

INSPECTION REPORT

STANWIX PRIMARY SCHOOL

Carlisle

LEA area: Cumbria

Unique reference number: 112221

Headteacher: Mr Bill Johnston

Lead inspector: Mr Andrew Scott

Dates of inspection: 13th – 16th June 2005

Inspection number: 267984

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

| | |
|------------------------------|-----------------------|
| Type of school: | Primary |
| School category: | Community |
| Age range of pupils: | 4 – 11 |
| Gender of pupils: | Mixed |
| Number on roll: | 408 |
| School address: | Mulcaster Crescent |
| | Carlisle |
| Postcode: | CA3 9DW |
| Telephone number: | 01228 607566 |
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| Appropriate authority: | Governing body |
| Name of chair of governors: | Miss Elaine Frecknall |
| Date of previous inspection: | 1st March 1999 |

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

This is a large school situated close to the centre of the city of Carlisle. It has 408 pupils who mainly come from the immediate neighbourhood where social conditions are above average. Nearly all pupils come from white British families; a few pupils do not have English as their first language but are essentially bi-lingual. Children start school with a wide range of abilities that are mainly above average. An increasingly significant number of pupils leave or join school after the age of four but this has no significant impact on standards. Seven per cent of pupils have special educational needs, which is well below average, and there are three pupils with statements of special educational need. Most of the pupils with special needs have specific learning difficulties. The school won a School Achievement Award in 2001 and achieved Healthy School status in 2004. The headteacher is a Primary Strategy Consultant Leader.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

| Members of the inspection team | | | Subject responsibilities |
|--------------------------------|-------------------------|----------------|---|
| 27545 | Mr Andrew Scott | Lead inspector | English Information and communication technology Music English as an additional language |
| 14404 | Mr Alan Rolfe | Lay inspector | |
| 32827 | Mrs Jacqueline Marshall | Team inspector | Mathematics Geography History Physical education Special educational needs |
| 15015 | Mr Mike Wehrmeyer | Team inspector | The Foundation Stage Science Art and design Design and technology Religious education |

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

OVERALL EVALUATION

This is a very good school. The excellent leadership of the headteacher ensures a happy and positive atmosphere in which teachers have high expectations and motivate pupils by setting challenging work. As a result, pupils work eagerly and diligently, achieving very well as they pass through the school. Standards across a broad range of subjects are well above average by the end of Year 6. Teachers' equally high expectations of pupils' behaviour and good level of care combine to produce excellent relationships both in and out of lessons. **The school gives very good value for money.**

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- The astute and influential leadership of the headteacher, well supported by key staff and governors, has ensured that the school has made very good progress since the last inspection
- High quality teaching ensures that pupils achieve very good standards by the time they leave school, although teaching in some classes does not consistently reach the very high standards seen in others
- Excellent relationships throughout the school mean that pupils have excellent attitudes to work, behave very well, are well cared for and know that their opinions matter
- The exciting and diverse curriculum enriches pupils' experiences in culture, sport and the wider world, and contributes very well to their learning
- The strong emphasis on pupils' personal development ensures that pupils develop into mature, responsible and thoughtful individuals

The school has made very good progress since the last inspection. More effective teaching and assessment mean that standards have improved in most subjects and all pupils now achieve very well by Year 6. The provision in the reception classes is better and the whole school curriculum is better structured and more stimulating. Relationships throughout the school and pupils' attitudes are now excellent; pupils receive better guidance about their work. The overall leadership and management of the school are more effective, with better planning, financial control and self-evaluation. The school has succeeded in addressing both the key issues from the last inspection.

STANDARDS ACHIEVED

| Results in National Curriculum tests at the end of Year 6, compared with: | all schools | | | similar schools |
|---|-------------|------|------|-----------------|
| | 2002 | 2003 | 2004 | 2004 |
| English | B | A | A | A |
| Mathematics | A | A | A | C |
| Science | A | A | A | C |

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

Pupils' achievement is very good overall. Children make good progress in the reception classes and exceed most of the goals expected of them by the end of the year. Their achievement in mathematical development and knowledge and understanding of the world is especially good. By the end of Year 2, pupils' attainment is well above average in English, mathematics, science, music and physical education and above average in all other subjects judged. By the end of Year 6, pupils' attainment is well above average in all

subjects judged, except for information and communication technology (ICT), which is above average. However, this is a considerable improvement since the last inspection when it was below national expectations. Pupils with special educational needs, pupils who do not have English as their first language and gifted and talented pupils all achieve very well.

There is very good provision for pupils' personal development. Their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is very good. Pupils behave very well, have excellent attitudes to work and enjoy excellent relationship with one another and with adults. They enjoy coming to school and so the level of attendance is consistently high.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION

The quality of education provided by the school is very good. Teaching and learning are very good overall. Teaching and learning are good in the reception classes and particularly effective in mathematical development and knowledge and understanding of the world. In the other classes, teaching is very good, although it is primarily in Year 6, and to some extent Year 5, that teaching is consistently very good. The school has a very good curriculum, strongly enriched by educational visits, visiting experts and stimulating activities. The high quality displays show how much teachers value pupils' work. There is very good provision for pupils with special educational needs. The good care for the well-being of pupils contributes well to the excellent relationships that pervade the school. Pupils' learning is enhanced through a good partnership with parents, and very good links with other schools and colleges, as well as excellent links with the local community.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

The leadership and management of the school are very good. The leadership of the headteacher is excellent, ensuring that the school has developed impressively, has a very clear direction which is embraced by all members of staff and is, therefore, in very good shape to improve further. The school is very good at assessing its own progress and creating pertinent and sharply focused action plans. Senior staff are mostly very effective in playing a full role in school development and in leading their subject areas. Governance is good. Governors are hard working, very supportive, and keep a close watch on the school's development. Although the school's monitoring systems are good, they are not rigorous enough to ensure that provision is consistently very good throughout the school.

PARENTS' AND PUPILS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

Parents have a high regard for the school. They particularly approve of the high expectations of staff and the resultant progress their children make. They also appreciate the range of activities, the ethos of the school and way in which it is led and managed. They feel that their children are treated very fairly, well looked after and, as a result, behave well. A few parents have reservations about the quality of communication from the school and how much their opinions matter. The inspection team endorses all of these views. The pupils echo their parents' positive views. They have some concerns about the quality of behaviour but these were not shared by the inspection team.

IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

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

- to introduce more rigour into the school's monitoring procedures so that teaching is of an equally high standard in all classes and all subjects

PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS

STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

Standards achieved in areas of learning and subjects

By the time they leave school, pupils achieve very well. Standards in most subjects are very high and have improved since the previous inspection.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- All pupils achieve very well by Year 6, including pupils with special educational needs
- Standards of work by Year 6 are well above average in the main subjects of English, mathematics, science and religious education
- Pupils' attainment in art and design, design and technology, music and physical education is also well above national expectations
- In ICT, pupils' attainment is above expectations

Commentary

1. Children begin school with skills and abilities that are mostly above the expected level for their age. However, their physical development and personal and social skills are much as expected for children of their age. Overall attainment on entry is above average, with evidence of a slight fall in recent years. In the reception classes, children achieve well overall because of good teaching. They are on course to exceed all of the goals expected of them by the end of the reception year. However, they are achieving very high levels in mathematical development and knowledge and understanding of the world.
2. In the national tests of 2004, the standards of pupils in Year 2 were well above the national averages in reading and writing. Nearly all pupils achieved the expected level and at least a third of pupils achieved the higher level. When compared to schools in a similar socio-economic context, standards in writing were well above average although, in reading, they were average. Standards in mathematics were above the national average, because of the many pupils who achieved the expected level. Compared to similar schools, standards were below average because not enough pupils achieved the higher level. The trend of test results over time has been impressive in reading and writing, although mathematics has not been quite so strong. Teachers' assessments in science showed that standards were average.

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

| Standards in: | School results | National results |
|---------------|----------------|------------------|
| reading | 17.1 (16.8) | 15.8 (15.7) |
| writing | 17.0 (15.6) | 14.6 (14.6) |
| mathematics | 16.6 (17.2) | 16.2 (16.3) |

There were 60 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year

3. Pupils' achievement in the current Year 2 is very good and standards in the three main subjects are well above average. In English, pupils speak and listen confidently, and read expressively and with very good understanding. Their writing shows accurate

spelling and punctuation. In mathematics, pupils have good basic skills and mental agility. In science, pupils are good at carrying out simple investigations. Pupils' attainment in music and physical education are also well above expected levels. Their attainment in all other subjects that were judged was above expectations for pupils of their age.

4. Pupils in Year 6 achieved well above standards in the national tests of 2004 in English, mathematics and science. The performance in English was also well above that of all similar schools, because over half of the pupils achieved the higher level. Compared to similar schools, mathematics was average. Results in science were above average compared to schools with a similar socio-economic status and average compared to schools where attainment was similar at Year 2. Results in the national tests over recent years have remained high, and there has been an upward trend in English and mathematics.

Standards in national tests at the end of Year 6 – average point scores in 2004

| Standards in: | School results | National results |
|---------------|----------------|------------------|
| English | 30.0 (29.8) | 26.9 (26.8) |
| mathematics | 28.7 (29.2) | 27.0 (26.8) |
| science | 30.2 (31.0) | 28.6 (28.6) |

There were 61 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year

5. Standards in the current Year 6 are well above average in most subjects. In English, pupils display confidence in all aspects of the language, have a wide vocabulary and write maturely. In mathematics, pupils are very effective at problem solving and have a rich, technical vocabulary. In science, pupils have a deep knowledge and present their findings succinctly. Pupils' attainment is equally high in religious education, art and design, design and technology, music and physical education because of very effective teaching. Attainment in ICT is above average and this represents a substantial improvement since the last inspection. The achievement of pupils with special educational needs and those whose first language is not English is as good as that of other pupils throughout the school. Gifted and talented pupils achieve very well in the main subjects, as well as in sport and music.

Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities

Pupils' attitudes and relationships with others are excellent, and their behaviour is very good. Their personal development, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, is very good. Attendance and punctuality are also very good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils have excellent attitudes to school and learning
- The school places great store on pupils developing as responsible and thoughtful individuals
- Behaviour is consistently very good
- The school broadens pupils' horizons markedly through its provision for spiritual and cultural development
- The levels of attendance and punctuality are high

Commentary

6. Pupils have a very positive approach to their learning and enjoy coming to school. The vast majority of pupils are very interested in what they are doing and take a full part in all aspects of lessons, because teachers make lessons intriguing. For example, in a Year 4 English lesson, all pupils were very eager to contribute to a discussion about the introduction of wolves into the wild, and showed obvious disappointment if they were not chosen to speak. Most pupils are confident, willing and able to talk about their work and explain their ideas sensibly and clearly. A significant number of pupils participate in the wide range of extra-curricular activities provided by the school.
7. Relationships throughout the school are excellent. Staff are very good role models, openly valuing pupils' opinions and ideas, which effectively promotes their self-esteem. Teachers are kind, respectful, firm and very fair towards pupils. As a result, the atmosphere in classrooms is calm, relaxed and friendly. This has a significant and positive effect on pupils' learning and self-confidence. For example, in a Year 6 English lesson, pupils read out their work for the others to assess. At the end of each reading, there was spontaneous applause in recognition of their efforts. Pupils have many opportunities to work collaboratively in pairs and small groups, and do so with courtesy and consideration. Pupils look out for one another in the playground 'Buddy System', whereby older pupils befriend younger pupils who may feel sad or lonely.
8. In lessons, behaviour is mostly very good and, on occasions, excellent. Pupils are fully aware of what is and what is not acceptable behaviour. They have a very good understanding of the school rules, like the school's merit system, and readily accept the sanctions for any instances of poor behaviour. Outside lessons, before and after school, at break-times and lunch-times, pupils socialise very well. They are very courteous, and treat the school's accommodation and equipment with care and respect. Behaviour in the playground is lively, at times boisterous, but essentially good-humoured and considerate. Bullying is rare. The school has a very good anti-bullying policy that makes clear that bullying will not be tolerated. Parents and pupils have indicated that these procedures work. There have been no exclusions in the last year.
9. Pupils' spiritual development is promoted very effectively in subjects such as religious education, art, science and history. During a visit to a local church, for example, pupils were given time to sit and reflect on how the atmosphere and their feelings in church differed from those in school. Pupils have regular opportunities to reflect on topical or moral issues in assemblies, although themes are not always directly related to religion. In circle time, pupils are given plenty of scope to explore their feelings and emotions, as well as their relationships with friends and family. In religious education, Judaism, Hinduism, and Islam are studied along with Christianity, promoting pupils' cultural development strongly through a greater awareness of the beliefs and traditions of different major world faiths. Staff provide interesting images in displays and in their choice of books and stories, which help pupils fully understand the multi-cultural nature of the society in which they live. Well-planned trips to museums, theatres and places of worship, as well as the many after-school activities, all help to enhance pupils' cultural awareness.

Attendance

10. Attendance is well above the national average and punctuality is very good. The school has very good procedures for monitoring and promoting good attendance. The headteacher works closely with the school's administrative staff. They jointly monitor

pupils' attendance on a weekly basis, have a very good knowledge of the reasons for pupils' absences, and make swift contact with parents should there be any concerns about their children's attendance. Pupils are actively rewarded for excellent attendance with certificates. Whilst the school actively discourages parents from taking holidays in school time, these represent a significant proportion of the recorded pupil absences.

Attendance in the latest complete reporting year (%)

| Authorised absence | | Unauthorised absence | |
|--------------------|-----|----------------------|-----|
| School data | 4.2 | School data | 0.1 |
| National data | 5.4 | National data | 0.4 |

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

QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

The school provides a very good quality of education for its pupils. Teaching and learning are very good overall. The curriculum is very good, with excellent enrichment, and there is very good provision for pupils' personal and social education. Pupils are well looked after and cared for. There are very good partnerships with the parents and other schools, and excellent links with the local community, all of which improve pupils' learning.

Teaching and learning

The quality of teaching and learning is very good. Assessment is good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The motivational relationships in classrooms spur pupils to develop an excellent work ethic
- High expectations by teachers enable pupils to achieve very well, but these are not consistent throughout the school
- Teaching presents and reinforces learning adeptly so that pupils readily understand new concepts
- Teachers ensure that activities include all pupils and actively promote their social development
- The very good support for less able pupils and those with special educational needs enables them to achieve very well

Commentary

11. Pupils are happy learners. They feel very comfortable in lessons because teachers plan work which is well structured, stimulating and enjoyable. Teachers have firm discipline but strive to make learning a fun experience, encouraging and respecting the contributions of pupils. For example, the teaching of singing scat to Year 6 pupils was dynamic, demanding and ultimately highly rewarding. Teachers set suitably challenging targets to help pupils progress. For example, in English, some pupils in Year 2 know that they should use full stops and capital letters more consistently. Nevertheless, the quality of target setting varies and sometimes the targets are too broad.
12. The quality of teaching and learning is very good overall. This represents a substantial improvement since the last inspection when they were essentially satisfactory. There is very good teaching in all year groups, but it is consistently strong in Years 5 and 6 and in some subjects, like music and physical education. Teachers plan work that meets the needs of pupils, aware of pupils' existing knowledge and skills, through good assessment, and so providing challenging activities. Through effective marking and sensitive guidance in class, teachers show that accuracy and quality matter and so pupils learn to care about the standard of their work and strive to improve all the time. Teaching and learning are good in the Foundation Stage, giving children a solid start to their education.
13. Teachers have good, in some cases very good, knowledge of their subjects and so are able to introduce new learning with confidence and conviction. In a Year 1 physical education lesson, the teacher's skills on the piano enabled pupils to respond readily to her variations of expression and tempo. Teachers use resources skilfully to help clarify concepts. For example, the interactive whiteboards are constantly used to demonstrate mathematical workings or to show how sentences can be sequenced. They generate discussion so that pupils can talk through any uncertainties and so that the teachers can easily assess how well pupils have understood. Pupils benefit from brisk repetition of key facts and relevant homework to consolidate learning.
14. Teachers work hard to make sure that all pupils benefit equally from lessons. In discussions, teachers vary the complexity of their questions so that pupils of all abilities

can answer and, in so doing, gain valuable confidence. Similarly, in written work, pupils are given different tasks and so feel comfortable with the challenge. Pupils work extremely well together, in pairs and small groups, whether sharing a computer keyboard or discussing ideas for poetry. They are very empathetic and value one another's views. Very occasionally, teachers do not provide enough scope for more able pupils to develop their independent learning or the pace of lessons is too deliberate for them to make swift progress.

15. Staff ensure that pupils with special educational needs achieve as well as other pupils. Mostly, there is close support and kindly advice in lessons which reassure and encourage pupils to think for themselves and acquire key skills, especially in literacy and numeracy. The special needs teacher is especially effective in teaching small groups of pupils in literacy and mathematics. The teaching assistants are also skilful at giving support, unobtrusively but successfully. They get to know the needs of their pupils very well so that they know naturally whether firmness, guidance or simply moral support is required at any one time.

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 54 lessons

| Excellent | Very good | Good | Satisfactory | Unsatisfactory | Poor | Very poor |
|-----------|-----------|----------|--------------|----------------|------|-----------|
| 4 (7%) | 17 (31%) | 25 (46%) | 8 (15%) | 0 | 0 | 0 |

The table gives the number of lessons observed in each of the seven categories used to make judgements about lessons; figures in brackets show percentages where 30 or more lessons are seen.

The curriculum

The quality of the curriculum is very good overall. Opportunities for enrichment of the curriculum are excellent because there is a high priority on providing pupils with exciting experiences. The quality of resources and accommodation is good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Outstanding enrichment of the curriculum excites and engages pupils, and is a significant factor in their very good achievement and high standards
- Pupils' personal, social and health education is an integral part of school life
- The school has done well to overcome the limiting features of its accommodation

Commentary

16. The curriculum is very good because of the many exciting, high quality experiences the school provides for pupils to enhance their learning. Visits to museums and places, such as Tullie House and Silloth, bring history and geography to life, whilst the visit of the Life Education Bus to school was very effective in promoting pupils' personal, social and health education. In addition, pupils are able to participate in an impressively extensive range of extra-curricular activities, from tennis and badminton, to a recycling group, an art club and opportunities for the oldest children to answer difficult questions in the religious education Quest club. All of these many and varied opportunities make an excellent contribution to pupils' very high interest in school life and very good achievement.
17. Pupils' personal development is a high priority throughout the school and embedded in all areas of the curriculum. Assemblies, lessons and circle time, as well as residential visits for pupils in Year 4 and 6 and the very effective and influential school council, are

examples of how the school seeks constantly to create opportunities for the education of the whole child. By the time pupils leave school in Year 6, they will have learnt many skills that will help them as they continue in education and on into adult life. For example, in a Year 6 spelling group, the teacher urged pupils to develop and use the strategy that best suited them because they were not just learning the words for a test but to be able to use them for the rest of their lives. This level of support and care is a key reason why pupils with special educational needs do so well. The special needs co-ordinator uses assessment very effectively to ensure that pupils build on their learning in small, manageable steps.

18. Resources throughout the school are very good and used to great effect by all staff to support learning. Teachers and pupils use the interactive whiteboards very well during lessons, not only to demonstrate teaching points but also to access appropriate additional resources using the Internet. The accommodation is good and enhanced by many bright and informative displays that celebrate pupils' work. However, there are some limitations on the site that the school does well to overcome. There are no grassed areas that can be used in physical education lessons, for example, but the school has not allowed this to affect the quality of provision it offers and makes very good use of other local facilities. Sensitive planning in redeveloping the original building has enabled the school to create attractive and light classrooms. However, some areas, such as the library and ICT suite, are cramped and do not provide the best quality learning environments. The school is aware of these areas for development and has plans to improve them further.

Care, guidance and support

The provision for the pupils' care, welfare, health and safety is good. The support, guidance and advice for pupils' personal development are very good, and the school takes very good account of pupils' views.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Relationships between staff and pupils are extremely positive and help to provide a very good standard of pastoral care and good academic support
- The school provides a safe and secure environment where pupils feel happy and secure
- Although satisfactory, procedures relating to child protection are not as thorough as they might be
- The school actively seeks and values pupils' views of the school
- There are very good procedures for the induction of children into the school

Commentary

19. The high standard of individual care and support ensures pupils feel happy, confident and secure. Staff and pupils know each other very well and get on extremely well both inside and outside the classroom. Pastoral support for pupils is very good; pupils feel confident about approaching staff should they have any problems, in the knowledge that helpful and reassuring support and guidance will be forthcoming. Pupils are well supported academically, which contributes to their achievement. Teachers and support staff have a good knowledge of the individual needs of pupils, and work co-operatively to cater for these needs. The school provides very good care and support for pupils with special educational needs; there are individual education plans, with suitable

targets for improvement. Progress on meeting the targets is reviewed regularly and this helps to ensure that pupils achieve very well.

20. The school is a safe place for staff and pupils. The health and safety policy meets statutory requirements and a senior member of staff is effective in overseeing the application of this policy on a day-to-day basis. Procedures for general risk assessments and fire risk assessment are in place and inspections are carried out regularly. Risk assessments for educational visits, including residential trips, are well established. First aid provision is good, the school provides well for individual pupils' medical needs and good records of accidents and injuries are maintained.
21. Overall, arrangements for child protection are satisfactory. The school correctly follows the local child protection procedures and has its own specific policy, which is currently under review to ensure compliance with latest child protection procedures. A senior member of staff is the designated teacher but has not yet received all the most recent training. Teaching staff have received basic instruction on child protection procedures, but the school could do more to train other staff.
22. The school has very good procedures for welcoming children into the school. Parents are given a wide range of information and guidance about the school and how they can help to prepare their children for school life. Parents and children have opportunities to visit the school and meet with their teachers prior to admission. The school has very good relationships with the local playgroup from where a significant number of children join the school; these children attend assemblies and have lunch in the dining hall and thereby soon become familiar with the school surroundings. The school has established very effective procedures for the induction of pupils who enter school at various points in the academic year. These procedures enable children to settle quickly into the school environment.
23. The school actively seeks the opinions of pupils mainly through the school council, circle time and pupils' questionnaires. The school values their views highly and, where practicable, takes them into consideration when reviewing policies and procedures. Discussions with members of the school council indicate that they are enthusiastic and take their responsibilities seriously. They consider that their views are important and are acted upon. For example, the introduction of the playground 'Buddy System' was introduced as a result of the activities of the school council. This ensures not only that pupils feel valued and fully part of the school, but also contributes strongly to their understanding of citizenship and the part they play in a community.

Partnership with parents, other schools and the community

Links with parents are good, and partnerships with other schools and colleges are very good. Links with the community are excellent.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Involvement with the community has a major impact on pupils' experiences
- The school keeps parents well informed of its activities and the progress of their children
- The school has enabled parents to make a positive contribution to pupils' learning, but does not consult parents enough in its development
- Links with other schools are very beneficial

Commentary

24. The school's links with the community are extremely good and make a significant contribution to pupils' learning. There is an abundance of visitors to the school, including artists, musicians and theatre companies, who enhance pupils' learning in drama, art, design, music and citizenship. The school makes full use of the local facilities. Visits to museums, the library and art galleries stimulate pupils' learning in art, English, geography and science, by putting it in context. Field trips bring reality to pupils' understanding of history, science and geography, whilst links with local sports clubs provide high quality cricket and football coaching. The school's close association with the local parish church, visits to the cathedral, a mosque and Buddhist temple play key parts in pupils' spiritual and cultural development.
25. Overall, the quality of information given to parents is good. The school brochure provides a wide range of information about the school and its activities. Regular newsletters, information about the topics their children are studying and letters about specific events ensure that parents are kept up to date about current school activities. Parents have sufficient opportunity each year to discuss their children's progress, and parents of Year 6 pupils are invited to attend a meeting before their children take assessment tests. Attendance at these meetings is very good. Parents say teachers are friendly and approachable, and available before and after school for informal discussion about any problems or concerns. Pupils' annual reports are of good quality; they give clear guidance on pupils' attainment and progress, but they do not always identify areas for further development. The annual report from governors to parents is informative but does not meet its statutory requirements in reporting in all required areas.
26. Parents' involvement in their children's learning is good. A small but significant number of parents help in the school, listening to pupils reading, assisting in classrooms and accompanying pupils on educational visits. There are good arrangements to involve the parents of pupils with special educational needs in the review of their children's progress and the setting of future targets. There is an active Home School Association that organises social and fund-raising events. Significant amounts of money have been raised to finance additional learning resources, which have had a positive impact on pupils' learning. However, the school does not do enough to seek the views of parents on the school's overall performance and any major changes to the curriculum, policies and procedures, thereby restricting parental influence in these areas.
27. The school's links with other educational establishments are very helpful to pupils' learning. Close contacts with other primary schools produce interchange of teaching staff, meetings for subject leaders and many inter-school sporting events. Links with secondary schools have enabled the school to teach French in Years 5 and 6, and provide access to sports coaching and associated facilities. The school has developed smooth transitional arrangements with the local secondary school, including close liaison between staff, and the transfer of information relating to pupils' academic and social skills. Secondary staff, accompanied by former Stanwix pupils, visit the school to answer any questions and concerns Year 6 pupils may have in relation to their transfer. Pupils have a full day's induction at the secondary school, when they meet their form tutor and experience a range of lessons. Strong links with local colleges enable work experience and teacher training placements to be a regular feature in the school.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

The leadership and management of the school are very good overall. The leadership of the headteacher is excellent. The leadership of key staff and the management of the school are very good. Governance is good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The highly professional and pragmatic leadership of the headteacher has produced a school dedicated to high personal and academic achievement
- Shrewd evaluation of its own development enables the school to make swift and decisive progress
- Senior staff work very well as a team and have a major impact on the school's development
- The school could do more to ensure that teaching is consistently very effective throughout the school
- The governing body is hard working, supportive and well involved in the development of the school

Commentary

28. The headteacher is pivotal to the success of the school. He has established and continues to produce clear, uncluttered and very relevant action plans that have brought rapid improvement to the school. He has appointed and deployed staff creatively, and has inspired all his colleagues so that they share his aspirations and have raised their own capabilities. He has wisely delegated key responsibilities to senior staff, empowering and motivating them, whilst keeping a firm hand on the tiller. His vision is tempered by practical consideration. The school does not, for example, rush to adopt new initiatives as they emerge unless they meet a current need. When new opportunities are perceived to be worthwhile, the school acts with alacrity and success. Interactive whiteboards, for example, are now installed in each classroom and the staff are all confident in their use.
29. The headteacher, supported by key staff, is very perceptive when analysing the strengths and weaknesses of the school. A wide range of data, including the results of national tests, is carefully evaluated and considered, so that any plan for improvement is well rooted in common sense. Staff are very well supported professionally. Training is frequent and closely linked to the personal needs of staff and the priorities of the school. New teachers and student teachers receive close and fruitful support. If extra support is required, the headteacher establishes a programme to improve strategies and boost confidence, complete with pertinent targets. The school has also made very good progress to meet the current requirements to ease the workloads of teachers.
30. Senior staff have played a vital part in ensuring that subject areas and other aspects of the school have improved considerably. The three assistant headteachers work effectively as a leadership team and have clearly defined roles. They have been instrumental in developing strengths within the curriculum and assessment, for example. Subject leaders are mostly very good at developing their subjects, enriching pupils' experiences and helping to raise pupils' standards. This is especially noticeable in all the main subjects, as well as music, physical education and special educational needs.

31. The school has good systems for monitoring the quality of teaching and learning. The headteacher has established a consistent format by which teaching criteria are identified and evaluated. Comments represent clear judgements and explain to teachers what worked in their lessons and what needs to be improved. However, the criteria used are not suitably linked to pupils' achievement and so the true success of teaching is hard to ascertain. As a result, the very good practice in Years 5, 6 and elsewhere is not sufficiently shared. The school has already recognised this shortcoming and is eager to adopt a more rigorous approach.
32. The governing body has a good overview of the school. Governors are increasingly involved in the life of the school and so they are developing a first-hand knowledge through regularly visiting lessons and discussions with staff. The chair of governors meets very regularly with the headteacher to monitor progress. Governors with personal expertise use their skills for the direct benefit of the school. This is certainly the case with the financial management, since spending is scrupulously assessed and linked to success criteria. The governors have been anxious, for example, that the substantial investment in ICT should pay dividends. There is much discussion within governors' meetings but governors do not always expect the highest standards of provision, as in health and safety.

Financial information

Financial information for the year April 2004 to March 2005

| Income and expenditure (£) | | Balances (£) | |
|----------------------------|-----------|-------------------------------------|--------|
| Total income | 1,011,859 | Balance from previous year | 14,261 |
| Total expenditure | 986,940 | Balance carried forward to the next | 39,180 |
| Expenditure per pupil | 2,366 | | |

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

AREAS OF LEARNING IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

Provision in the Foundation Stage is **good**.

33. Provision has improved significantly since the previous inspection and several aspects are now very good. Teaching and learning are more consistent in quality, being good overall, but with some very good teaching in mathematical development and knowledge and understanding of the world. The school has introduced a much more consistent approach to the philosophy of structured play. The ongoing assessment of children's attainment and the tracking of their progress is very good. This ensures that children benefit equally, with tasks and activities usually matched closely to children's individual needs. It also enables staff to give very clear information to parents. As a result, very good links with parents have been established. The morning welcome session is a valuable social occasion to exchange information, and enables parents to leave children secure in the knowledge that they are settled and happy.
34. At the time of the inspection, there were 51 children enrolled in the two reception classes. There is one point of entry into reception, in September. The staff have tried various patterns of induction to comply with parents' wishes. The present system is based on pre-visits and a fairly quick start to the full curriculum, which meets most of the demands. Several children have been identified as having special educational needs which are being supported and monitored well, although the children have not yet been included on the school's register of special needs.
35. The school has built up the outside play facilities well since the previous inspection, creating busy and exciting secure outdoor areas and adding to the good overall curriculum. The curriculum is richer than at the time of the previous inspection, with the inclusion of sand and water trays, role-play areas and construction equipment, as well as a wider programme of visits and visitors. Leadership and management are good overall. There is very effective teamwork with the staff working closely together, sharing expertise. A detailed self-evaluation process has resulted in an effective action plan to guide the development of the provision. This is another improvement since the previous inspection. The formal recording of attainment is now more precise. Data is compiled for children on entry to and on leaving reception, giving the staff a good basis for judging the value added by teaching over the year.
36. The children's skills on entry to the reception are generally above the average expected for four year olds. Staff report that standards in listening and finger control skills have become lower over the years and are, therefore, average at the time of entry. With good teaching, the children make good progress. By the time they leave reception the children are achieving well in relation to their starting points, and very well in mathematical development and knowledge and understanding of the world.

Personal, social and emotional development

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Very good relationships between children and adults create an effective atmosphere for learning
- Good planning creates good opportunities for children to interact and mature
- Children learn to concentrate and persevere very well, but do not have enough opportunities for selecting and following their own preferences

Commentary

37. This area of learning is central to the ethos of the Foundation Stage. Everything is geared to enabling children to grow in confidence and gain social skills in an atmosphere of calm routine. The staff are very good role models and establish friendly, calm and considerate relationships. When children enter the reception classes, they are mostly already above average in social skills. They quickly gain confidence and soon learn to share and take turns. Their behaviour is consistently good and often very good. When they go to the interactive play areas, their sense of excitement and involvement grows markedly. These activities are new since the previous inspection and are well planned and resourced.
38. Most children listen well during the circle time start to many lessons. Some, however, begin to lose concentration and others call out of turn. When the teachers use strategies like 'talking partners', children are instantly back on track and enjoy sharing ideas with each other and being involved. When teachers plan more active sessions, like going out on a mathematics adventure, children behave very well and remember much of what they saw outside. Similarly, when staff use the interactive whiteboard, children are more focused and attentive. When working in groups, children learn to persevere well with their tasks.
39. The balance of the teaching still lies more within instruction than discovery. Children make good progress in most aspects of personal development, and achieve well to exceed the early learning goals by the end of the year. However, children do not benefit from sufficient opportunity to make their own decisions and follow them up. Consequently, their independence and initiative remain nearer to average.

Communication, language and literacy

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Reading is taught well and so children make good progress
- Teachers exploit discussions effectively, so that children develop their speaking and listening well
- Children are very willing to write, but struggle with spelling patterns

Commentary

40. Teachers plan carefully to provide a structured range of activities specifically to develop the children's language skills. These are above average when they start reception and, as children achieve well, they exceed the early learning goals by the end of the reception year. Children love to listen to stories and like to show when they recognise letters or words in the 'big books'. They also begin to follow the meaning within stories, and try to copy the teacher's expression in reading.
41. In discussions about books, and many other things, the staff encourage children to listen to each other with increasing attention, to talk to their work partners and report back on the things they have decided. Teachers use question and answer techniques well, successfully drawing quieter children into the discussions. Children also enjoy chatting informally in various role-play situations. These strategies promote children's reading and speaking skills well.

42. Children are very eager to write. Over the reception year, they progress from forming letters to writing whole words, and work towards whole sentences. Teachers work on the basis of allowing writing skills to emerge as children are ready. They encourage children to recognise rhyming words, which helps their spelling. Children spend a considerable time listening and build up their concentration span well, but a few children still find it difficult to listen for a whole session.

Mathematical development

Provision in mathematical development is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Very good teaching enables children to learn very well through practical activities
- Mathematical skills are put to good use across many areas of learning
- Children are very good at counting and are moving into simple problem solving

Commentary

43. The staff use a wide range of practical activities well to help children's understanding of number, shape, space and position. Consequently, children achieve very well from an above average starting point and exceed the expected goals by the time they start Year 1. Staff have high expectations for children to develop skills like measuring, counting to ever bigger numbers and seeing patterns in numbers that will help them with problems in addition and subtraction. All the children love the construction equipment and are gaining a good sense of position, shape and space from it. Staff use precise assessment observations very well. These guide them in preparing the next steps of learning for individual children and groups. Skilled questioning helps children develop their own thinking, curiosity and confidence. Staff use the interactive whiteboard well, to give children a very visual impression of pattern and position. The strategy of talking partners works well because all children feel involved while they are sharing ideas. Some children are not as quick as others at retaining information, but when the lesson takes them outside to explore the world of real numbers, the intensity of the experience makes a deep impression.

Knowledge and understanding of the world

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Very good teaching provides children with numerous opportunities to learn about the world around them, particularly in exploring the natural world
- The staff provide a great variety of resources, visits and visitors to stimulate children's sense of curiosity
- Teachers ensure that children acquire key skills in ICT

Commentary

44. Very good teaching produces very effective learning conditions and enables children to achieve very well. This is an area in which children enter school with above average levels of experience, and talk articulately about their knowledge. As a result, children achieve very well to exceed the expected goals by the end of the year. Many opportunities are provided for children to develop interests in science, history and geography. This curiosity is harnessed as teachers provide interesting resources like the large photographs of families in the past, which prompt discussion about family relationships and values. Staff celebrate a wide range of festivals, enabling children to learn simple religious ideas about special places and different people, as in the Chinese New Year. Children use the computers well, because staff focus on basic

skills; these are then extended to recording in language, mathematics and art. Some lively displays show how children have employed the techniques of famous artists, such as Seurat in their 'dot pictures'.

Physical development

Provision in physical development is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children have good opportunities to develop physical co-ordination
- Much improved space and equipment promote good progress overall, but some limitations in the site restrict free movement with wheeled vehicles
- Good teaching helps children prepare well for the Year 1 curriculum by the end of the reception year

Commentary

45. Children start reception with physical skills generally above the expected level, although staff have noticed that fine finger control is now nearer the average. Staff demonstrate how small items and tools should be handled and insist on care, and so children gradually refine their finger control and control tools more precisely. For instance, the delicate handling of brush strokes in one class produced excellent renditions of sunflowers in the style of Van Gogh. In the other class, the fine control of the computer mouse enabled children to manipulate the tiny dots that produced effective pointillist pictures. Good teaching provides more opportunities than in the previous inspection.
46. Improved resources are well used. This includes the new soft surface play area which is valuable for children's general play and work in the fresh air. The sloping nature of this area means children cannot use wheeled vehicles safely, and large climbing equipment has not yet been set up. In recognition of this, teachers use the school hall more for physical development and dance. Children are able to explore and gain sufficient skills with large equipment inside. They begin to experience suitable gymnastic and games skills in preparation for Year 1. Children like the challenge of warming up and hearing how their bodies respond to exercise, and refining their balancing skills using small equipment. Children, therefore, achieve well against their original starting points to exceed the early learning goals by the end of the year. Although finger control skills have also developed well, this is from a lower baseline. Children tend not to form letters to the quality associated with above average.

Creative development

Provision in creative development is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Good direct teaching of skills is combined with good opportunities to learn through play
- Staff provide a much improved range of activities to extend children's imagination, but do not always allow enough time for these to take place

Commentary

47. Most children start school with above the expected level of imagination and make-believe. The staff have planned a much more liberal curriculum than at the time of the previous inspection. The afternoon sessions, for example, are set aside to allow

children to meet new ideas and experiences and build these into their play, where they draw on the richness of their invention. When the weather allows, these are transferred to the outside environment.

48. Children can explore the variety of construction kits, share games in the 'travel agents' or 'bears' role-play areas and access the painting easels during interactive times. Where necessary, teachers introduce children well to direct basic skills, for instance in music, ICT or painting, so that children have information to draw on when they develop their own work. Teachers read stories expressively and children respond well to these, picking up the ideas to develop further in their play. The organisation of lessons into quite long sessions means that children do not always have the experience of play, imagination and exploration in the mornings. Overall, children make good progress and achieve well to exceed the goals expected of them by the end of the year.

SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 1 AND 2

ENGLISH

Provision for English is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The high expectations of teachers ensure that pupils achieve very well
- The working atmosphere in most lessons is very convivial, stimulating and industrious
- Teachers are very good at introducing and supporting new work so that pupils readily understand
- The rich and varied curriculum develops pupils' breadth of vocabulary and confidence in communication
- The school has done very well to maintain high standards, although provision is not yet consistently high throughout the school
- Teachers develop literacy imaginatively through other subjects

Commentary

49. Standards are well above average by the end of Years 2 and 6. The school has done very well to sustain high standards since the last inspection. There is a strong ethos of achievement that pervades the school, led by the high expectations of teachers. The quality of teaching is very good, particularly in Years 5 and 6. Teachers provide pupils with challenging and interesting work which motivates them to strive to do their best. Teachers are insistent that pupils acquire very good basic skills such as spelling, handwriting and punctuation, and so the structure of pupils' writing is very secure. In most lessons, pupils are encouraged to play a full part so that even the most reluctant of them is induced to listen earnestly and speak with clarity and relevance. As a result, all pupils achieve very well, including those with special educational needs and those who do not have English as their first language.
50. Pupils respond very well in most lessons because they simply enjoy being there. They appreciate the challenges set for them and the variety of work. Several boys in a Year 5 lesson, for example, were thrilled to discover that they would be 'doing poetry' that day. Pupils also warm to the style of teaching, the genuine care and intuitive support by teachers and support staff, as well as the emphasis on togetherness. As a result, the rapport between staff and pupils is excellent and this produces very positive

attitudes to work. In the same way, pupils behave very well and only rarely, when the pace of lessons falters, do pupils become restless or mischievous.

51. Teachers present new learning adeptly. They specify the aims of the lesson so that pupils are very clear about what they are required to learn. They skilfully explain and demonstrate concepts, like prepositions, using resources to reinforce key points. For example, teachers have developed very good skills in using interactive whiteboards to highlight how written expression can be improved by re-drafting. Teachers set work that is usually very well matched to pupils' abilities, are vigilant in guiding pupils' thoughts in group activity and are good at marking work to show what could be improved. In some classes, teachers set very effective, highly individual targets for pupils so that they can focus on and overcome any shortcomings. However, the quality of target setting is not consistent across the school, and so is not as equally effective in all classes.
52. The full curriculum gives pupils exciting opportunities to develop their literacy skills. Teachers introduce literature from an early age to motivate and acquaint pupils with rich vocabulary and expression, whether Roald Dahl's *Esio Trot* in Year 2 or *The Tempest* in Year 6. Teachers in Year 6 use poetry by Masefield and Longfellow as a spur to pupils' creativity. Such influences are very successful; in a poem, one pupil in Year 5 described 'water as brown as a mouldy peach'. Visits and readings by authors, like Alan Temperley, help to bring literature alive and have inspired a deep interest in reading among the pupils. Visits to the theatre help pupils to acquire the speaking skills necessary for their own productions, notably *Bugsy Malone*, staged in a nearby city theatre.
53. The subject is very well led and managed. The school monitors trends and test results thoroughly and is, therefore, able to pinpoint areas of concern. For example, it was recognised that speaking and listening were not as good as they could be and so staff training was instigated to devise more effective methods. Home-school partnerships have been strengthened to improve better opportunities for pupils' reading. The subject leader has a regular programme of monitoring teaching and provides valuable feedback to colleagues. However, these analyses of teaching are not related closely enough to how well pupils achieve and so are not evaluative or rigorous enough. This helps to explain why the consistency of very good teaching in classes in Years 5 and 6 is not found in all classes.

Language and literacy across the curriculum

54. Teachers make very good use of other subjects to broaden pupils' experience of language and to develop a broad vocabulary. Examples abound. Pupils in Year 5, for instance, presented their performance poems in a live video link with another school and, in a music lesson, wrote lyrics to match the rhythm of a song. Pupils in Year 6 wrote a play-script about life in an Indian village. Year 3 pupils practised sequencing sentences using the parable of The Good Samaritan. Factual accounts of penguins in the Antarctic were written by pupils in Year 2.

MATHEMATICS

Provision in mathematics is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Very good teaching ensures pupils achieve very well and reach well above average standards
- Pupils have very good attitudes towards mathematics because lessons are engaging and challenging
- The school's emphasis on improving pupils' skills in using and applying mathematics has been very effective
- There are very good opportunities for pupils to use their mathematical skills in other subjects

Commentary

55. The school has made good improvement in provision since the last inspection. The subject leaders have been very effective in focusing on raising standards, improving the quality of teaching and developing pupils' skills in using and applying mathematics. Standards in Year 2 and Year 6 are well above average and pupils in all year groups achieve very well. Lower attaining pupils and those with special educational needs achieve very well because they benefit from the sensitive encouragement and support provided by the special needs co-ordinator and well-briefed teaching assistants. Pupils of all abilities make very good progress because they are very well challenged through well-matched work and questioning in lessons. In addition, in Years 5 and 6, the most able mathematicians are very well extended, with lessons including learning about fractals and the Fibonacci sequence.
56. Pupils enjoy mathematics and are keen to join in during lessons because teachers' planning includes a wide variety of strategies to motivate and engage them. Through very effective questioning seen in all years groups throughout the inspection, teachers provide pupils with opportunities to explain their answers and ideas using mathematical language, encouraging them to develop a deeper understanding of mathematical concepts and their everyday use. Much of pupils' work is practical and focuses very effectively on developing their skills in tackling mathematical investigations. Consequently, pupils are confident when faced with problems and know which strategies to adopt. For example, in a very good lesson in Year 6, pupils discussed their ideas with their 'talk partners', tried them out on whiteboards to test if they would work and then demonstrated their outcomes to the class using the interactive whiteboard. Any misconceptions were quickly dealt with by the class teacher and other pupils who confidently questioned each other on their use of different strategies and offered ways their peers could improve.
57. Throughout the school the quality of teaching and learning is very good. Teachers successfully assess pupils' progress in lessons and adapt their planning for the next lesson. Weekly plans are regularly modified to take account of the progress made and skilfully adapted to build on pupils' current understanding. Where teaching is consistently very good, this is also seen in the marking of pupils' work. Teachers set clear targets and share with pupils what they need to do next to improve. However, the quality of marking is not yet consistently of the same high standard across the school and pupils in some classes are not always aware of what they need to do next to improve.

Mathematics across the curriculum

58. This is very good overall. The science curriculum, for example, is used frequently to help pupils to practise their numeracy skills, such as recording temperatures during an

experiment on insulation and creating graphs of their results. Pupils measure and time athletics activities with great accuracy in physical education lessons. Within mathematics lessons themselves, meaningful links are often made to pupils' learning in other subjects like, for example, the use of map co-ordinates in geography. These help pupils to understand how they can use and apply the skills they have learnt in mathematics in real-life situations. Speaking and listening skills are often practised during mathematics lessons, with a very good focus on developing pupils' mathematical vocabulary.

SCIENCE

Provision in science is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Good improvement since the previous inspection has ensured that pupils reach well above average standards and achieve very well by Year 6
- Teaching is very good, and is supported by a rich curriculum
- The emphasis on practical activities and technical skills inspires and motivates pupils
- Teachers provide very well for pupils' individual needs and are encouraging pupils to take more responsibility for their own progress

Commentary

59. Very good leadership in science has ensured that the weaknesses found in the previous inspection have been eradicated. Provision is stronger and standards are now well above average at the end of Year 2 and Year 6, a significant improvement since the previous inspection, when standards were judged to be just above average. Pupils in Year 2 benefit from a wide range of experiences and, over the year, they achieve very well in relation to their starting points on entry to the school. These pupils are particularly effective at collecting information from simple experiments, and organising it into tables and graphs.
60. Standards in Year 6 have remained high over recent years. The present Year 6 pupils work hard, and have a very positive attitude to their work. They have covered many topics in much greater depth than is usually found and most pupils present their work neatly. They are good at note-taking, and displaying their findings, such as converting measurements to graphs. They convey clearly how they relate their predictions and conclusions to scientific knowledge. The subject leader has encouraged a particularly exciting curriculum, well enriched with visits and visitors. In addition, many valuable links are made with other subjects. For instance, in a topic on fairgrounds, pupils' designs had to take into account aspects of electronics and forces.
61. Teaching is very good. Teachers plan their practical lessons carefully and supply interesting equipment and materials. Although some of the afternoon sessions are quite long, teachers mostly organise lessons well. When lessons begin briskly, with short but pertinent introductions, teaching is very good and at times excellent; pupils are alert and immerse themselves in practical tasks. Teachers' subject knowledge is particularly strong, so that their explanations go into great detail. This promotes good learning of the technical vocabulary of the subject. Teachers encourage pupils to contribute ideas, like a boy in Year 2 who suggested that the group might classify plants using Venn diagrams. Teachers use an effective range of strategies, for

instance an 'agony aunt' approach, which made an excellent lesson on human reproduction even more relevant.

62. The subject leader has developed a strong commitment to inclusion in science. This means that all groups are well identified and catered for in lessons, and that less confident pupils and those with special educational needs are supported by very well directed and active classroom assistants. The subject leader has strengthened the curriculum by showing clearly where each year group should be by the end of the year. This means that, in each year, the teachers build more effectively on pupils' learning, which is a major improvement since the previous inspection. Management is good. Strong assessment systems and self-evaluation give the school a firm grip on tracking standards. The action plan is now rightly focusing on strengthening the pupils' knowledge of their own learning by introducing pupils' self-assessment.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY (ICT)

Provision for ICT is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The school has succeeded very well in developing the subject over recent years
- The emphasis on the teaching of basic skills has paid dividends
- Although more able pupils achieve well, teachers do not always give them enough scope to proceed at their own pace
- Enlightened teaching ensures that pupils have excellent attitudes to work
- The facilities and resources have greatly improved, but the ICT suite is not a good shape for whole-class learning
- Teachers make the most of opportunities to develop ICT through other subjects

Commentary

63. Compared to the findings of the previous inspection, the school has made great strides forward. There has been a whole-school emphasis on ICT over recent years. With funds earmarked by the governing body, the school has moved quickly to establish suitable facilities and improve the skills of staff. A very appropriate priority this year has been to develop ICT in conjunction with other subjects. As a result, pupils' attainment has substantially improved and is now above expectations by both Year 2 and 6, and all pupils achieve well. The subject leader is enthusiastic and very knowledgeable, is eager to continue to develop the subject, aware that greater rigour in monitoring teaching and learning will be necessary to raise standards further. Therefore, the subject is led and managed very well.
64. Teaching and learning are good throughout the school. Teachers are effective at building on prior learning so that pupils acquire vital skills progressively. Teachers introduce new concepts skilfully, often using the interactive whiteboards to clarify and reinforce procedures. Pupils are, therefore, able to carry out their own work swiftly and independently. Through a good level of challenge, teachers ensure that pupils acquire good skills in computer operation, such as word-processing, handling data through spreadsheets and graphs, as well as investigating simulation such as classroom layouts.

65. Although more able pupils have better than average skills in ICT, they do not have sufficient scope to develop even further. In most lessons, pupils are set very similar work. Many activities are open-ended so that more able pupils can make good progress but, often, activities are too prescribed for pupils to develop their individual skills at their pace. There are few topics in which pupils can amass information for themselves and present it in a variety of ways, or have the freedom to think up their own ways of solving problems or handling data.
66. Teachers devise fascinating topics which capture pupils' interest and encourage them to give of their best. Pupils in Year 3, for example, thoroughly enjoyed exploring the possibilities in a music program to compose their own digital tunes of varying pitch and rhythm. Teachers have a very relaxed yet supportive manner and make their high expectations plain to the pupils. As a result, pupils are always at ease, respond very well and work very hard for their teachers. Pupils also work together extremely successfully. They link comfortably with partners to discuss, experiment and develop ideas, sharing computer operation considerably.
67. Pupils benefit from very good resources. Although the ICT suite is small and awkwardly shaped, teachers are able to conduct lessons with entire classes; there is also a set of laptop computers which classes share. The school has a wireless network and use of broadband for maximum efficiency. There are video cameras, digital cameras and digital equipment for pupils to explore control application and conduct science experiments. There are interactive whiteboards in each classroom and ample software to enable pupils, for example, to compose music and develop multi-media presentations.

Information and communication technology across the curriculum

68. ICT is developed very effectively through other subjects. ICT is an integral part of some subjects like English, in which pupils regularly word process their writing, and in geography and history, where pupils research key facts. Sometimes, teachers make imaginative links which inspire pupils to achieve very well. In a Year 3 physical education lesson, for instance, pupils used a video camera to record their jumps in gymnastics. They then watched their performances so that they could evaluate them and learn how to improve. Pupils in Year 6 had designed and made a clown's face in design and technology, complete with a light bulb for a nose, and a bow tie. Their mission in a subsequent ICT lesson was to create computer commands and links to cause the nose to glow at intervals and rotate the bow tie.

HUMANITIES

69. Few lessons were observed in geography and history during the inspection, so there was too little evidence to make judgements on provision or pupils' attainment in either subject.
70. In **geography**, teachers plan effectively to provide first-hand experiences to support pupils' learning, whether using the local area or further afield. These experiences help to bring the subject alive and contribute very well to developing pupils' understanding of the world around them. This was evident, for example, in the high quality work produced by Year 3 pupils following their visit to the Eden River Trust to learn about rivers. Pupils made detailed maps showing the path of the river and location of different features, investigated and made a graph of the river flow following a game of

'Pooh sticks' and classified creatures they found along the river. Very effective links to science and mathematics further deepened their learning.

71. In **history** too, the school provides a wealth of high quality first-hand experiences and exciting activities to support pupils' learning. For example, a recent study in Year 6 on World War II was very effectively planned so that pupils could understand the experiences of children during the period. Pupils enthusiastically recalled their 'evacuation' by train from Carlisle to Gateshead where they ate their lunch of rations and talked to a group of real evacuees about their memories. Local museums and attractions such as the Guildhall, Tullie House and New Lanark, as well as the contributions of parents and grandparents, extend and add to pupils' learning throughout the school. The quality of work produced following visits reflects the value of such experiences which feature throughout the school. Where learning is less well planned, some teachers rely heavily on worksheets that have a limited effect on pupils' understanding and development of historical skills.

Religious education

Provision in the subject is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- There has been significant improvement in provision since the previous inspection
- Good teaching enables pupils to achieve well
- The subject is very well led and the curriculum is well enriched by visits and visitors

Commentary

72. Pupils' attainment is above the level expected for pupils aged seven, and well above the level expected for pupils aged eleven. This is a considerable improvement since the previous inspection when attainment was average throughout the school. Now pupils make very good progress and achieve very well. Pupils with special educational needs achieve equally well because the school is sincerely committed to inclusion and so provides very good support to these pupils. Much of pupils' learning is developed through discussion. Year 6 pupils, for instance, had a genuine dilemma in a design and technology lesson. Out of fairness, they wanted to accommodate every group's views of the design process, although this conflicted with the criteria that were best for the purpose. The pupils handled this in a very mature way. Year 2 pupils are understandably not as advanced. In their discussion about 'turning the other cheek', they felt vengeance was still a valid response.
73. Teaching is good overall. Teachers now display good subject knowledge and so generate enthusiasm among the pupils. Consequently the pupils listen with heightened interest and are keen to be involved in lessons. The teachers are anxious to overcome a weakness noted in the previous report, that pupils did not relate their learning to their own lives and that written work was mostly factual. By giving pupils, young and old, opportunities to voice their opinions, teachers have improved this aspect. Pupils now know that their views matter and are valued by the teachers. Consequently they enjoy the lively debates, which make the learning vivid and relevant. Teachers make particularly good use of visitors or pupils' recall of visits to places of interest.

74. Leadership is very good because it has brought about the extensive improvements that have also raised the spirituality of the school through a strong programme of collective worship. The subject leader has built up strong teamwork behind the subject, shown by the care taken by staff in marking and assessing pupils' progress. Management is also very good. The subject leader monitors the teaching and supports teachers exceptionally well. The curriculum has been developed well and gives a very good structure to the programme of study, although a few lessons still have slender religious content. The leader is working in conjunction with the advisory teacher from the local education authority to build a centre for religious education, where examples of excellent practice are available. The involvement of ICT is somewhat limited, but it is part of the leader's action plan to increase resources for this.

CREATIVE, AESTHETIC, PRACTICAL AND PHYSICAL SUBJECTS

75. Not enough lessons were observed in **art and design** to make a judgement on provision. However, discussion with pupils about their displayed work, and an analysis of other work, indicates that they achieve very well in art and design by Year 2 and 6. The school provides a particularly rich curriculum in art, with high expectations of pupils' performance; pupils are taught a very wide range of skills and techniques. Very good use is made of outside influences, like a visiting artist who rapidly developed the teachers' skills in sculpture, enabling them to pass these on to the pupils. The leadership and management of the subject are very good, and have succeeded in building up strong teamwork committed to enabling all pupils to do their best. This is seen in the hard work that teachers have put into mounting the displays, thus valuing pupils' efforts. Standards are well assessed within the moderated portfolio of work and provision is well monitored. This has indicated to the subject leader that pupils need to make more effective use of their sketchbooks.

Design and technology

Provision in design and technology is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teachers make learning interesting and relevant so that pupils learn readily
- High expectations by teachers encourage pupils to be creative and self-reliant
- The very good development of the subject has been an important influence on pupils' learning

Commentary

76. Pupils' attainment by the end of Year 2 and Year 6 is well above that expected for the pupils' ages and pupils achieve very well throughout the school. The curriculum is sensibly based on national guidelines, and teachers select topics that relate to work that the pupils are doing in other subjects. For instance, Year 6 classes are designing and making model fairground rides to link with their science topic on forces and electrical circuits, and their ICT work on control programming. Over a school year, pupils experience the full range of design topics, including mechanisms, structures and food technology. Pupils who have special educational needs particularly like this subject because they can experience success in it.
77. Teaching is good overall, but often better. In the lessons observed in Years 4 and 6, the teaching was very good to excellent. This was because the teachers had very well

defined subject knowledge which enabled them to have the highest expectations. Teachers take a specific skill, such as silk screen printing, and then encourage pupils to refine it until it matches the quality they originally planned for. Pupils are encouraged to find further purposes for the artefacts provided. For instance, having studied the characters of *The Tempest* in their English lessons, Year 6 pupils had to design and make appropriate headgear for them. Since these were worn in the performance of the play, pupils became much clearer about the importance of design in terms of appearance and comfort. Pupils respond exceptionally well to this kind of teaching, which puts much of the responsibility for success in their hands. Without realising, pupils also develop their literacy and numeracy skills very effectively.

78. Subject leadership and management are very good. The resources have improved considerably since the previous inspection, and a suitable, simple assessment system enables teachers to keep track of pupils' attainment and progress. The subject action plan is good, and includes beginning to let pupils develop self-assessment, to boost knowledge of their own learning.

Music

Provision for music is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The school has developed the subject very successfully in recent years
- Very good teaching ensures that pupils achieve very well
- Pupils are enthusiastic about music, because lessons are fun, inspirational and rewarding
- Very good curricular opportunities enable pupils to learn about the rich diversity of music

Commentary

79. Pupils achieve very well and their attainment is well above expectations by both Year 2 and 6. This shows a considerable improvement since the last inspection, when pupils' progress was judged to be unsatisfactory. The enthusiasm and drive of the subject leader have been influential in keeping music as a high profile and in supporting colleagues. The school has also been wise in retaining a former class teacher who not only has excellent musical skills but knows how to inspire pupils. This teacher does much of the teaching in Years 3 to 6, as well as being involved in choir and other school activities. He is very well supported by other teachers.
80. Pupils acquire many skills because of the skilful teaching. In a Year 2 lesson, pupils experimented with percussive sounds to accompany an Indian song, quickly understanding how to conjure sounds out of the available instruments. One pupil created a shimmering sound from a triangle to represent a rising sun. Pupils' singing throughout the school is cohesive, expressive and rhythmic. As a prelude to a singing practice, three pupils accompanied the teacher with improvised percussion playing. The speed with which the teacher taught pupils in Year 6 how to sing scat in two contrasting parts, in four echoing groups, was very impressive.
81. Pupils thoroughly enjoy their music lessons because of the exuberance of the teachers, the strong focus on skills and subsequent sense of achievement. Teachers select stimulating music so that pupils are instantly motivated and participate eagerly. Even boys in Years 5 and 6, who can sometimes be reluctant singers, give voice lustily. Teachers stress the importance of precision and expression in performance; pupils respect this and try their hardest to respond. Humour is an intrinsic part of teaching. Quirky flourishes on the piano during singing bring a smile to the pupils' faces and the singing of songs like 'I'm being eaten by a boa-constrictor', and its rather abrupt ending, go down a treat. Consequently, pupils' behaviour is immaculate. During a singing practice for all pupils in Years 3 to 6, the teacher asked pupils to sit up and fold their arms. As one, 240 pupils complied.
82. Pupils' learning is greatly enhanced by a stimulating curriculum. The everyday curriculum is sensibly based on a recognised scheme of work which provides a good structure to learning. However, teachers add to this considerably through their own creativity and extra opportunities. Year 6 pupils, for instance, have visited the Sage Centre in Gateshead to attend jazz workshops. A brass ensemble has worked with pupils in school and will return to provide opportunities for composition. Within lessons, pupils experience a wide range of influences from the Beatles to the Lightning Seeds, from Gujarati songs to singing scat with counter melodies. In addition, all pupils in Year 3 learn the recorder and many pupils learn musical instruments. By all accounts, the annual productions are of high quality, and the most recent production, *Bugsy Malone*, was very well supported and received by parents and the community.

Physical education

Provision in physical education is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils achieve very well because of very good teaching that sets high expectations
- An extremely well enriched curriculum encourages pupils to develop very good, and at times excellent, attitudes towards work

- Very effective leadership and management of physical education have been a key factor in improving overall provision and pupils' achievement

Commentary

83. Throughout the school, pupils' attainment is well above national expectations and all pupils achieve equally as well. Teachers have high expectations of what pupils can do and share clear views on how they can improve with the pupils. As a result, pupils strive to improve their performance further. Pupils are very comfortable with this process and contribute very sensible comments about their own and others' work which they put into practice in their next performance. A recent innovation has been the introduction of a video camera that records pupils' performances in lessons so that they can evaluate their strengths and weaknesses. A group of Year 3 pupils used this to improve their forward rolls in a gymnastics lesson. Ten seconds after completing a forward roll, they had immediate feedback on what they could develop, tried again and then observed whether they had improved, all within a few minutes. Pupils made very good progress as a result of this extremely effective approach.
84. Pupils participate enthusiastically in all areas of sport, whether in lessons or in the extremely wide range of extra activities the school provides. Whilst standards are positively affected by many individual and team successes at local and county levels, the school is very good at encouraging all pupils to participate in healthy exercise. This enjoyment is the main factor in pupils' very good attitudes and achievement. For example, the cross-country club regularly has more than 40 runners, many of whom have taken part in inter-schools' competitions as well as the Cumbrian Run and local 'fun runs', along with parents and staff. Teachers plan lessons that capture pupils' enthusiasm and imagination. For example, in an excellent dance lesson in Year 1, 'bees' darted and stopped to feed on flowers, whilst 'worms' curled and stretched. Pupils' movements were very realistic because the teacher encouraged them to focus on what they had observed and then demonstrated how these could be improved further.
85. Very good leadership and management have ensured substantial improvement since the last inspection. The enthusiastic subject leader has played a prominent role and leads his colleagues by example. Through monitoring of both the curriculum and teaching, areas for improvement have been identified and addressed. For example, the reorganisation of swimming times has led to better use of time and had a positive impact on standards in swimming. A number of staff have received supportive training in various aspects of physical education and teachers' subject knowledge overall is very good. This, along with the commitment and enthusiasm of staff and other adults, has had a very positive impact on standards.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP

86. **Citizenship** was not a focus for the inspection and, therefore, no judgement is possible about its provision. However, it is clear that the school attaches considerable importance to pupils' social and civic responsibilities. This is particularly evident in Year 6 where pupils have developed the independent learning skills that they will need in their secondary career. Members of the school council acquire very good experiences of formal meetings and open debate.

Personal, social and health education

Provision in personal, social and health education is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The school plans its teaching programme very well, with good links made to many subjects of the curriculum
- Pupils are very well prepared for the responsibilities of living in a community
- Health education is very well promoted throughout the school

Commentary

87. Elements of personal, social and health education are embedded in the planning in other curriculum subjects and are a key part of the school's overall ethos. Pupils learn, for instance, about a healthy life-style in science, and about co-operation and fair play in physical education. There are specific lessons on such topics as responsibilities and choice, and very good provision is made for pupils to learn about sex and relationships and awareness of the misuse of drugs. Visits and visitors enrich the curriculum further, including the very popular 'Life Education Bus' and residential visits for pupils in Years 4 and 6.
88. Pupils' personal and social development is supported very well in lessons. The headteacher and all staff praise those positive attitudes and behaviour that make the pupils part of the whole school community. Plenty of opportunities are planned for pupils to take responsibilities, such as jobs within their own classrooms, participation in the school council and the lunch-time Green Club. All these skills and qualities are developed and nurtured by all staff so that by the time pupils reach Year 6 they take their role as oldest in the school very seriously, helping younger children, staff and visitors to the school.
89. Displays around the school, the wide range of extra-curricular sporting activities provided and advice given by staff in all subjects reinforce the school's commitment to health education. Pupils know from the moment they join the school how to keep healthy, from washing their hands to the benefits of safe exercise. They are well aware of the nutritional value of different foods. This whole-school approach and focus have recently been acknowledged in the school's achievement of Healthy School status.

PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

| <i>Inspection judgement</i> | <i>Grade</i> |
|---|--------------|
| The overall effectiveness of the school | 2 |
| How inclusive the school is | 1 |
| How the school's effectiveness has changed since its last inspection | 2 |
| Value for money provided by the school | 2 |
| Overall standards achieved | 2 |
| Pupils' achievement | 2 |
| Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities (ethos) | 2 |
| Attendance | 2 |
| Attitudes | 1 |
| Behaviour, including the extent of exclusions | 2 |
| Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development | 2 |
| The quality of education provided by the school | 2 |
| The quality of teaching | 2 |
| How well pupils learn | 2 |
| The quality of assessment | 3 |
| How well the curriculum meets pupils' needs | 2 |
| Enrichment of the curriculum, including out-of-school activities | 1 |
| Accommodation and resources | 3 |
| Pupils' care, welfare, health and safety | 3 |
| Support, advice and guidance for pupils | 2 |
| How well the school seeks and acts on pupils' views | 2 |
| The effectiveness of the school's links with parents | 3 |
| The quality of the school's links with the community | 1 |
| The school's links with other schools and colleges | 2 |
| The leadership and management of the school | 2 |
| The governance of the school | 3 |
| The leadership of the headteacher | 1 |
| The leadership of other key staff | 2 |
| The effectiveness of management | 2 |

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