progress is too slow and many are underachieving. This is because the teacher's expectations of the children are not high enough, the pace of teaching and learning is often too slow and the classroom environment lacks the richness needed to inspire the children to use what they know about print and numbers and to learn from stimulating new experiences. Although many interesting ideas are presented, they are not always developed to extend the children's learning, especially for the higher-attaining children. The teaching is satisfactory in many sessions, but over time it is unsatisfactory as the weaknesses are limiting the children's achievement.
90. In the last inspection, progress and teaching were judged to be good. As then, most children are on course to attain the standard expected for their age by the end of the reception year in all six areas of learning. The higher-attaining children do better than this in reading, writing, number and aspects of knowledge and understanding of the world.
91. Four key areas for improvement lie in the lack of
- the stringent use of ongoing observation and assessment to record each child's progress in all six areas of learning;
  - the critical use of assessment information to plan different starting points and outcomes for groups and individuals;
  - low teacher direction and explicit learning purpose in the activities that the children choose for themselves;
  - frequent opportunities for the children to explore, develop ideas and express themselves creatively.

### **Personal, social and emotional development**

92. Many boys and girls, including some of the younger children, already show they have attained the standard expected by the end of the reception year. All make good progress in developing their self-confidence and in becoming increasingly independent, as they are quick to learn the routines and what is expected of them, such as sitting still during stories and discussion times.

93. The strength of the provision lies in the good relationships between the children, the teacher and other adults who work with them. The children are benefiting from being in a small class in a large, light airy room, where there are often two or more adults who ensure that the children follow the routines. Sometimes, this means that the adults do things that the children could do for themselves such as getting resources they need. This is not helped by the organisation of the classroom where items are not all readily accessible and there are few labels to guide the children. Similarly, opportunities are missed to use signs such as "Four children may play here" to develop the children's awareness of the need for agreed codes of behaviour.
94. The pleasant, accepting approach of the teacher encourages the children to offer their opinions and to make their own decisions. Many children show a good level of maturity, initiative and self-care. For example, two boys sensibly organised others as they stacked boxes of equipment. The children's maturity also shows in their contentedness to work on their own, to wait their turn and in their confidence to seek help from others when they cannot help themselves. Although the children showed little difficulty in dressing themselves after a physical education lesson, four children could not tie the strings on new baking aprons and sought help from an adult. The teacher recognised this as an area for development and produced a shoe for the children to practise tying the laces in a bow.
95. The children openly comment on what they see and what others do, and show a good level of tolerance of those children who find it hard to do as they are told. All are interested in learning. When the teacher produced a box, the children were intrigued to know what was in it and concentrated intently while the teacher brought out toy snakes of different lengths. The teacher is not capitalising enough on this positive attitude to challenge the higher-attaining children and to set higher expectations of the others.

### **Communication, language and literacy**

96. The children are on course to attain the early learning goals in this area of learning by the end of the reception year, but they are not achieving as well as they should. This is because the teacher underestimates what the children can achieve in reading and writing.
97. Although a few are reticent speakers, most of the children have good language skills. Many talk confidently and fluently, often at great length, about what they have done and use a wide range of words and phrases. In some cases, their speech is more typical of older children. In one instance, when the teacher recited a poem, a girl pre-empted her introduction of the term "tongue twister" by saying "*you didn't get your tongue twisted*". This good facility with language greatly assists the children's learning. Their responses show that they generally understand what is said to them and are confident to ask when they do not.

98. The children like and listen appreciatively to stories. Daily literacy sessions are ensuring that the children know how books work. For example, through pretending not to know, the teacher prompted the children to use the contents page to find where the page about a tree in winter was. Although the children do not show an evident love of books, they like hearing stories and remember the sequence of events as well as details in the pictures. They are learning the names and sounds of letters of the alphabet. The higher-attaining children suggested several words including “ice” and “dice” to rhyme with Dinah Price, and all have compiled their own poems on “Christmas is...”. Many recognise and write their names unaided and are sharing and reading books at school and at home. The parents’ willingness to hear their children read is a significant factor in the children’s progress. The teacher is keeping systematic records of the children’s reading progress and comments such as “saw oo in the word *moon*”, are helpful in identifying significant learning points in reading.
99. Although the children make steady progress in learning to form letters and to trace and copy words, they are slow to start writing independently because this is not sufficiently planned for and encouraged. The teacher misses opportunities to show the children how to write as part of each literacy session and not enough is done to promote reading and writing as part of classroom activities. Effective practice, such as the teacher’s question “*Do you think Mum and Dad will like it?*” in response to a higher attaining child’s writing about an ornament, is occasional rather than a consistent ploy to foster literacy.

### **Mathematical development**

100. A scrutiny of work from last year shows that most children attained the standard expected by the end of the reception year but a significant number did not. This is partly explained by the slow pace of learning and the limited range of daily activities to help the children to become increasingly familiar with and competent in handling number. Although there is an hour allocated each day to mathematics, the focus time is usually much shorter and the activities then chosen by the children do not always have a clear mathematical purpose. Little use is made of number cards, games and activities to show the children simple ways to record what they find out.
101. Many children start school with a good grasp of counting and number rhymes. As noted in the previous inspection, the children have a good understanding of mathematical terms and concepts such as shape and length. They had little difficulty in identifying the shorter of two toy snakes and in referring to the “middle sized” when comparing three. Similarly, they confidently chant numbers to 20 and match items one-to-one correctly in their play in the travel agency. There is little evidence of the children being challenged to solve mathematical problems or to explain their thinking. For example, in the session using toy snakes of different lengths, the teacher settled too quickly for the obvious answers. She did not develop the activity to probe the children’s understanding of different ways to compare and contrast. She missed chances to allow the children to decide how they would do it and to ask them to show and explain how they knew, for instance, that a particular snake was the shortest of the ones available. As a result, the children’s learning is too slow. The teacher is following her planned programme and is not evaluating the children’s responses to help her plan individual, group and class activities that push on the children’s learning.

### **Knowledge and understanding of the world**

102. The children are on course to attain the expected standard by the end of the year but the provision, while satisfactory, is narrow and there is little in the classroom to catch the children's interest and foster their skills of observation and exploration. In contrast, the good running commentary of the school kitchen assistant not only kept four children highly focussed on mixing ingredients to make snowmen biscuits, but also ensured that they saw how *"the dough is getting bigger and bigger just like a snowball."*
103. Many of the children have good general knowledge, especially about their own area. When looking at countryside pictures, several needed little prompting to talk about badgers and squirrels. Chances are missed to accelerate their learning by presenting related information such as books, pictures, artefacts and CD ROMs and by raising questions to prompt their use.
104. Over the year, the children benefit from the school's rural environment and visits to places such as Maryport Aquarium. They learn about people, places and events. The teacher is making good use of the oak tree in the school grounds to help the children to observe and track changes through the seasons. When the children make educational visits, good use is made of the camera to record what the children do and see but chances are missed to record comments from the children like one boy's remark that the oak tree was shaped like a catapult. The children learn how to use the tape recorder to listen to stories and many confidently handle the computer mouse to draw pictures on screen and are learning how to save work.
105. The children learn to use different tools and techniques to join and fix materials. They have learnt how to add a handle to a paper cup to make a mug and designed patterns to decorate it, but in many activities the adults decide what the children will do and use. There are few opportunities for them to repeat the activities or to experiment with different glues, papers and materials.

### **Physical development**

106. The children make satisfactory progress in learning to use and move their bodies and many have already met the standard expected by the end of the reception year, especially in the early learning goals for movement and sense of space. Most are well co-ordinated for their age and show maturity, skill and good control as they move around the school and on the playground. They twisted, turned and kept within their own space when moving to music and watched as others demonstrated what they could do.
107. Many show well-developed dexterity, skill and control in using pencils and other tools. Two girls neatly manipulated the scissors and paper to cut out small stars and then swiped the star over the glue stick before placing it carefully on their pictures. Others find it hard to control their actions. Not all have learnt to control a pencil and form letters uniformly and correctly. In their play and activities such as baking, the children show developing skill in using different materials and items and most are quick to respond to advice. The "bakers" lightened the pressure to roll their dough gently into a rectangular shape before carefully and safely cutting round a template with the end of a knife. Two girls acted on the teacher's comments and held two corners each of a cloth to stretch out the creases as they laid it on the floor.

108. The absence of planned observations and a system to track the children's progress means the higher-attaining children are not being given fresh challenges and others are not having the regular experiences they need to develop their skills.

### **Creative development**

109. The children make satisfactory progress over time, but the quality and range of provision is narrow. There are strengths in the teaching of specific techniques, such as printing, but there are limited opportunities for the children to rehearse and refine these techniques or to explore and apply them in their own way. This limits their achievement.
110. Despite the space available to set out equipment, materials and tools, the classroom offers little to tempt the children to experiment and create different textures and to work on a small and large scale. A good example of this was the lost potential for the children to explore the sounds of shakers and chime bars. Having caught the children's interest by showing them the instruments and setting the challenge of composing a wake-up tune, the teacher did not make a big enough feature of them to ensure that the children were drawn to the task. This meant that a few had a go but it was not seen as something they all had to do.
111. In an adult-led session, the children experimented with white chalk, paint and silver pens to create pictures of winter. The teacher made good use of winter scenes in photographs and magazine pictures to fire the children's imagination and showed them how to use the end and side of the chalk to create different effects. This was reflected in a few finished pictures. Others showed the effective use of dabs of paint to represent snowflakes.
112. Four children drew on their experience and their imagination in their play in "Yanwath Travel Agents", supported by relevant props, including tabards for the agency staff, brochures and forms. One girl held an imaginary conversation, asking where the caller wanted to go and then giving the times that the agency opened and closed for lunch.
113. Photographs show the children have used finger puppets to tell stories to a partner and also took part in a nativity play at Barton Church.

### **ENGLISH**

114. Overall standards are unsatisfactory. As noted in the previous inspection, standards in speaking and listening are above average throughout the school. Standards remain average in reading but in writing, although average standards have been sustained at the end of Key Stage 1, they have fallen at the end of Key Stage 2 to below average. The quality of handwriting, spelling and imaginative writing is poor. Presentation of work is often unacceptable. In the last inspection, a strong feature noted was the "*very high standard of presentation*".
115. There is considerable evidence of underachievement, particularly in writing but also in reading, in all year groups but to the greatest extent in Years 5 and 6. This is not due to the pupils' lack of skill in using language.
116. Pupils' good speaking skills are evident in their work in all subjects and their conversations with others. They are confident and articulate and willing to voice their opinions. When given the chance to prepare presentations, Year 3 and Year



4 pupils show good skills in explaining and describing and keeping their audience attentive. A Year 3 girl fielded questions maturely and was not fazed by people coming into the room. A strong feature of the pupils' language is their quickness to understand and apply technical vocabulary. Year 2 pupils talked of stories having "key moments", saying "*Stories would be boring without them*". A further good example was when higher-attaining Year 4 pupils confidently used the terms "possession" and "omission" to describe the different functions of an apostrophe.

117. Teachers encourage the pupils to talk about what they know and their lesson plans often list the key words to be emphasised. However, speaking and listening activities are rarely used as a learning tool or identified as a teaching focus across the curriculum. There are few group debates or use of talk partners or plenary sessions led by pupils. This is one reason why the pupils' listening skills are not as well developed as their speaking skills. In the infant and lower Key Stage 2 classes, the teachers do not insist on pupils listening carefully and this often results in pupils giving half-hearted attention. In some lessons, pupils talked to each other when they should have been listening and were then unsure of what they had been asked to do. This is not the case in the class of Year 5 and Year 6 pupils where the acting headteacher has high expectations that they will listen and sets rules to ensure they do.
118. Pupils make satisfactory progress in reading in all years but much appears to be due to the pupils' good language skills and to parents' willingness to hear their children read. The school does not promote reading through attractive book areas and invitations to find out from books. Most pupils are interested in reading and the majority read with satisfactory levels of accuracy and fluency for their age. They use their reading skills satisfactorily to tackle worksheets, labels, guided reading books and individual reading books from the school's reading scheme.
119. One area in which the teachers do well is developing the pupils' ability to read with expression. This was evident in a lesson where Year 1 and Year 2 pupils enjoyed reading along with the teacher and predicting what might happen in the story "Suddenly". By Year 2, pupils know to change their voice when they see features such as exclamation marks and emboldened print. They know about contents and index pages in information books and at Key Stage 2 they learn how to find books in the library which has a well-organised small collection of fiction and non-fiction books.

120. The teaching of reading is less effective in helping the pupils to appreciate what they are reading and how to talk about it. Higher attaining Year 6 readers confidently talk about themes and characters and compare the merits of authors such as Dick King-Smith and Philip Pullman, but average readers find this more difficult. Similarly, while they skim to get the gist and scan to find words, skills used well when using CD ROMs and the Internet, they are not as competent in discussing stylistic features. This in turn weakens the quality of their writing.
121. The infant pupils develop fluency in writing stories, accounts and instructions such as "How to make a pizza". They learn to be adventurous in their use of words and phrases to describe characters and in what they say. Higher attaining Year 3 and Year 4 pupils chose words well to create effect, such as "ffreezing!" and "*There was the most dreadful howl followed by the scariest silence*". Pupils learn to use paragraphs and to structure their writing clearly but much of their writing is banal. Many Year 5 and Year 6 pupils found it hard to play on words as they wrote in the style of M. Rosen's agony aunt poem "Dear Maureen". Despite the good writing model given by the acting headteacher and discussion of alliteration, puns and synonyms, only the higher-attaining pupils managed work at the level expected for their age. In a reply to a letter from a kettle, phrases such as "*I see why you are all steamed up ...don't blow a fuse*", were good examples of how the higher-attaining pupils used language to good effect.
122. The majority of pupils attain broadly average skills in technical aspects of writing as they learn to use correct grammar and punctuation. They are more accurate in the exercises done in literacy hours than in other work. In handwriting and spelling, standards are unsatisfactory and reflect weaknesses in the teaching over the years since the last inspection. Higher-attaining pupils in Year 2 are being shown how to join their writing and this is further developed in Years 3 to 6 through regular sessions of handwriting practice. However, few pupils transfer these skills consistently into their day-to-day work and their writing is often untidy. Only a few of the Year 6 pupils use a well-formed, mature, joined hand and present their work neatly. Far too many are slipshod in their work, which is splattered with spelling and punctuation errors. Pupils know few spelling strategies.
123. The acting headteacher has initiated the current focus on raising standards in spelling and handwriting, but there is little evidence of significant improvement in the pupils' work. This reflects the lack of a concerted and rigorously monitored effort to teach strategies and raise expectations. One of the main initiatives is the teaching of a spelling programme to pupils with special educational needs. Although this provides a satisfactory framework for group learning, it is not being used flexibly enough to meet the learning needs of individuals. The small group of Year 3 pupils, following the Additional Literacy Support programme, successfully learnt the rule to double the consonant after a vowel before adding "ing" as in "winning". They much enjoyed the card game and the use of small whiteboards to write down answers. Such effective learning ploys were less evident in whole-class sessions.

124. The teaching seen during the inspection was satisfactory in most lessons and good in a few. However, evidence from pupils' work shows that the teaching is not strong enough to raise standards. The teachers have a satisfactory knowledge of English but have not made the best use of training in how to teach the National Literacy Strategy. As the teachers plan much of their work on their own, they miss chances to share ideas and enliven literacy hours. Little use was made of the practical activities recommended in national training and seen in many schools. In many lessons seen, the pupils lacked enthusiasm and their work rate was low. The teachers' planning for literacy hours is too general. Not enough consideration is given to what different attainment groups need to learn and how this may best be achieved in the time available. The teachers track pupils' reading progress and keep samples of their writing, but do not make enough use of the information to set clear, specific targets for individuals and groups of pupils.
125. Leadership and management in English is poor. The co-ordinator's role is significantly underdeveloped. Since the last inspection, not enough has been done to monitor the quality of planning, teaching and learning; the co-ordinator does not have enough information about standards and practices across the school. As a result, there is no well-founded plan of action to raise standards.

## **MATHEMATICS**

126. Standards are average at the end of Key Stages 1 and 2. Inspection evidence indicates that most Year 2 and Year 6 pupils are attaining the level expected for their age and a small number are doing better than this, especially in number. Given the satisfactory progress seen in lessons, the school is set to attain similar results at Key Stage 1 to those in the 2001 national tests and to improve slightly at Key Stage 2. However, standards have fallen at Key Stage 2 since the last inspection when they were judged to be good.
127. The school is following the content of the National Numeracy Strategy and uses the guidance to structure teachers' planning. Nevertheless, the planning does not take sufficient account of the recommended content for both year groups in each class or of the different ability groups to provide appropriately challenging work for all. This is most evident in relation to the higher-attaining pupils, who make satisfactory progress but often underachieve. The recently introduced system of individual pupil assessments each half term offers good potential to link teaching more closely to pupils' strengths and weaknesses.
128. Several aspects have been overlooked as key features in raising standards. Firstly, pupils do not set out work neatly in their books. In all year groups, many pupils ignore the squared paper so that sums are poorly aligned and pupils often make avoidable errors in their working out. Secondly, the marking of pupils' work is too variable with insufficient guidance to pupils on what they need to do to improve.
129. Infant pupils make satisfactory progress in all aspects of mathematics. Most Year 2 pupils are confident users of number. They count correctly in twos, fives and tens, double and halve numbers to 20, and have a developing awareness of number values. They coped well in one lesson in using < and > symbols to record their answers when comparing two numbers up to 100. However, the same work for all meant that the higher-attaining pupils were not challenged sufficiently. Meanwhile, the large group of lower-attaining Year 1 pupils struggled to complete their work as many needed guidance from the classroom assistant. In this lesson,

good features of the teaching were the brisk pace and the way the teacher asked pupils to explain how they worked out the answers. This is not always to the fore in all lessons.

130. The teaching overall is satisfactory. At Key Stage 2, although there is good teaching for Year 5 and Year 6 pupils, the overall quality does not reflect the “*good and sometimes very good*” teaching reported in the last inspection. In only one lesson seen was there real vitality in teaching and a sense that pupils were making strides in their learning. This lesson for Year 5 and Year 6 pupils got off to a purposeful start, as the acting headteacher used the pupils’ knowledge of the seven times table to reinforce their understanding of decimals. He referred the pupils to information on display and there was a sense of excitement and enjoyment in the oral exchanges between teacher and pupils such as *Has it clicked for you yet?*. As the work was carefully matched to the pupils’ level of attainment, all made good progress in using relevant mathematical terms and procedures.
131. When the teachers stress key points or vary the activities, the pupils are more receptive. For example, the teacher’s reminder to read questions and instructions carefully helped Year 3 and Year 4 pupils to focus more closely on the information in bar charts and pictograms, both on paper and on computer screen. Similarly, the Year 6 pupils enjoyed using their knowledge of number facts to solve quickly problems such as “64 divided by 8 times 14 times 3” in as many different ways as they could. The mix of activities interested the pupils and they were keen to participate and to share what they had found out in their calculations.
132. Although the teachers usually ensure that the pupils with special educational needs have adult support, their planning does not always identify clearly the level of attainment expected of different groups of pupils. Too often, the reliance on textbooks, worksheets and whole-class teaching does not pose enough challenge for the higher-attaining pupils. Overlong sessions of teacher talk result in pupils not having enough time to try things for themselves. This slows their learning, as not all complete the work set for them.
133. The leadership and management of mathematics is unsatisfactory. The lack of effective action since the last inspection has resulted in an unclear role for the co-ordinator. The acting headteacher has instigated tracking, monitoring and evaluation procedures, but these are not fully understood by the co-ordinator. Although she has monitored teaching and learning, this has not led to a plan of action to structure what needs to be done to improve the quality. One area of improvement is in the analysis of the pupils’ results in the 2001 national tests by the acting headteacher and the co-ordinator to identify areas of weakness. This highlighted several areas including data-handling which is being given a higher profile, not only in mathematics but also in ICT and to some extent in science. Resources for mathematics are adequate although there is limited computer software.

## SCIENCE

134. Standards are average at the end of Key Stage 1 and below average at the end of Key Stage 2. Inspection evidence shows that most Year 2 pupils are on course to attain Level 2 as expected for their age. In contrast, Year 6 pupils have not made enough progress at Key Stage 2 and few are attaining Level 4 as expected for their age. A particular area of weakness is the pupils' skills in scientific enquiry but pupils also have many gaps in their scientific knowledge and understanding. The school is not well placed to raise the low standards of 2001.
135. These findings contrast markedly with those of the 1997 inspection. Improvement since then has been unsatisfactory and the quality of teaching and provision has fallen from good to barely satisfactory. Far too little has been done to clarify the role and expectations of the co-ordinator in monitoring the quality of teaching and learning and in raising standards. As a result, the school has little to help it identify the changes and emphases needed in teaching and in the curriculum to deal with pupils' underachievement. Opportunities have been missed to analyse pupils' results in the 2001 national tests to pinpoint the gaps in their knowledge and understanding.
136. A scrutiny of pupils' books shows their work is often untidy and, more importantly, shows insufficient development in the quality of scientific report writing or in ways to record data and evidence from observations. This is linked to weaknesses in English, mathematics and ICT provision. For instance, the teachers are not reinforcing well enough the need for pupils to apply what they know from mathematics lessons in handling and interpreting scientific data.
137. Contrary to the 1997 report, there is little evidence in lessons seen, in teachers' planning or in pupils' recorded work of the pupils learning to plan and carry out their own scientific enquiries and to extend their thinking through prediction, observation and analysis of their findings. Too much is directed and carried out by the teacher with little allowance made for pupils' existing knowledge. This has limited pupils' progress.
138. The Year 6 pupils lack knowledge in areas of mathematics that should have been covered in previous years. Because of this, the acting headteacher is lowering his expectations of the pupils and curtailing the work on sound and vibration that he would like to do with the Year 5 and Year 6 pupils. For example, the pupils were highly excited and motivated to make sounds using instruments, bottles and straws. This work was more typical of that for much younger pupils but was a necessary precursor to the planned work to focus their attention on the relationship between what they heard and saw. The headteacher's use of "*Why?*" and "*How do you know?*" type questions helped the pupils to make connections with what they already knew and by the end of the lesson, they had, for instance, discovered that large vibrations create loud sounds.
139. As pupils move through the school they acquire knowledge of life processes, living things, materials and physical processes, but the skills of observing, predicting and hypothesising are not being developed systematically. This is a key weakness in the teaching which varied in lessons from satisfactory to unsatisfactory. Over time, the teaching is not strong enough to make the most of the pupils' interest in science and to ensure that all pupils make the best progress and achieve as well as they could.

140. Year 1 and Year 2 pupils have learnt that materials have different characteristics that often determine their use. The pupils know that strong materials are used in building and transparent materials for windows. In an unsatisfactory lesson, when the teacher attempted too much, the pupils became confused over whether ice was a solid and if it could change back into a liquid or not. The pupils had too little time to consolidate their thinking, although it was clear that many had good general knowledge and a developing awareness of the processes of freezing and melting. For example, one pupil suggested that salt could be used to melt ice. Opportunities were missed to put this to the test alongside the planned use of heat to melt ice cones. Similarly, chances were lost to show the pupils how to record their hypotheses and to initiate the idea of a fair test in looking at all three cones at regular intervals.
141. In a long lesson for Year 3 and Year 4 pupils, the teacher's focus on question-and-answer and the completion of worksheets helped the pupils to consolidate what they knew about the properties of materials, such as hardness, strength and flexibility. However, there was not enough to challenge the higher-attaining pupils and develop their learning. All were working well within their capability. Although the teacher made good use of the school environment to set the context for the work, chances were missed for pupils to investigate their own ideas and to record their findings in different ways, including the use of ICT. Pupils' books also showed that practical work had been minimal since September.
142. The science policy is being redrafted and updated to reflect national guidance. Although the teachers keep records of pupils' attainment in tests, there are no agreed assessment procedures to assist teachers in deciding what pupils should learn next. Similarly, the co-ordinator does not monitor teachers' planning to ensure that the scheme of work is being taught and that the planned activities are matched to pupils' levels of attainment and to their specific needs. The school has adequate resources and is fortunate in having a pond, wildlife area and greenhouse, although there was no indication in pupils' work that these resources are used to any great extent.

## **ART AND DESIGN and DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY**

143. The school has sustained the satisfactory standards in design and technology since the previous inspection but the good standards then reported in art and design are not evident. Work is as expected for pupils' ages in drawing and painting and all pupils, including those with special educational needs, make satisfactory progress because of the satisfactory teaching.
144. Improvement since the last inspection has been unsatisfactory overall. By adopting national guidelines to structure the content of what is taught, the school has rectified the lack of detail in planning criticised in the last inspection. However, little has been done to exploit natural links between the two subjects or to ensure that the distinctive subject skills of both are taught systematically. ICT is not an integral part of the pupils' learning in either subject. The curriculum is not as rich as indicated in the last inspection report, especially in art and design where there is little evidence of pupils working with three-dimensional materials or producing work on a large-scale. Although classrooms are cramped, there is scope for collaborative and larger scale work by using space throughout the school in a more flexible way. Pupils' work is not presented to best effect and there are few examples of the work of other artists and craftspeople to inspire the pupils. This is a weakness in the school's provision for pupils' spiritual and cultural development.

145. Infant pupils learn different techniques and skills in using tools and materials for particular purposes and in creative ways. For example, pupils in Years 1 and 2 designed and made a “coat-of-many-colours” as in the Bible story of Joseph. In listing the materials needed and how they could fix the materials to the coat template, they identified gluing, stapling and sewing as possible methods. Most chose to use material with a repeating pattern although they have used different fabrics and textures, such as charcoal and crayon, to create collage pictures as part of work in art and design.
146. In the junior years, pupils refine and develop their skills and knowledge. They learn how to sketch and show detail and perspective. Pupils in Years 3 and 4 have produced detailed sketches of items such as a training shoe, cymbal and scissors, which show a developing awareness of how to use shade and tone to highlight detail. This growing attention to detail is also evident in their plans for models, and in the chairs made for a queen, many included adornments and extras with a definite purpose in mind.
147. The pupils enjoy the practical nature of both subjects. The pupils in the class of mixed Year 3 and Year 4 pupils were totally absorbed in attempting to make an alarm with a pin, paper clip and switch. In this lesson, however, the element of design was lost for many as they were learning how to create an electrical circuit. Only the higher-attaining pupils went on to combine circuits and proudly create a pressure mat. The enthusiasm and good subject knowledge of the acting headteacher motivated the Years 5 and 6 pupils to apply well what they knew about sound from their science lessons and design and make a “B-donger”, a musical instrument that would produce different notes. The pupils keenly shared ideas and worked co-operatively to plan what they would do and use.
148. The quality of leadership and management in both subjects is unsatisfactory. The co-ordinator is not monitoring teachers’ planning or the quality of teaching and learning, so has no information to guide curriculum development. Little has been done to widen the range of resources, tools, kits and books or to develop procedures to track pupils’ progress.

## **GEOGRAPHY AND HISTORY**

149. It is not possible to make an overall judgement on standards and the quality of teaching in geography, as there was insufficient evidence. No geography was taught in the autumn term for the infant pupils. In the geography lesson seen for pupils in Years 5 and 6, the teaching was satisfactory but pupils’ attainment was well below that expected for their age. In history, there is a similar picture. Although standards are satisfactory for the infant pupils and for those in Years 3 and 4, they are well below average for the Year 6 pupils. This is principally because the current cohort of Year 6 pupils have not been taught much geography and history since the autumn term when they were in Year 5. The content of work in their books and evidence from discussions with pupils indicate that the Year 6 pupils have poor levels of knowledge, skill and understanding in both subjects. This indicates a significant decline in standards since the previous inspection when attainment at 11 was judged as average.
150. The work done by Year 6 pupils in the autumn term about the Gunpowder Plot was of a low standard. Too much was copied or was merely information taken straight from the Internet to show that pupils had made progress in using different

source materials. Discussions with Year 6 pupils showed that they had only a sketchy understanding of the historical significance of the plot or how the evidence might be interpreted in different ways. Much of what they talked about was work they had enjoyed in Year 4.

151. Pupils learn about life now and in the past and how geographical features and factors have an impact on how people live. They develop an understanding of cause and effect but the work is not always matched to the ages and abilities of the pupils. The biographical accounts of Florence Nightingale by Year 1 and Year 2 pupils reflect their writing skills rather than their skills in finding out and thinking about historical facts. A good feature of this work was the use of the Internet to find information. Year 3 and Year 4 pupils made satisfactory progress in a lively history lesson as the teacher made good use of role-play to help the pupils appreciate why the Romans decided to settle in Britain. Pupils enjoyed this as well as looking up the definitions of key words. However, the pace of pupils' learning slowed when they copied work from the board. A scrutiny of work by Year 3 and Year 4 pupils shows the work is of a similar level for both years and does not indicate a developing ability to use their skills to interpret or question what they have learned.
152. The acting headteacher made effective use of concept mapping to help the Year 5 and Year 6 pupils to see the links between what they already knew about mountain environments. It soon became clear that pupils had only a rudimentary understanding of the physical attributes of mountain regions and many were unable to name continents and countries or to locate mountainous areas, despite using a map that showed major physical features of the world. The pupils were tentative in their responses, which often showed misconceptions such as mountains always being snowcapped. During the lesson, the headteacher's good management skills and clear explanations ensured that all pupils stayed attentive and began to acquire new understandings and confidence in using geographical terms.
153. The acting headteacher has taken on the role of co-ordinator for both subjects but, because of other priorities, has not been able to tackle any of the issues necessary to make improvements. Weaknesses in subject leadership and management have led to little being done since the previous inspection towards compiling subject policies and monitoring pupils' progress. As a result, gaps in Year 6 pupils' learning have been overlooked. This term the school is using national guidelines to structure work in geography and history, but they have not been adapted to suit the needs of the school.



## INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

154. Standards are broadly in line with those expected for pupils' ages at Key Stage 1 and at lower Key Stage 2, but below, although close to those expected of pupils in Year 6. Since the last inspection, much has been done to raise the quality of ICT equipment but the school has not capitalised on the good practice and standards judged in the last inspection, nor kept full pace with national developments.
155. There is evidence of underachievement in all classes. Many pupils gain experience from using computers outside school and, in sessions seen, several pupils showed that they were already competent in some, if not all, aspects of the task. The quality of teaching is satisfactory overall in helping the pupils to learn different skills, although there are significant weaknesses in some teachers' knowledge and the pupils often know more than they do. The classroom assistants use their knowledge very effectively to support the pupils and to help them learn.
156. Too many Year 6 pupils are catching up on what they should have learnt in previous years. While many boys and girls are extremely confident and competent in using CD ROMs, opening up programs and surfing the Internet, a significant number are not. They are hesitant when using the computers, even in finding programs and saving work. Their learning is accelerating as the acting headteacher is posing challenges that involve the application of what pupils know, not only in ICT but from other subjects such as mathematics. A good example was the compilation of a spreadsheet to compare the prices of items from different supermarkets. With the guidance of a classroom assistant, pupils quickly pooled their knowledge of what to do. They hotly discussed whether items should be omitted when the data was incomplete if they had to make a "full spreadsheet". As the acting headteacher was not present, he missed the content of this debate. He is fully aware of the teaching difficulties posed by having a separate small ICT suite and the proposed use of a computer in the classroom offers the opportunity to remedy some of these by demonstrating to the whole class.
157. One area of weakness throughout the school is pupils' poor skills in using the keyboard and word processing functions. Many pupils, even in Year 6, rely on one finger and take time to find the letters they need. The school has not developed ways to provide individuals and groups with time to gain familiarity with the keyboard and speedier expertise in using it. The computer club provides some chance for this, although those who attend tend to be proficient in using the keyboard and mouse. In lessons, the starting point is too often the same for all pupils, irrespective of what they already know. This reflects the lack of a well-established school assessment system to track what pupils can do.
158. The infant pupils learn basic computer controls and how to use a range of programs, including those to direct battery-driven floor toys. They learn how to open up a program, to write on screen and to insert a picture from a separate file. In an unsatisfactory lesson, Year 1 and Year 2 pupils did not make enough progress as the time was too short for them to apply what they knew. Year 2 pupils were eager to use the computer word bank to create sentences about their family. Higher-attaining pupils competently scrolled down the menu of available pictures before selecting and inserting their choice to illustrate their sentences. However, when the printer jammed, the teacher curtailed the lesson and other pupils lost the chance to have their turn.

159. The junior pupils refine their skills in word processing, handling and presenting data and creating images on screen. The co-ordinator's good step-by-step demonstration in using different functions ensured that Year 3 pupils learnt how to produce repeating patterns. They worked quickly and showed intense concentration with an occasional *"Oh look, I've done it!"* to mark their feelings of success. By Year 6, pupils know how to make tables, draft and edit work and use different features to enhance the presentation of work.
160. The timetabled use of the ICT suite by groups of pupils from the three classes, supervised either by their teacher or a classroom assistant, ensures that the computers are in fairly constant use. Nevertheless, during the inspection, there were several occasions when computers and the printer were out of use because of technical faults, despite almost daily maintenance by the chair of governors. Similarly, teachers and pupils made little use of other ICT equipment such as calculators, cameras and tape recorders. Not all the teachers are equally confident and knowledgeable in how to teach and use ICT as a learning tool across the curriculum, especially in literacy and numeracy. Two have only recently undertaken nationally funded training to update their knowledge, but all are providing a useful model for the pupils in using the computers to produce labels, captions, worksheets and documents.
161. The quality of subject leadership and management is satisfactory, but weaknesses in monitoring and evaluating what the school does are holding back progress in raising standards. The co-ordinator has good personal expertise in ICT and has been successful in increasing and updating equipment so that the school has largely what it needs to meet National Curriculum requirements. Gaps have been filled by borrowing resources such as the sensing equipment to give Year 5 and Year 6 pupils experience in using the computer to control and record data as part of work in science and geography. The adoption of national guidance ensures that pupils are being taught the full programmes of study in ICT. However, there is no school guidance on how the taught units complement work in other subjects.

## **MUSIC**

162. It was not possible to judge overall standards of music, or the overall quality of teaching, as no lessons were seen. Music does not have a high priority in the school and pupils are experiencing a narrow curriculum which barely meets National Curriculum requirements. Parents commented on the loss of the musical leadership, expertise and enthusiasm of a teaching assistant whose work was praised in the previous inspection. The acting headteacher has taken on the role of co-ordinator and has plans to develop the subject but it remains a low priority compared with other curriculum areas. All the teachers are following national guidance in planning their weekly lessons, but, as reported in the previous inspection, there is no school scheme of work to ensure that pupils' skills and knowledge are developed systematically and progressively.

163. The standard of singing is satisfactory. Pupils know a range of songs and hymns but their singing lacks depth of tone. This is because they sing to recorded accompaniment and are not being taught how to improve the quality of their performance. In assemblies and lessons, the pupils listen to different types of music such as classical pieces, traditional carols and modern hymns. Pupils at the computer club used the Internet to listen to their favourite songs from current hit music.
164. The infant pupils explore different sounds and learn to recognise and produce sound. They are introduced to musical terms such as “timbre” and “tempo” and have some opportunity to play percussion instruments. The school has only a limited number and range of these with few from different cultures. In the junior classes, the pupils appraise different types of music and compose their own pieces, sometimes using a computer program.
165. During the last school year, the pupils benefited from seeing and hearing a harpist and a quartet of brass and string players. One pupil commented that the sound of the harp “*was like rain falling.*” Photographs also show that Year 2 pupils used a range of percussion instruments and a small number of Key Stage 2 pupils learnt to play the recorder.

## PHYSICAL EDUCATION

166. Standards are satisfactory in those aspects of physical education that the school can provide, namely games, swimming, athletic and outdoor and adventurous activities. As reported in the previous inspection, the school cannot meet the requirements of the National Curriculum at Key Stage 2 as there is no suitable indoor space to teach gymnastics or dance. As most physical education sessions are held outdoors, pupils miss out when the weather is inclement. Nevertheless, all pupils, including those with special educational needs, make satisfactory progress. In the lesson seen and in their outdoor play, pupils showed a range of skills and movements typical of their age.
167. Although the school has not resolved the problem of how to provide lessons in gymnastics, there are some curricular strengths. A long-standing arrangement at the local pool, and with parents who transport the pupils there, ensures that pupils from Years 1 to 6 have swimming lessons. Most Year 6 pupils can swim at least 25 metres and have learnt about personal survival skills. Infant pupils use the school’s adventure playground in the summer months and all junior pupils undertake orienteering and activity challenges as part of their residential visits. Older junior boys and girls can attend sports activities after school, including football and netball, and pupils learn the rules of team games and the principles of fair play as they participate in local league matches, tournaments and competitions.
168. In the lesson seen, the teaching was satisfactory. The teacher’s secure subject knowledge ensured that pupils in Years 1 and 2 made satisfactory progress in throwing and catching balls. The lesson was well structured so that pupils moved from controlling the ball with their hands to using their feet. The pupils practised hard despite the cold, windy conditions and watched closely when the teacher asked others to demonstrate effective practice. This helped all pupils to improve and by the end of the lesson they were eager to play a game that involved them controlling a ball around cones.

169. Subject leadership and management are unsatisfactory. Since the last inspection, little has been done to ensure that the junior pupils have some experience of gymnastics and dance. The teachers are using national guidance to structure the curriculum but this has not been tailored to suit the school's singular situation. Although a policy is in draft form, there is no agreement on how pupils' progress may be assessed and the information used to meet the needs of all the pupils.

## RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

170. As no lessons were seen during the inspection, it is not possible to judge the quality of teaching. Judgements on standards are based on discussion with pupils and the content of their work. As noted in the last inspection, Year 2 pupils attain the standard expected for their age as given in the Cumbria Agreed Syllabus for Religious Education. However, standards have fallen at Key Stage 2 and are well below those expected for Year 6 pupils.
171. Year 6 pupils have not been taught the required programmes of study since the beginning of the autumn term in 2000. The imbalance in provision noted in the last inspection is still evident in the work of pupils in Years 5 and 6, who so far this school year have studied two stories from the New Testament and have just begun to learn about Islam. In discussion, Year 6 pupils remembered that the Qur'an is the holy book of Muslims and also remembered aspects of Judaism from when they were in Year 4. However, they found it hard to describe the distinctive features and religious traditions of this or other faiths, including Christianity. Much of the work in pupils' books was copied and the content was well below the standard expected, especially for eleven-year-olds.
172. Infant pupils learn what religion is about through hearing and discussing stories from the Old and New Testaments. They also learn about common elements in various religions such as festivals of light and the symbolism of Christingle and Diwali candles. One Year 2 pupil showed a sound understanding of the meaning of baptism in Christianity in writing, "*Baptism is to welcome the baby into God's family*".
173. The standards of work of pupils in Years 3 and 4 are broadly in line with expectations. Pupils build on their learning from Years 1 and 2 and begin to identify similarities and differences between religions including Christianity and Judaism through their study of beliefs, artefacts and symbols. They also develop a deeper understanding of the meaning behind parables such as "The Prodigal Son". Their learning is enhanced by the content of school assemblies on the themes of caring and forgiveness.
174. Subject leadership and management is unsatisfactory. In overseeing religious education, the acting headteacher is becoming increasingly aware of the gaps in the provision. He has not yet begun to monitor and evaluate the quality of teaching and standards of attainment in all classes. Little has been done since the previous inspection to improve the quantity and range of resources and they remain limited.