

INSPECTION REPORT

BELLE VUE INFANT SCHOOL

Carlisle, Cumbria

LEA area: Cumbria

Unique reference number: 112228

Headteacher: Mrs J Thomson

Lead inspector: Mr R Gill

Dates of inspection: 7th – 9th February 2005

Inspection number: 266403

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Infant
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	4 – 7
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
Number on roll:	146
School address:	Beaver Road Carlisle Cumbria
Postcode:	CA2 7PT
Telephone number:	01228 607554
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Appropriate authority:	Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	Mrs S Glendinning
Date of previous inspection:	26 th April 1999

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

Belle Vue Infant School is situated to the west of Carlisle town centre and serves a mixed but broadly average community. Most of the 146 pupils come from the immediate locality. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs is similar to that found nationally overall, but the number of pupils with a statement of special educational needs is below. Virtually all the pupils are from families of white British heritage. There are very few pupils who are learning English as an additional language, but these are fluent in English speakers. When they start school, children's attainment is generally similar to that expected. There has been a significant turnover in staff, including the deputy headteacher, since the school was last inspected in 1999. The school was credited as a Healthy School in November 2003, received Activemark in September 2004 and was recognised for Excellence in Early Education in October 2004.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
4074	R Gill	Lead inspector	Mathematics Information and communication technology (ICT) Music Physical education Art and design Special educational needs
8988	J Cross	Lay inspector	
4350	C Whittington	Team inspector	English English as an additional language Design and technology History Geography Religious education
22380	P Parrish	Team inspector	Foundation Stage Science

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

OVERALL EVALUATION

This is a good school with some very good features. Attainment is above, and often well above, the national expectation. Pupils' achievement, at the end of Year 2, is good and has improved very well since 1999. Good leadership and management, with very good contributions from the headteacher and governors, have helped to improve markedly the quality of teaching. The high staff turnover has been managed very well. The school provides good value for money.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- the headteacher's very good leadership, in particular, has helped to raise standards and improve teaching considerably in the last five years;
- pupils with special educational needs are taught very well and make swift progress;
- additional opportunities within the curriculum have a positive effect on pupils' personal development;
- the school's very good ethos extends to very productive links with parents and the local community;
- methods of assessment are sound, but guidance for teachers sometimes lacks precision; and
- teaching does not involve pupils enough in ways to improve their work.

The school has improved very well since its last inspection in April 1999. Attainment, at the time of the last inspection, was below expectations overall, but well below them in mathematics. Standards, pupils' achievement and teaching have all improved in reading, writing and mathematics. Subject co-ordinators are involved well in checking on their areas of responsibility and higher attaining pupils are making good progress owing to the improved teaching that they receive.

STANDARDS ACHIEVED

Results in National Curriculum tests at the end of Year 2, compared with:	all schools			similar schools
	2002	2003	2004	2004
reading	A	B	A	A
writing	B	B	B	B
mathematics	A	B	A	A

*Key: A - well above average; B - above average; C - average; D - below average; E - well below average
Similar schools are those with similar percentages of pupils eligible for free school meals*

Pupils' achievement is good. The school's results in the National Curriculum tests show that Year 2 pupils are generally well above expectations in reading and mathematics and above them in writing.

The judgements made during the inspection show that currently:

- children in the Foundation Stage achieve well and are on course to exceed the nationally expected goals;
- standards in reading, writing and mathematics are above average in Year 2. Expectations in science are met, but not enough pupils are reaching standards above those expected for their age;
- achievement is good, but pupils with special educational needs achieve very well; and
- pupils are on course to meet the ambitious targets set for them by the end of Year 2.

Pupils' personal qualities are good. Their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Attitudes and behaviour in lessons are good and pupils' behaviour around school is positive. Attendance and punctuality are good.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION

The quality of education provided by the school is good. Teaching and learning are good overall. Teaching is good in the Foundation Stage. It is good in English, mathematics and information and communication technology (ICT) and satisfactory in science and religious education. Pupils make good advances in their learning partly because the basic skills of literacy, numeracy and ICT are used effectively in other subjects. This is a very inclusive school in which pupils with special educational needs learn very well. Methods of assessment are satisfactory, but advice for teachers about how to judge the level of pupils' work and the use made of the new electronic record of pupils' attainment are at an early stage of development and there has not been time for these to be used extensively in setting targets for pupils. The assessment of pupils' work is sound, but pupils are not yet involved enough in the targets for their learning. The school looks after pupils very well. It works effectively with parents to enhance pupils' achievements. Links with other schools and the community are very good. The curriculum is good and is very well enriched by additional activities.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Leadership and management are good. The headteacher has worked very well to raise standards since 1999, ably supported by deputy headteacher, staff and the governing body. A genuine atmosphere of teamwork exists, in which collaboration over innovations, such as the teaching of thinking skills, is high. Subject co-ordination is good. Subject leaders know what needs to be done and some have had a good influence already, but several are too new to have implemented their good quality plans. The governing body fulfils its statutory duties very well. Governors ensure that the school includes all pupils successfully and promotes racial equality well.

PARENTS' AND PUPILS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

Parents are very pleased with the school and the improvements it has made. Many appreciate the improvement in their children's academic progress and personal development. Pupils have a very good opinion of the school and talk with confidence about their learning.

IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

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

- improve the guidance for teachers in how to judge the level of pupils' work and make more productive use of the records of pupils' progress; and
- involve pupils more in the assessment of their work and the targets set to improve their learning.

PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS

STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

Standards achieved in areas of learning and subjects

Pupils' attainment in Year 2 is generally above average and their achievement in reaching this level of attainment is good. Standards by the end of the reception year are above the expected levels in most areas of learning and children achieve well.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards are above the nationally expected level in reading, writing, mathematics and ICT.
- Pupils achieve well throughout the school, which represents a very good improvement since 1999.
- Pupils with special educational needs achieve very well.
- The progress of higher attaining pupils in the investigational aspect of science is a relative area of weakness.

Commentary

1. Pupils' current attainment in Year 2 is generally above average and pupils' achievement in reaching this level of attainment is good. The results in 2004 were well above average in reading and mathematics and above it in writing. This high attainment represented very good achievement for the pupils concerned. The ambitious targets for 2005 would place pupils well above average, overall, again if they were reached. Pupils' current rate of progress means that these targets are attainable. The good progress towards this year's goals is typical of the wider picture of attainment. Over the last five years, results in the school have moved ahead faster, on average, than the national improvement in performance.
2. Standards by the end of the reception year are on course to be above the expected levels in all areas of learning, except in knowledge and understanding of the world where they meet requirements. This represents good achievement in the Foundation Stage because children consolidate and extend basic skills and make good progress in most areas of learning. They go even further in personal and social development. They are on course to be well above the expected levels by the end of the year, owing to the high quality of teaching they receive in how to think, feel, learn and relate to one another. Moreover, children's achievement in physical development is enhanced greatly by the high quality provision for outdoor play.

Standards in national tests at the end of Year 2 – average point scores in 2004

Standards in:	School results	National results
reading	17.5 (16.9)	15.8 (15.7)
writing	15.3 (15.4)	14.6 (14.6)
mathematics	17.4 (17.3)	16.2 (16.3)

There were 56 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year

3. National Curriculum test results in 1998 were below the national expectations generally and well below them in mathematics. The key development points, from the last inspection, were all about raising standards through better organised teaching and improving the achievement of higher attainers. These matters have been tackled with clarity and determination in a concerted programme of improvement. For example, those pupils capable of higher attainment are given regular teaching in small groups to give them additional challenges, particularly in mathematics. They respond very well to these opportunities and standards have

improved overall by virtue of their improved performance. Standards in science are in line with expectations for the pupils' age, but in 2004 few pupils reached the higher level. Teaching has been improved in this respect, but there are relatively still too few opportunities for pupils to take responsibility for their own investigations. This means that, while the proportion of pupils reaching the higher level has improved since 2004, standards could be higher still.

4. Beyond English, mathematics and science, standards have also risen in ICT and in the Foundation Stage. In other subjects, standards are satisfactory except in design and technology and music where they exceed expectations. This is because in design and technology pupils are taught more systematically to evaluate their own work than in other subjects and they receive specialist teaching in music that also ensures all pupils are involved regularly in performances in front of parents.
5. Pupils who have special educational needs achieve very well. Teaching, from teachers and their assistants, is very effective for these pupils. They thrive so well because their individual achievements are valued and celebrated positively in all lessons. Higher attainers make good progress in an atmosphere in which they are often challenged with more difficult questions and set more demanding work. Those that possess particular talents are also catered for well and make good progress, particularly in physical activities such as maypole dancing or football. Moreover, the thinking skills and philosophy lessons appeals to those with an interest in ideas and how they can be debated. Pupils with a talent for languages grasp the basic elements of French well and those with an interest in sport, art or ICT can join one of several clubs designed to meet their needs.

Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities (ethos)

Pupils' behaviour and their attitudes to school are good. Pupils' personal development is good; their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good overall. Attendance and punctuality are good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils enjoy school and are well motivated.
- Staff have high expectations of pupils' conduct throughout the school day.
- Pupils work and play together amicably.
- Staff foster helpfulness and thoughtfulness very effectively.
- Pupils' regular attendance enables them to learn step by step.

Commentary

6. Pupils' good attitudes and values are central to their high personal and academic achievements. Teachers, many of whom are new to the school since the last inspection, have successfully maintained its positive climate for learning and have strengthened pupils' personal development.
7. Parents are unequivocal that their children like school and work hard. They commend its happy, welcoming and protective environment. This warmth is strikingly apparent from the very start of the school day when cheery staff greet pupils individually as they enter the building. This puts them at their ease and in the right frame of mind for learning.
8. Teaching in the Foundation Stage nurtures children's personal and social development very successfully, enabling them to form trusting relationships and learn to co-operate, share and take turns. Pupils of all ages are keen to please the staff and show a high level of interest in their work. They persevere well with allotted tasks. The staff are very good role models for them. Many are seeking further qualifications and their enthusiasm for learning is manifest.

9. Pupils with special educational needs enjoy thoroughly their extra-help sessions because learning is very effectively matched to their needs and is made fun. A small 'catch-up' group of 'Billy's Buddies', for example, were tickled to hear that Billy, the bear puppet, had mischievously hidden words in their storybook. The scenario captured pupils' interest and motivated their learning.
10. Parents' perceptions about behaviour are correct. Discipline is firm yet fair and staff do not tolerate bullying, harassment or racism. They promote very strongly respect of differences and consideration of others' feelings. Some lessons, for example, are designed specifically to encourage pupils to think deeply about their attitudes to life. Pupils very rarely misbehave in lessons and concentrate well on their learning. Outdoors the superbly developed courtyard and log trail, and other challenging equipment, stimulate constructive, co-operative play. One pupil was excluded for a fixed period last year.

Exclusions

Ethnic background of pupils

Categories used in the Annual School Census
White – British
Black or Black British – Caribbean

Exclusions in the last school year

No of pupils on roll	Number of fixed period exclusions	Number of permanent exclusions
145	1	0
1	0	0

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

11. Relationships are good throughout the school. Staff celebrate and reward pupils' thoughtfulness in special assemblies that spur them to be responsive to the needs of others. Pupils are good at helping around the school and are encouraged to extend their care and concern to the wider community through charitable fundraising and mutually beneficial links with the elderly. Children in the Foundation Stage, for example, have held their teddy bears' picnic in the grounds of a residential home, bringing pleasure to those they entertained.
12. Pupils' multicultural awareness has improved since the last inspection largely as a result of better resources to represent the diverse nature of British society. Extra-curricular provision has vastly improved and offers Years 1 and 2 greater opportunities to mix socially.

Attendance

Attendance in the latest complete reporting year (%) – 2003/4

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
School data	4.9	School data	0.1
National data	5.1	National data	0.4

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

13. Attendance is considerably higher than at the time of the last inspection and is now above average for infant schools nationally. This has been achieved by closer checks on reasons for absence and earlier involvement of the education welfare service with families causing concern.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

The school provides a good quality of education that includes good teaching and learning. The assessment of pupils' work is satisfactory. There is a good curriculum. Pupils receive very good care and good support and guidance. The school has a very good partnership with parents, other schools and the community. Pupils greatly appreciate what the school does for them, particularly in the way that their views are taken into account.

Teaching and learning

Teaching and learning are good with some very good features. Assessment is sound overall, but the close analysis of National Curriculum test results and the assessment methods for pupils with special educational needs have contributed very well to the rise in standards.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The best teaching is very lively and creates good links with other subjects.
- Pupils are taught to think well about issues and problems.
- Pupils are not yet fully involved in assessing their own work.
- Pupils with special educational needs and able mathematicians are provided for very well.
- Sometimes not enough is expected of higher attainers in science.

Commentary

14. The quality of teaching is good and much improved on that found at the time of the last inspection. The proportion of good and better teaching has grown very well. There have been many changes in staff over the years and new teachers have been inducted very well in methods designed to raise standards. Parents and governors are very positive about the way in which teaching has improved since 1999.

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 28 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very poor
0	6	18	3	1	0	0

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

15. Strong teaching is often about the way in which lessons provide a variety of lively activities, invariably incorporating ICT, that capture pupils' imaginations and successfully link several subjects together. A Year 2 literacy lesson was typical of this type of teaching. Pupils were writing about how their local area compared with Scotland, which was being studied in geography. Computers were used very well to help pupils practise letter sounds within words and large maps were used most effectively to locate places and practise, incidentally, co-ordinates in mathematics. Pupils loved the sense of activity and pace in their learning. This kind of lesson is often made even more effective by the swift progress made by pupils with special educational needs who are taught very well by a well-trained teaching assistant.
16. The frequency with which ICT is used to reinforce and broaden learning is a strength of the school. Computers in classrooms are used very effectively to provide opportunities for pupils to investigate in many subjects. Pupils have useful access to the Internet and can use it well for research. Beyond the regular practice of skills related to reading, writing and mathematics,

pupils regularly control an electronic toy around various obstacle courses, thereby developing valuable aspects of special intelligence.

17. The school has just begun to teach a course in thinking skills to pupils of all ages. This is proving most successful. Lessons are either of a general nature in which thinking is developed through debate about matters of topical interest or they are linked to a subject already being studied such as mathematics. In both cases, the breadth of pupils' learning is increased very well. For example, in one lesson pupils were expected to discuss in which order some picture cards should be placed to make a story. The level of thinking and discussion produced, by the searching questions asked by the teacher, was of a high order. This kind of discourse is regularly reinforced through the course in philosophy, for young children, which has been taught in school for some time. It is plain to see that regular lessons are being influenced positively by this kind of approach. Very occasionally teaching is unsatisfactory because learning is dull: pupils are not expected to use their skills in thinking, but this is uncharacteristic of lessons overall.
18. Pupils with a special educational need are often expertly guided by teaching assistants in ways that allow them to learn alongside others. Occasionally, pupils are withdrawn for more specialised learning devoted to reading and writing letter sounds or basic mathematics. This individualised support is sometimes part of a local education authority funded project within which the teacher or teaching assistants have received additional training. In all these cases, the provision is strong and pupils make very good progress in their learning as a result.
19. Gifted pupils are given more demanding work that satisfies their curiosity and capacity for deeper thought, particularly in mathematics. For example, gifted pupils in Year 2 receive work in mathematics that not only extends their skills in arithmetic, but requires them to think around a problem and try different solutions. This same emphasis on challenging the higher attainers does not yet apply fully in science. Pupils capable of more demanding work are often not required to be independent enough in their own learning, for example in selecting their own resources and equipment and setting up their own fair tests.
20. The good, and sometimes very good, teaching in the Foundation Stage contains all of the successful elements found elsewhere in the school. Children are engaged very well, encouraged in skilful ways and challenged to be independent and resourceful learners. They respond very well to these challenges. The development of reading, writing and mathematics is a strength of the provision in the reception classes, but so is children's progress in physical development. This is due to the very good opportunities they receive to use the new courtyard, the existing outside play area and the school hall for energetic and imaginative work.
21. Some very good methods of assessment have produced much higher standards in the past few years. Test scores have been analysed very well and wise decisions have been made about what improvements in teaching have been necessary. Assessment in general is satisfactory because some aspects are not yet as advanced. The school acknowledges this and already has plans in place to tackle these areas. Collections of pupils' work in several subjects, designed to assist teachers in judging the level reached by pupils in their lessons, lack detail and are not helpful enough. Learning objectives are regularly advertised well at the beginning of lesson, but not discussed well enough at the end of many lessons. Teachers praise pupils well when marking their work, but provide too few targets that indicate where improvements are needed. The school has introduced a useful computerised system of recording where pupils are up to in their learning, but there has not been time to use these records to set pupils targets for improvement. The whole aspect of setting targets, commenting upon them in marking and involving pupils in discussions about how learning has progressed, at the end of lessons, is an area for development throughout the school.

The curriculum

The school provides a good curriculum that is very well supplemented by additional activities. Accommodation is satisfactory, but resources are good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- A good range of interesting activities engages pupils well in learning.
- Opportunities for learning are enriched very well through a range of clubs, visits and extra lessons that help children to think and learn well.
- The curriculum for children in the Foundation Stage is enhanced significantly by the recently established outdoor facilities.
- The school makes very good provision for pupils with special educational needs.

Commentary

22. The curriculum promotes good achievement and has been improved well since the last inspection. All requirements of the National Curriculum, the locally agreed syllabus for religious education and the areas of learning for children in the Foundation Stage are met well. Teaching, which is committed strongly to providing well for the pupils, goes to considerable lengths to plan a curriculum of good quality. As a result, pupils throughout the school are enthusiastic about learning. They are well prepared for the next stage of their education. For example, they have plenty of opportunities to become confident and develop their own viewpoints, which are designed wisely to stand them in good stead for the next stage in their sex, drugs and relationships education.
23. The curriculum, for the children in the Foundation Stage, ensures that their early experiences of school life are successful in establishing good basic skills and very good personal development. The newly improved outdoor facilities, especially within the courtyard, allow children to practise and reinforce learning in every aspect. For example, children not only play together imaginatively, but write stories in the log cabins. These facilities are shared well with families from the local community. Moreover, teachers from other schools learn a great deal from seeing them being used.
24. Good progress has been made since the last inspection in designing a curriculum to raise standards in literacy, numeracy and ICT. The curriculum includes many opportunities for a variety of methods of learning. All classes, for example, have weekly activities that are devoted to the development of thinking skills. Tasks include problem solving, questioning, and spotting similarities and differences between sets of materials. These innovations in getting pupils to think more flexibly have helped to raise standards in English and mathematics. In science, pupils are beginning to use measurement and graph work well. Many exciting opportunities are found to extend pupils' skills in ICT across the curriculum.
25. The school has a strong commitment to providing well for all pupils, whatever their specific requirements. Provision for pupils with special educational needs is very good. The school makes sure that pupils that need extra help with literacy and numeracy are catered for very well. Part-time teachers and several teaching assistants form a well-qualified team that gives specialised support to pupils. The curriculum is adapted well, when necessary, and teaching assistants work very well alongside teachers in regular lessons to make sure that pupils make good progress, similar to the rest of the class. While higher attaining pupils are usually challenged well in literacy and numeracy, provision is less effective in science, where provision for furthering the investigational skills is under-developed.

26. The staff and parents work extremely hard to provide a very good range of extra-curricular clubs and lunchtime activities to enrich the curriculum, far more than is typical. The range includes art, craft, music, ICT, board games, languages and sport activities of good quality that considerably enhance the learning of pupils taking part.
27. Accommodation is satisfactory overall. The courtyard play area has been a very beneficial addition, but there is a lack of enclosed areas in which pupils can work in small groups. This means that whole-class teaching and small group work takes place alongside each other and can sometimes be distracting for the pupils concerned. Lessons benefit from the good level of resourcing, for example the numbers of computer available to be used in classrooms. Teachers and their assistants are deployed effectively. Staffing levels are good and many are engaged on a range of extra training, profitable for both personal and school improvement.

Care, guidance and support

Staff continue to take very good care of the pupils and support and guide them effectively. They involve pupils well in the school's work and development.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Staff and governors work hard to ensure that pupils are happy, safe and settled in school.
- Pupils with special educational needs receive very good academic and personal support.
- The needs of higher attainers in mathematics are met very successfully.
- Trusting relationships are established throughout the school community.
- Bullying is dealt with effectively on the rare occasions that it occurs.

Commentary

28. This is a nurturing school that enables pupils to flourish in the watchful environment that staff create. Every child matters to the staff who do their best to assure their physical and emotional well-being and tackle their needs and sensitivities. Parents are delighted with the level of care that their children receive. They particularly appreciate the friendliness and approachability of the staff that enable them to share any concerns and anxieties that arise.
29. Staff are very good at noticing pupils' insecurities and bolstering their confidence. A teaching assistant, for example, made sure that she was in the right place at the start of school to make a fuss of a pupil who had been uncharacteristically clingy and unsettled the previous day or two. This smoothed the parent's departure and got the day off to a better start.
30. A few parents feel that the three-week period of induction when children first start school in the Foundation Stage is unduly lengthy. Their views are not justified, bearing in mind the large numbers of new entrants involved. The school rightly considers that delaying full-time attendance, through staggering children's intake and their inclusion in lunchtime arrangements, best serves their needs. These measures ensure that children settle in smoothly and gain confidence as learners.
31. Staff assess pupils' learning reasonably thoroughly, enabling them to respond well to individual academic needs. They quickly identify those who would benefit from additional support and devise suitable programmes to boost their achievement. Part-time teachers and highly trained teaching assistants skilfully provide the extra help that enables pupils with learning difficulties, and those who excel in mathematics, to attain higher standards. Pupils of all abilities, however, are not sufficiently involved in target setting and assessing how well they are getting on.
32. Staff are ever mindful to safeguard the pupils from harm. They are suitably trained in matters relating to child protection and ably supported by a governor who is a health professional, experienced in dealing with such issues. Staff take bullying very seriously and do all they can

to eliminate it. They successfully use assemblies, discussion times and lessons such as personal and social, health education and citizenship to promote empathy.

33. Staff are keen to involve pupils in decision-making but do not provide a regular forum, such as a school council, to canvass their views about its provision. Pupils, nevertheless, have tested out play equipment successfully to inform future purchases. They have also influenced the school's decision to introduce extra-curricular football.

Partnership with parents, other schools and the community

The school enjoys very good partnerships with parents, other schools and the community that contribute very effectively to pupils' learning and personal development.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Parents are very supportive of the school and their children's learning.
- Staff and governors communicate with parents very effectively and have their trust.
- Neighbouring schools share resources and expertise very successfully.
- Off-site visits in the locality provide many first-hand experiences for the pupils.
- Strong links with a teacher training college bring many benefits.

Commentary

34. Since the last inspection the school has strengthened its links with parents and the wider community through the commitment and hard work of the staff. Parents are rightly very pleased with the school's provision for their children and readily become partners in their education.
35. Contact between staff and parents, particularly at the start of the school day, is high and helps to establish strong bonds. Quite a number of parents regularly volunteer to assist the staff because of the welcome and encouragement that they receive. Suitable training courses for helpers, run in school, play an important part in making their contribution purposeful. Parents and other adults can also develop their skills by attending computer courses.
36. The 'Friends of Belle Vue' are extremely successful in organising fundraising and social events. Parents and staff pull together supremely well to raise substantial funds for the school by accepting challenges such as abseiling and assault courses that forge team spirit. The wider community is also actively involved in fundraising through the school's close links with a local hostelry that hosts family events such as fun days and barbecues. The funds generated are used wisely and have, for example, contributed towards the development of the courtyard that enhances the outdoor curriculum so well.
37. Parents of new entrants appreciate being informed about the teaching of reading and mathematics, and ways to help their children to learn at home. Staff successfully facilitate two-way dialogue between home and school through records that accompany pupils' reading books. Adult fiction is loaned to parents to reinforce the message that reading is pleasurable.
38. Pupils' annual written reports are clearer and more detailed than at the time of the last inspection. Parents of those children with special educational needs are particularly well updated about their progress through regular meetings with the staff. The governors' annual written report to parents is a wealth of information about the curriculum and school life. Governors' personal observations of how and what the pupils have learnt make it eminently readable.

39. The school links very effectively with other local schools for the benefit of staff and pupils. It usefully shares facilities, equipment and special events with the adjacent junior school to which pupils usually transfer. Pupils say that they love attending each other's school performances. Transition is eased by a buddy system that pairs Year 2 pupils with those in Year 5. Sporting links with a local secondary school enable access to specialist facilities and staff training. Foundation Stage teachers from several infant schools have got together to produce valuable training materials on the outdoor curriculum, gaining much from the sharing of experiences and ideas.
40. Staff arrange educational visits that bring learning alive for the pupils. These have recently included visits to local churches, the park, museums, an aquarium, a stately home and a rare breeds' farm.
41. Students regularly undertake teaching practice in school, several later being appointed to the staff. Their freshness and enthusiasm help to keep the school forward thinking and abreast of educational innovations.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Leadership and management are good. Leadership and management of the headteacher, ably supported by the deputy headteacher, are very good. The leadership and management of the co-ordinators are good. The governance of the school is very good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Very good aspects of leadership have improved teaching and raised standards very well.
- The school is managed in very collaborative ways.
- Governors play a very strong role in assuring the school's development.
- The monitoring of lessons and pupils' work is not comprehensive enough.

Commentary

42. There have been very good improvements since the last inspection that are praised by parents and governors, who speak highly of the headteacher and staff who have, they claim, breathed new life into the school. Many parents rightly speak in glowing terms of the school's caring ethos that stems, they believe, from the vision and hard work shown by committed leadership. The school was judged as being satisfactory in 1999, but national test results were below, and sometimes well below, expectations. The headteacher, who was new in post in 1999, judged that pupils were not doing well enough and has since overhauled teaching with the help of new teachers, some of whom have been appointed very recently. The very good improvement in standards, in the last five years, is due, mainly, to reinvigorated teaching, a greater ambition for pupils capable of higher attainment, very good provision for pupils with special educational needs and the very close involvement of parents in their children's education.
43. The provision for pupils with special educational needs is very well co-ordinated by the headteacher, but relies on the very close working together of staff, parents and pupils. The dovetailing of the many initiatives designed to help these pupils make speedy progress is the product of very good management throughout the school. This individualised work for pupils with special educational needs is closely allied to the very productive teaching of higher attaining pupils. The work of a part-time teacher, for pupils who can manage more demanding work, is a regular and successful feature of the teaching in Year 2.
44. Underlying the very inclusive atmosphere, which exists throughout the school, is a bedrock of enthusiastic collaboration. The staff work very well together, particularly when trialling new

ideas and monitoring their success. The introduction of thinking skills and elementary philosophy into the curriculum, for example, has added an exciting dimension to pupils' learning, but it has been done in a very well considered fashion. Many of the staff, including the headteacher, are working towards higher degrees in education and they are charting the success of these innovations in the curriculum as part of their studies. This sense of academic rigour within the school adds depth to professional discussion, makes the teaching sharper and produces effective learning in lessons. Moreover, since many of the staff are new, and relatively inexperienced, the head and deputy headteacher have guided them effectively in how to carry out their responsibilities as co-ordinators. This has involved a great deal of productive discussion and sharing of expertise. As a result the staff is well used to working together, sharing ideas and evaluating jointly. Pupils benefit from this ethos of teamwork: pupils with special educational needs are very well provided for; higher attainers are given more demanding work in an organised fashion; and all pupils, particularly boys, thrive on the broader, more hands-on, curriculum.

45. The school knows its relative weaknesses well and has already correctly identified, for example, that co-ordinators, new to subject responsibility, need to extend their monitoring role into observing teaching and examining pupils' work. A core of staff, including the headteacher, observes teaching regularly and offers helpful advice to the individuals concerned. The school rightly plans to extend the scope of this kind of monitoring and acknowledges that the current system is not consistent enough in its approach. The depth and nature of the areas for development suggested by observers vary considerably and monitoring does not yet incorporate strategic issues, for example those about standards, which are identified in the school development plan.
46. The Foundation Stage is managed well overall, but leadership has been particularly effective in creating the special, courtyard, area for outside play and making sure that it is well used. Furthermore, the school has recently been presented with an Excellence in Early Education award, by the local education authority, in recognition of its good provision for reception-aged children and its coherent plans for further development.
47. The improvements in teaching, since 1999, have been brought about by rigorous and effective performance management of staff. Teachers work towards apt objectives that are based on insightful evaluation. Furthermore, the headteacher has been effective in providing enough time for teachers away from the class to prepare for lessons, reflect on their teaching and fulfil their managerial responsibilities. Governors are very closely involved in all developments. Their very good work, steered by the very effective chair of governors, has helped to raise standards. They employ very effective systems with which to get to know how the school is performing, including meeting co-ordinators regularly for detailed discussions about pupils' achievements. Statutory duties are implemented in full, including the provision of a race equality policy that is monitored regularly. Governors consult well and have an outward-looking approach that compares the school with others in a similar position.

Financial information for the year April 2003 to March 2004

Income and expenditure (£)		Balances (£)	
Total income	452729	Balance from previous year	12123
Total expenditure	440817	Balance carried forward to the next	24035
Expenditure per pupil	2862		

48. The budget is very well managed with administrative skill. A reasonable amount is carried forward each year and plans to spend the surplus are well considered.

PART C: THE QUALITY OF EDUCATION IN SUBJECTS

AREAS OF LEARNING IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

Provision is good and has improved very well since the last inspection; in particular, the curriculum and organisation of the reception classes have been developed rigorously. Moreover, attainment in personal and social development, communication, language and literacy, mathematical development, creative development and physical development has improved well since 1999.

Children are admitted to the reception classes when they are four, with the older children mainly in one class and younger ones in the other. The quality of teaching is good and sometimes very good. The children's achievement is good, with strengths in their personal, social and emotional development, where achievement is very good. Children with special educational needs are supported well and achieve well. A very calm, purposeful and productive atmosphere pervades the reception classes and relationships are very good. The quality of this provision is brought about by good leadership and management.

Since the last inspection, provision for outdoor play has been improved radically. The courtyard area is a very special feature of the school's provision for learning. It represents the realisation of a grand vision for play and for links with the community: children of all ages, within the school, use it as well as pre-school children from the locality.

Not enough evidence was collected to make an overall judgement on provision in **knowledge and understanding of the world**. However, teachers' plans, evidence of past work and talking to children demonstrate that children achieve soundly and are on course to reach the expected standard. They have considered how much they have grown when bathing dolls and discussing human development. Moreover, they have investigated the best way to wash their own hands when dirty: testing with cold water, warm water and soap and warm water. Children control computers well to operate programs when matching pictures to numerals, for example. They know a range of Bible stories and are developing an appreciation of religious festivals. In the one lesson observed, children learned successfully about Shrove Tuesday before making their own pancakes. They were expected to think in a scientific way about how to make pancakes and about the changes observed as the batter went into the pan.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Very good teaching ensures that children are keen to learn and behave very well.
- Daily routines that are very well thought out help the children to feel secure and to grow in confidence and independence.
- A good balance is achieved between activities led by adults and opportunities for children to engage in purposeful play of their own choosing.

Commentary

49. The very good quality of teaching ensures that children achieve very well. They are on course to exceed the learning goals for personal, social and emotional development by the end of the reception year. Their confidence, independence and self-assurance are well above expectations for their age.

50. From the start of the day, when children show they have arrived by putting their own red apple into the basket, children know and enjoy the routines that follow. The daily routine of choosing two activities enables children to follow their own interests and staff to check that a suitable range of activities is completed over the week. The good balance between activities directed by adults and those chosen by children help to maintain a good interest in learning and to develop independence and self-confidence. The older and higher attaining children are expected to extend to three independent activities and this helps to quicken their pace of learning. All activities, whether led by an adult or child-initiated, are completed with the same concentration and persistence, and sensitive intervention by staff ensures that learning runs smoothly. Children are good at seeking help when needed and listen carefully to any instructions given.
51. Children behave very well because they get clear information to help them to know what they should do. Stories are discussed from the perspective of different characters and this plays a significant part in developing the children's awareness of how other people think and feel. Activities, such as learning to bath and care for babies, extend this understanding well. Children share and co-operate very well with others. For example, some children enjoyed the group activity of choosing a filling for their home-made pancakes before spreading it themselves, and finally eating it politely.

COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children's good interest in what they do encourages discussion and many good opportunities are provided for children to speak with adults and each other to develop their language and their thoughts.
- Letter shapes and sounds are taught very well and provide children with a firm foundation for improving their reading and writing.

Commentary

52. Children achieve well as a result of the good teaching they receive. They are on course to exceed the learning goals set for the end of the reception year.
53. Every opportunity is taken to pose questions that encourage the children to think and to explain. In one lesson, children were required to think very carefully about ingredients, utensils and tools needed for making pancakes and they succeeded eventually in explaining their suggestions well. Discussion between children is most productive as they carry out their work, for example when playing in the baby clinic. They are given plenty of opportunities to verbalise their thoughts and feelings and are comfortable to do so. Younger children sometimes find it hard to listen, but older children have acquired the skill well. They listen to instructions for games and activities, for example, and pass them on to other children when necessary.
54. Well-told stories and a good supply of books mean that children develop a keen interest in books and reading. Teachers respond well to the wide range of readers in their classes, making sure that all make good progress. A strong feature of the teaching is the very successful programme for helping children to recognise letter shapes and sounds, usually from a low starting point on admission to school. Teachers use games, paint, magnetic letters and many other methods to secure a good understanding of letter sounds and blends. A puppet, that habitually mispronounces words, is used well to enhance children's learning, although the lack of written words to draw attention to mistakes reduces opportunities for further learning. This good variety of teaching methods has proved successful even with boys who often find it hard to concentrate on writing. Teachers have high expectations for the

children. For example, one or two younger children made rapid advances in learning about punctuation when a question mark in a story was identified as a 'guess word' and an exclamation mark as a 'danger mark'. Higher attainers, in both classes, are often advantaged like this and make quick progress as a result.

MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision in mathematical development is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Good mathematical understanding is developed through a wide range of practical activities.
- Children practise counting and calculating, but some opportunities to reinforce or extend work are missed.

Commentary

55. The quality of teaching is good, children achieve well and they are on course to go beyond the expectations for their learning by the end of reception.
56. The children enjoy activities related to mathematics and count spontaneously in many situations, mostly to ten and sometimes well beyond. For example, in one lesson, a small group of higher attaining children counted to 30 and were successful at deducing many of the written number words. Teaching uses outdoor activities very well to develop learning. The counting of stones, as part of children's play, helped many to practise adding on by one or two, sometimes as far as ten. Teachers plan work that is well matched to children's needs. In a whole-class mathematics session, for example, most children used fans of numbers to identify answers when counting on two more. However, the task was made more challenging for higher attaining children by asking them to add ten to the first number. Useful activities help children to make comparisons of size, for example by ordering strips of paper matching their height and turning them into flowers. The children's good speaking skills enable most to discuss and compare quantity, shape and size well. Children become aware of the language of measurement through everyday, seemingly incidental, activities focused on comparison, such as deciding which line of children is longer or shorter.
57. Occasionally there are missed opportunities to extend children's learning. In one lesson, for example, some lower attaining children were supported well by the teaching assistant, but lacked a line of numbers or other counting materials to give them added confidence. Moreover, mental calculation by higher attaining children was slowed in one lesson by the suggestion that they started counting again from one when totalling numbers, rather than counting on from the largest number.

PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision in physical development is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children have plentiful practice in using a good range of small tools and implements correctly.
- The use of the outdoor area is planned very well to enhance children's learning.
- Lessons in the school hall are very successful.

Commentary

58. Teaching is good, overall and sometimes very good in the school hall. Children achieve well and most are on course to exceed the nationally expected goals by the end of the year.
59. Teachers provide frequent opportunities within all areas of learning for the children to increase their manual control effectively and most children become very dextrous, for example as they join boxes or assemble construction apparatus to make models. They learn to control writing implements well and know how to form letters correctly.
60. Regular sessions for physical development are arranged in the school hall to encourage control of the larger muscles. In one very good lesson, children were very clear that they were practising landing skills and jumped off a variety of large apparatus with enthusiasm to improve their skills. Demonstrations by the teacher and children helped keep learning well on course and a good supply of apparatus meant that children were engaged in continuous exercise.
61. The outdoor areas are used very well and organised to extend the children's physical skills, whenever the weather allows. The log trail, wheeled vehicles, balancing apparatus and playhouses are used very well to develop skilful co-ordination.

CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT

Provision in creative development is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The children's good self-confidence enhances their creative skills within imaginative play and singing.
- Children are given plentiful opportunities to make things, but sometimes their independence is curtailed by not having easy access to the materials and resources that they need.

Commentary

62. Teaching is good and children achieve well. Standards, by the end of the year, are likely to go beyond expectations for children of this age.
63. Children's art work is testimony to the frequent practice the children have in extending their creative skills in exploring colour, shape and texture. Collage is a particular favourite and children have many pieces of individual work that show very careful and often vibrant arrangement of a good variety of colours and textures. Moreover, in one lesson, they thoroughly enjoyed making three-dimensional models, demonstrating an adept use of resources. The children are sometimes too reliant on adults to locate the materials they might need because the practical area between the two classrooms is rather cramped and cluttered; resources are not freely available. This sometimes affects other activities, such as imaginative play in the sand, because children cannot easily fetch other resources to use.
64. There are regular opportunities for children to develop their musical skills, in music lessons and during free play, with musical instruments, outdoors. The children are taught by a specialist and know a good selection of songs well. Their confidence enhances their achievement and their voices are particularly tuneful for their age. Most children can keep to a simple beat well with percussion instruments or claps. This shows very good improvement since the last inspection, when children knew very few songs.

65. The children's confidence and good speaking and listening skills help them to respond to role-play situations creatively. The quality of play of the younger children, especially, is enhanced when adults take part. Activities are well supervised, but never directed too closely, allowing the children to respond to their own choices and preferences.

SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGE 1

ENGLISH

Provision in English is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards are above national expectations and pupils achieve well.
- The quality of teaching and learning is good, but very good for pupils with special educational needs.
- Relevant opportunities to link literacy to other subjects are developed well.
- The co-ordinator makes a positive contribution to the subject.
- The quality of assessment is sound and relevant targets are beginning to be set for the pupils, but it is too soon to see many results from this initiative.

Commentary

66. The national test results in 2004 show pupils to be well above average in reading and above it in writing when compared with schools nationally. The number of those capable of achieving higher levels in writing was lower than in reading. Currently, standards are above the expected levels in both reading and writing. This represents good achievement throughout the school. Those pupils with special educational needs receive very good support, are given work which is appropriate to their abilities and make very good progress. Those who are more able are given suitably challenging work that fosters their good achievement.
67. Speaking and listening are taught well in all classes and standards are constantly well above expected levels. The use of 'talk partners' is developing well in all classes. Pupils develop self-confidence in every class and by the time they are in Year 2 many can express themselves with clarity even when talking about some quite complex ideas. During lessons, all listen with great interest and many ask relevant questions.
68. The overall standard of reading is above average. Lessons are used purposefully to ensure that pupils read with interest and expression. They obviously enjoy reading and talk enthusiastically about books. Standards in writing are above average, although this remains an area for continued development with regard to pupils' performance at the higher level. A good range of writing is covered. There are interesting literacy displays around the school which reinforce and record the pupils' understanding and achievements. These include newspaper reports and 'My Favourite Toy' in Year 1. Pupils in Year 2 have produced some exciting long stories, which begin "In a deep dark forest . . ." Higher attaining pupils, in particular, have been well taught to use apt vocabulary that gives the reader a feeling of suspense and foreboding.
69. The overall quality of teaching and learning is good and sometimes very good. Lessons are lively and imaginative. Teaching is very enthusiastic and characterised by high expectations. This encourages the pupils to try hard, and all are fully committed to their learning. The development of thinking skills and elementary philosophy elsewhere in the curriculum has hidden benefits for pupils' learning in English. They are able discuss well and present their thoughts in a more logical fashion as a result of these interesting additions to the timetable. Pupils with special educational needs are taught very well. They are provided with a very well planned curriculum designed to improve their reading and writing. This is taught in a very well orchestrated way that makes learning fun and very successful in its small steps approach.
70. Relationships throughout are very good and enhance the pupils' very positive attitudes to learning. Skilful questioning targets individuals and ensures that all are fully involved. All

adults give praise to reward and encourage pupils in a way that makes learning interesting and enjoyable. In most lessons, the teaching assistants and other helpers make a very positive contribution to the pupils' learning.

71. Leadership and management of the subject are good, particularly in the way that standards have been raised since 1999. The quality of teaching has improved greatly and results in National Curriculum tests have risen from average to well above it. The use of assessment has been vigorous in raising standards, but is sound overall. Advice to teachers about how to judge the level of pupils' work, so that appropriate individual targets can be set, lacks precision. Pupils have recently received personal targets that help them understand what they must do next to improve. However, the co-ordinator, correctly, recognises that there is more work to do in this respect. The overall quality of resources is good and these are used effectively.

Language and literacy across the curriculum

72. There are numerous opportunities provided to develop speaking and listening in lessons. In a history lesson, for example, pupils developed their speaking and listening skills through comparing old and new teddy bears. In mathematics they explain their various strategies. The use of writing is well developed in various subjects. These include science, where pupils in Year 2 write well about their study of electricity, writing instructions in design and technology, writing directions in mathematics and comparing their own environment with a Scottish island in geography. ICT is used well in most lessons.

MATHEMATICS

Provision in mathematics is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Leadership and management have had a very good effect in improving pupils' standards and achievements.
- Provision for pupils with special educational needs and higher attainers is very good.
- The curriculum is greatly enhanced by the recently introduced programme of thinking skills.
- The assessment of pupils' work is sound, but pupils are not involved enough in discussing targets for their future learning.

Commentary

73. The 1998 results in National Curriculum tests, which were the latest available at the time of the last inspection, were well below average. The newly appointed headteacher determined that pupils were not doing well enough and set about to remedy the situation. Standards have improved dramatically in the last six years. In 2004 pupils were well above average at the end of Year 2 and the target is for this success to be replicated this year. Currently, pupils in Year 2 are attaining standards above the national expectation and are on course to meet the ambitious target set for them to reach by the end of the year. They are achieving well to reach current standards.
74. The quality of teaching has improved well and is good overall. Teaching has become far more sophisticated in providing for pupils with special educational needs. Those pupils that need additional help in mathematics have been given additional classes within a specialised programme funded by the local education authority. Moreover, higher attaining pupils are taught, in their last term in Year 1 and in the first two terms of Year 2, to accelerate their performance. The quality of teaching for both sets of pupils is often very good: carefully chosen activities are rigorously taught and learning is monitored very well at each step.

Standards have risen fast as a result of these measures and parents are justly proud to report that their children thrive on these, and other, ways that the school finds to enhance learning.

75. Pupils enjoy learning greatly because lessons are practical and interesting. This 'hands-on' approach appeals to all pupils, but particularly to the boys who relish the frequent use of computers. A lesson in Year 2 was typical of the kind of good work that exists within the school. Pupils made good progress because their interest was captured initially by the visual stimulus provided by computer images. They then consolidated their learning, about map co-ordinates, by steering a computerised toy around various obstacles and working with specially designed software on the computers. The teacher and the teaching assistant both worked productively with small groups to ensure that pupils made good progress. This lesson, that successfully linked mathematics and geography, was typically lively and thought provoking. In other classes this combination of games, the use of ICT and small group work is common and equally effective.
76. There are relative weaknesses in teaching, but they are easily outweighed by these strengths. Most weaknesses relate to the relative lack of involvement by pupils in talking about how well they are doing in their learning and what could be done better. Teachers' marking is accurate and up to date, but rarely gives pupils targets to reach. This lack of discussion about what a pupil's next steps of learning might be is often lacking in lessons. For example, there is no common method used to enable pupils to judge how close they have got to the original objective for the lesson. The lack of targets for pupils to discuss is part of a wider issue. The school has recently introduced a comprehensive and computerised system of recording where pupils are up to in their learning, but it has not yet accomplished the next job of using this information in the setting of individualised targets for all pupils.
77. Notwithstanding these areas for development, which are recognised by the school and already in its plan of action for the subject, the recent introduction of a programme of thinking skills is beginning to have a significant influence on pupils' progress in lessons. For example, in one lesson in which pupils were studying two-dimensional shapes, they were asked to make an upright model out of them and discuss how this arrangement of shapes looked from the viewpoint of other pupils around the table. The pupils found this challenging task very thought-provoking and the discussion, carefully guided by the teacher, was most rewarding.
78. Leadership and management of the subject are good. Very good work has been accomplished in tackling low standards and improving pupils' achievement, but the lack of a system to involve pupils more fully in the assessment of their work places some limitations on learning. The relatively new co-ordinator knows a great deal about the subject, but has not yet observed lessons and sampled pupils' work to evaluate, at first hand, what is working well and what needs to be improved. Moreover, the collection of pupils' work designed to guide colleagues in how to judge the level of pupils' work is incomplete.

Mathematics across the curriculum

79. Pupils' competence in using mathematics across the curriculum is good. Computers are often used to help pupils consolidate and extend their skill in calculation or to present information in graphical form. The above average standards in design and technology are partly due to pupils' careful and accurate measuring.

SCIENCE

Provision in science is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils have good attitudes to their learning and enjoy the practical approach teachers take to the subject.

- Almost all pupils reach the average standard, but few reach a higher level.
- Assessment systems do not give teachers a clear enough view of pupils' skills and where development is needed.

Commentary

80. Standards attained by Year 2 are broadly average and achievement is satisfactory, overall. Strengths are in the high number of pupils who achieve average standards in the subject but there are weaknesses, currently the focus of development in the school, in helping pupils who are capable of attaining a higher level.
81. Teaching and learning are satisfactory, with good features in the practical approach teachers take to the subject and the good number of adults available, staff and parents, to help pupils to carry out investigations. In some respects, however, the good number of adults limits attainment because they tend to help a little too much and set too close a programme for investigation. Pupils' achievement is consequently limited by insufficient provision for experiment and investigation that really challenge their thinking. This affects the higher attaining pupils, especially, and keeps the number of pupils attaining higher levels below those for similar schools. Assessment systems are not sufficiently focused on skills to clearly inform teachers when and for which pupils they need to plan for more challenging learning.
82. Pupils in Year 2 worked in groups to find out why some people can run faster than others but the ideas came primarily from a published scheme, leaving pupils very little room for devising their own lines of enquiry or supplementary ideas. In addition, adults sometimes missed opportunities to teach pupils to measure their feet and legs accurately, tending to carry out the task for them. In another class, this was a strength and pupils gained much from making independent measurements although still closely bound to the precise task set. Pupils collaborated well in collecting and recording information. Lower attaining pupils and those with special educational needs were supported well by the teacher and helped to achieve equally well.
83. Past work indicates limited attention to pupils' own ideas for investigation, but pupils are nevertheless clear on the basic facts of the subject. They know what plants and animals need to help them grow, for example, and some higher attaining pupils know the common features of living things. Work on electricity is a strength. Pupils have carried out investigations into what makes a bulb light up and, as a result, were able to construct working models of lighthouses.
84. Good opportunities are identified to extend pupils' skills in ICT and mathematics through, for example, using a data program to devise pictograms and block graphs to compare differences between pupils. Sometimes comparisons and conclusions for the whole class are limited because graphs for different groups of pupils use different scales. Few opportunities are found to extend writing skills and most writing is confined to single words or sentences needed to complete published worksheets.
85. Leadership and management of science are satisfactory. The co-ordinator has identified much of the action required through a useful review of standards, planning and observation of teaching and learning in lessons. Some action has been taken but there is further work to be done. Standards are a little higher than at the time of the last inspection and, taking into account recent action by the relatively new co-ordinator, improvement is satisfactory.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

Provision in information and communication technology (ICT) is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The ICT curriculum has been improved well and standards have risen as a result.
- Good leadership and management have improved the subject, but pupils are not encouraged to talk about how well they are doing.
- ICT skills are used well in other subjects of the curriculum.

Commentary

86. Provision was satisfactory in 1999, but it had improved well over the previous four years. This momentum has continued and now provision is good. Currently, pupils are attaining above the nationally expected level and are achieving well. They have good attitudes to their work and their competence in using skills in ICT is good. The existence of a computer club provides additional interest for pupils. Parents speak highly, with justification, of their children's enthusiasm and capability in this subject.
87. The main reason for the improvement in standards is the frequency with which ICT is practised in many subjects. This gives so many pupils a confidence and flexibility in using computers that the majority reach or exceed the expected level for their age. The quality of teaching is good, particularly in the respect of providing these varied opportunities for pupils. As a result, they learn quickly and enjoy their work a great deal. The lack of many opportunities for pupils to talk about the way that they have learnt – their successes and areas to develop – is a common shortcoming in most lessons. Pupils are encouraged to talk about what they are doing, but not necessarily how well they have done.
88. Pupils' attainment can be exemplified in many subjects. By the end of Year 2 pupils can, for example, create picture images that contain much detail. Some pupils painted, using screen tools, complicated pictures of a Portuguese Man of War, while others created faces to use when talking about feelings and how we show them. Year 2 pupils can collect information and present it graphically on screen because of the way in which they have been trained in Year 1. Already pupils in Year 1 are very familiar with pictograms. They can move items round on the screen with the mouse, create graphs with the information and print out the results with confidence. Pupils' understanding of space and direction is developed well by using an electronic toy that can be programmed to move around objects. Pupils are able to develop the use of geographical vocabulary while, for example, making the toy move around lighthouses that they have made in science.
89. The use of ICT is well integrated into the programme designed to develop pupils' thinking. The regular workshops that include activities to challenge pupils' powers of deduction and lateral thinking, for example, include appropriate tasks on computers. Moreover, pupils with special educational needs often have time to consolidate their learning about three-dimensional shapes, for example, under the guidance of a teaching assistant. Nevertheless, there are some gaps in pupils' experience, of which the school is well aware. Computers are not used in music to help pupils compose their own electronic music and while the school has digital cameras and a camcorder, they are not yet used by pupils as regular tools for learning.
90. The good leadership and management have been instrumental in raising standards and making sure that the usual areas of work such as word processing are successfully augmented by using computers for drawing plans for models in design and technology, for example. The school is on the verge of purchasing some electronic whiteboards after experimenting with digital projectors linked to computers as an aid to teaching. This is a well-timed and well-managed development upon which the school is ready to capitalise. Parents are involved very well by being able to attend courses, at school, for real beginners so that they can keep up with their children. The co-ordinator has provided teachers with good advice about how to judge pupils' levels of attainment and examples of pupils' achievement are held

centrally. However, the results of this exercise are not used yet to determine standards overall.

Information and communication technology across the curriculum

91. Pupils' competence and use of ICT are good across the curriculum. Parents, staff, pupils and governors are all aware of the benefit to pupils' learning that is afforded by this work. Governors speak with knowledge and insight about pupils' use of the Internet, for example. The use of information gleaned from various sites enlivens pupils' studies well in subjects such as history and geography.

HUMANITIES

Too few lessons were observed during the inspection to make a judgement on the overall provision in these subjects, but pupils' work was studied and discussions were held with staff and pupils.

92. Standards in both **geography** and **history** are in line with national expectations and pupils are achieving satisfactorily. The single lesson seen in each subject was good. The geography lesson covered comparisons between the pupils' local area and that on a Scottish island. Pupils enthusiastically expressed their preferences and reasons for these. Local studies have involved the recent floods in Carlisle, making very effective use of information about the disaster. In the history lesson, pupils compared an old and a new teddy bear. They were interested, enthusiastic and highly motivated and reached the nationally expected level in being able to compare the past with the present.

Religious education

Provision in religious education is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Some lively teaching captures pupils' imaginations well.
- The local church and the Internet are used well to broaden pupils' learning.
- Teaching has not yet been checked and therefore weaknesses can go unnoticed.
- Advice for teachers on how to judge pupils' work lacks detail.

Commentary

93. Standards are in line with the locally agreed syllabus and pupils achieve satisfactorily by the end of Year 2. The curriculum includes Judaism and Hinduism in addition to Christianity and pupils show great interest in what they do. The inconsistency in pupils' attainment gives it a satisfactory profile overall. In some aspects pupils forge ahead and in others they plod along slowly. The rate of pupils' progress is directly linked to the colour and verve of the teaching they receive.
94. The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. Two quite different lessons demonstrate well the variety of learning that exists within the school. In a successful lesson in Year 2, pupils had great fun in tasting a Chinese meal at the time of the Chinese New Year. This was made more special because they had learnt festive Chinese songs in music lessons. Very good aspects of the teaching allowed pupils to be able to see the connections between the Christian celebration of Shrove Tuesday and Chinese feasting. Pupils greatly enjoyed the practical nature of their learning, particularly the boys who relished the variety within the lesson. By contrast an unsatisfactory lesson occurred in Year 1. Pupils had enjoyed a very effective visit to a local church where a mock christening had taken place, but lacked interest in the discussion back at school that centred on the photographs of the visit. The

recapitulation of knowledge associated with the ceremony was accompanied by nothing more lively or demanding. Pupils were not, for example, expected to use their thinking skills or practise their philosophy in this context. The good links with the local church were wasted on that occasion.

95. It is clear from pupils' work that undemanding lessons are not common. For example, links with design and technology were well made in work about the Old Testament story of Joseph. Pupils designed and made their own coat of many colours. Furthermore, the school sponsorship of a child in India provides many relevant opportunities to think closely about Hinduism and how it is practised today. The co-ordinator has not yet had time to observe teaching. This lack of checking means that the quality of teaching and learning cannot be used as a point of discussion in staff training.
96. Pupils' learning about religion is further enhanced by emailed reports back from Bee Bee Bear. This is a stuffed toy that accompanies friends of the school around the world and 'writes' reports for the pupils to enjoy. He reports on the cultures and faiths of the countries that he visits, much to the delight and edification of the pupils.
97. Leadership and management are satisfactory. The recently appointed co-ordinator is keen and enthusiastic and is in the early stages of raising standards and improving teaching. There is an old collection of pupils' work available for teachers to use to gain advice about judging the quality of work in their lessons. However, its value is limited because the work is not compared to the requirements laid out in the locally agreed syllabus and therefore the school cannot make a fully informed judgement about standards and what needs to be improved.

CREATIVE, AESTHETIC, PRACTICAL AND PHYSICAL SUBJECTS

Not enough lessons were seen in these subjects to form overall judgements about the provision in them. One lesson was observed in each of art and design, music and physical education, but none in design and technology. Pupils' work was examined and discussions with staff and pupils took place.

98. Standards in **art and design** are average by the end of Year 2 and this represents sound achievement. In the one lesson observed teaching was good. Year 2 pupils used their recently acquired mathematical knowledge about symmetry to create colourful patterns. At other times they have created imaginative three-dimensional creatures out of balloons and papier-mâché or illustrated their written work with thoughtful coloured pencil illustrations. Some small scale work with black pen on a red and white wash that depicts a winter scene is very evocative. However, this level of work is not replicated so well in Year 1 and pupils are therefore not acquiring a steady build-up of skills. Art club is greatly enjoyed by those pupils that attend. Some work of high quality is produced at the club, for example some pictures of trees in winter created by layering tissue paper of different colours and applying black ink afterwards.
99. Pupils' work demonstrates that standards in **design and technology** are above the national expectations and pupils achieve well. They plan and make models well and note how their work could be improved ("Next time I'm going to . . ."). Examples of pupils' work include designing and making a bridge, sliding and lever mechanisms and Joseph's coat of many colours, creating good links with religious education. A pupil explained eagerly what was involved in making a papier-mâché animal, even though she had been absent for this task, and graphically demonstrated how keen pupils are in the subject and how this infectious liking for it helps to improve standards.
100. Standards in **music** are above average at the end of Year 2 and pupils achieve well. Teaching was good in the one lesson observed. Pupils in both Year 1 classes were taught together by a teacher with specialist skills. The quality of singing and percussion work by pupils of this age was of a good standard. By the end of Year 2, pupils can sing a four-part round and produce two-part harmonies, which is beyond the expectations for their age. Parents are very pleased

with the regular school productions that involve all pupils in singing and playing instruments. Pupils talk enthusiastically about the enjoyment they gain from singing and playing instruments such as the recorder.

101. Pupils attain standards that are about average in **physical education**, which represents sound achievement. In the one lesson observed, teaching was satisfactory. Pupils in Year 1 gained sound ball control, but had little opportunity to talk about their learning. The breadth of activity provided for pupils is good and has been recognised by the Activemark Award. Pupils can, for example, learn to dance around the maypole, play football or get fit in circuit training. Fitness is valued well and the schools status as a Healthy School recognises this and ensures that healthy principles are reinforced regularly in lessons. A short observation in a Year 2 gymnastics lesson – too short to judge the quality of teaching – revealed that planning omits to provide work or the impetus that would result in attainment at the higher level. Most pupils are on course to reach expected levels but few will go beyond them.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP

Too few lessons were sampled in **personal, social, health and citizenship education** so a judgement on overall provision is not possible.

102. The school places great importance upon promoting pupils' personal and social development and encouraging them to keep safe and well. Staff use stories very effectively in lessons and assemblies that help pupils to consider their own and others' feelings and emotions. Learning to empathise with the story characters equips them well to challenge bullying, stereotyping and racism. Philosophy lessons successfully open pupils' minds to social and moral issues, and teach them to listen to and respect others' viewpoints.
103. Taking part in achieving national recognition as a Healthy School has spurred staff to focus strongly on promoting healthy lifestyles. Staff are very good role models for the pupils, keeping physically fit themselves and joining pupils in eating healthy snacks such as fresh fruit and vegetables at break.
104. Mutually beneficial links with elderly local residents and charitable fundraising promote citizenship effectively. Pupils, for example, have been very active in raising funds for the Asian tsunami appeal.

PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

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

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