

# INSPECTION REPORT

**VICTORIA JUNIOR SCHOOL**

Barrow-in-Furness, Cumbria

LEA area: Cumbria

Unique reference number: 112204

Headteacher: Mrs Caroline Vernon

Lead inspector: Mr Anthony Calderbank

Dates of inspection: 07 – 09 February 2005

Inspection number: 268178

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

© Crown copyright 2005

This report may be reproduced in whole or in part for non-commercial educational purposes, provided that all extracts quoted are reproduced verbatim without adaptation and on condition that the source and date thereof are stated.

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school. Under the School Inspections Act 1996, the school must provide a copy of this report and/or its summary free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the full cost of reproduction may be made for any other copies supplied.

## **INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL**

Type of school:	Junior
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	7 – 11
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
Number on roll:	241
School address:	Devonshire Road Barrow-in-Furness Cumbria
Postcode:	LA14 5NE
Telephone number:	01229 894656
Fax number:	01229 894657
Appropriate authority:	Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr D Marshall
Date of previous inspection:	23 November 1998

## **CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL**

Victoria Junior School is situated in the town of Barrow-in-Furness in Cumbria. It is an average sized junior school with 241 boys and girls aged 7 to 11 years. Children are organised in single age group classes with two classes in each age group. Currently the percentage of pupils in receipt of free school meals is broadly in line with the national average. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs is similar to that found in most schools. There are 4 pupils with a statement of special educational needs. The pupils are receiving support for dyslexia, moderate and severe learning difficulties and autism. The vast majority of pupils are of white British ethnic background. The school is part of an Excellence in Cities initiative. It has achieved Activemark and the FA Charter Standard for Schools. In 2001, it received a School's Achievement Award. The school is currently part of an Excellence Cluster and is involved in the Leadership Development Strategy in Primary Schools. The attainment of most pupils on entry to the school varies, but is generally above average in reading, writing, mathematics and science.

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
7979	Anthony Calderbank	Lead inspector	Science Art and design Design and technology Religious education English as an additional language
9883	Brian Silvester	Lay inspector	
2465	Geoff Yates	Team inspector	Mathematics Information and communication technology Music Physical education
32963	Joan Lock	Team inspector	English Geography History Special educational needs

The inspection contractor was:

Cambridge Education Associates

Demeter House  
Station Road  
Cambridge  
CB1 2RS

Any concerns or complaints about the inspection or the report should be made initially to the inspection contractor. The procedures are set out in the leaflet '*Complaining about Ofsted Inspections*', which is available from Ofsted Publications Centre (telephone 07002 637833) or Ofsted's website ([www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)).

## **REPORT CONTENTS**

	Page
<b>PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE MAIN INSPECTION FINDINGS</b>	
<b>STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS</b>	<b>8</b>
Standards achieved in areas of learning and subjects	
Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities	
<b>QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL</b>	<b>11</b>
Teaching and learning	
The curriculum	
Care, guidance and support	
Partnership with parents, other schools and the community	
<b>LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT</b>	<b>16</b>
<b>PART C: THE QUALITY OF EDUCATION IN AREAS OF LEARNING AND SUBJECTS</b>	<b>18</b>
<b>AREAS OF LEARNING IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE</b>	
<b>SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 1 AND 2</b>	
<b>PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS</b>	<b>28</b>

## PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

### OVERALL EVALUATION

**Victoria Junior School is a good school**, which has a significant number of very good features. The quality of teaching is good overall and pupils achieve well as a result. Attainment in English, mathematics and science is well above average. The newly appointed headteacher, with the support of staff and governors provides a very clear vision and is committed to promoting equality and higher standards. Pupils' personal as well as academic development is fostered strongly, and the school is a caring community where everyone matters. The school provides good value for money.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- Standards are well above national expectations in English, mathematics and science, and pupils also achieve well in art and design and most of the aspects of physical education inspected.
- The quality of teaching is good overall, with a high proportion very good.
- The school is very well led by the new headteacher and management is good.
- Pupils writing skills are very well developed but some written tasks in subjects other than English are not sufficiently challenging.
- There is a strong commitment to meet the needs of all children resulting in, for example, very good provision for pupils with special educational needs.
- Pupils' attitudes, behaviour and relationships are very good.
- Assessment procedures and the use of the information are very good in English and mathematics, but are not as well developed in other subjects.
- Opportunities for pupils to take part in physical educational activities both in and out of school are excellent.
- Pupils' views are sought and acted upon very effectively.

The school has made good progress since its very favourable inspection report in 1998. Standards in English and mathematics have risen. Appropriate procedures have been put in place to monitor teaching and classroom provision and, as a result, the quality of teaching and the pace of lessons have improved. The school no longer has an open plan layout and distracting noise levels are no longer an issue. Staff have benefited from training in respect of multi-cultural provision, which is now good. However, there is still a need to ensure that writing tasks set for pupils in subjects other than English are suitably challenging.

### STANDARDS ACHIEVED

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

When pupils start at the school in Year 3, their standards are generally above national expectations in English, mathematics and science. However, as a result of the good progress they make across the school, standards are well above national expectations in these subjects in Year 6. This is evident in the current Year 6 classes and is also reflected in the school's results in the national tests. When the school's results are compared with those from similar schools, they show that the progress made by the pupils was above average in English and average in mathematics and science. Last year's test results showed an improvement in all three subjects. This is an improving school and standards are now rising.

Work seen during the inspection shows that attainment in English, mathematics and science is well above average and that pupils are achieving well in relation to their starting points on entry to Year 3. Pupils' achievement is good in art and design and most of the aspects of physical education inspected. They achieve satisfactorily in information and communication technology (ICT) and standards in religious education are in line with the expectations of the agreed syllabus. Pupils with special educational needs achieve well because of the good quality of support they receive.

**Pupils' attitudes, values and behaviour are very good.** The school makes very good provision for pupils' moral and social development and good provision for their spiritual and cultural development. There are very positive relationships between pupils and between adults and pupils. The attendance rate is well above the national average.

### **QUALITY OF EDUCATION**

**The school provides a good quality of education** for its pupils. **The quality of teaching and learning are good** and, as a result, pupils make good progress especially in English, mathematics and science. Teachers know exactly what they expect pupils to learn and make this clear to the class from the start of the lesson. They make use of a good range of teaching styles, including effective use of ICT and practical activities to improve the quality of learning. This interests and motivates pupils, making them work hard and concentrate for longer periods. Teachers make effective use of questioning to probe pupils' understanding and to challenge their thinking. However, some writing tasks set by teachers in subjects other than English do not always sufficiently challenge the pupils. Assessment procedures and the use made of the information are very good in English and mathematics, and in lessons across the curriculum teachers check pupils' learning and give constructive feedback to help them improve. However, in subjects other than English and mathematics, there are no systematic whole-school procedures for assessing pupils' standards and tracking their progress. Teaching assistants make a good contribution to pupils' learning through the effective support they give to groups and individuals.

The school provides a very good curriculum, which meets national requirements. The very good enrichment provided by visits and extra-curricular activities adds much to the quality of education. The opportunities for pupils to take part in physical educational activities both in and out of school are excellent. Provision for pupils with special educational needs is very good and the Individual Education Plans include clear guidance on how to meet the pupils' needs. Partnership with parents is good and effective links have been established with the local community. The school provides a good level of care for its pupils and pays appropriate attention to their welfare. Procedures for seeking the views of pupils and acting upon them are very good.

### **LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT**

**The leadership and management of the school are good.** The leadership of the new headteacher is very good and she is well supported by the deputy headteacher. Other key staff carry out their duties effectively. The management of the school is good and governors play an effective part in shaping its direction. There is a common commitment to running a school where all pupils are included and helped to develop well both academically and socially.

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

Parents and pupils hold very positive views of the school. Pupils enjoy school and parents hold it in high regard.

### **IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED**

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

- Ensure that written tasks set for pupils in subjects other than English are sufficiently challenging.
- Establish systematic whole-school strategies for assessing and tracking pupils' progress in subjects other than English and mathematics.

(The school has already identified these issues.)

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

### **STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS**

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

The achievement of boys and girls, including those with special educational needs, is good. The standard of pupils' work is showing signs of improvement especially in English, mathematics and science due to good teaching and very good leadership.

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

- The standard of pupils' work and their progress has improved since the previous inspection in English and mathematics.
- The 2004 national test results in Year 6 show standards to be well above national expectations in English, mathematics and science. This represents good achievement and progress.
- The quality of pupils' writing in subjects other than English could be better.
- Pupils with special educational needs and the more capable make good progress and achieve well.

#### **Commentary**

1. On entry to Year 3, pupils' overall standards have been generally above the national expectations in reading, writing, mathematics and science, but vary from year-to-year. For example, the current Year 3 pupils entered the school with below average standards in reading and writing, and average standards in mathematics. Teacher assessments in science carried out in the Infant School indicated a below average attainment.

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
English	29.0 (28.0)	26.9 (26.8)
Mathematics	28.7 (28.5)	27.0 (26.8)
Science	30.0 (29.8)	28.6 ( 28.6)

*There were 58 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year*

2. Pupils' achievement is good overall. Owing to improved teaching, the standard of pupils' work is considerably better than it was at the time of the previous inspection in English and mathematics.
3. In the 2004 national tests, pupils in Year 6 achieved well above average standards in English, mathematics and science. When the results are compared with those achieved by the same pupils at the end of Year 2, they show that the progress made by the pupils was above average in English and average in mathematics and science. Though the trend in the school's results over the past five years has been below the national trend, last year's test results showed an improvement in all three subjects and the school only just failed to meet its very challenging targets in English and mathematics. This is an improving school and standards are rising.
4. Inspection findings indicate that attainment is well above average in English, mathematics and science. The school is not complacent and is constantly striving to be even better. For example, through its effective self-evaluation procedures put in place by the new headteacher, the school identified that standards in mathematics had been declining since 2000 and immediately put in place an action plan to rectify the situation. As a result standards are



beginning to improve especially with regards to pupils' ability to use and apply their numeracy skills to solve problems. Standards in English have improved significantly since the previous inspection because of improved teaching and the successful introduction of the National Literacy Strategy. Pupils' speaking and listening, writing and reading skills are well above those found in most schools. However, the school is aware that writing tasks set in subjects other than English are not always sufficiently challenging.

5. Improved provision and teaching with regards to scientific investigations have resulted in younger pupils having a better understanding of what makes a test fair. However, older pupils do not set up their own investigations without guidance from planning boards.
6. The school's own analysis of the 2004 test results showed that girls outperformed boys in all subjects for the first time. In the past there has been no significant gender differences. As a result of this, teachers' planning is currently being monitored closely to ensure that strategies to support the learning styles of boys are being used. However, during the inspection there was no noticeable difference in the achievement of boys and girls.
7. Standards in ICT are similar to those found in most schools and pupils are being provided with appropriate opportunities to use and consolidate their skills in other subjects. Pupils in Year 6 have made satisfactory progress in religious education (RE) and standards are in line with the expectations of the locally agreed syllabus. However, improvements made to the RE curriculum and the way the subject is taught are having a positive impact upon standards and achievement in other classes lower down the school.
8. Standards in art and design are above average. In the dance and games lessons observed during the inspection, pupils' performance skills were better than those found in most schools and reflect well on the management of the subject.
9. Pupils with special educational needs achieve well because of the very good provision made for them. They make good progress towards the targets set for them in their Individual Educational Plans. The school keeps a register of gifted and talented pupils and makes every effort to ensure that they are provided with appropriate opportunities to develop their skills. The very small number of pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds achieve as well as their classmates.

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

Pupils' attitudes to learning, behaviour, attendance and punctuality are all very good. Pupils' moral, social, spiritual and cultural development is good overall.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Pupils are keen to learn and have very positive attitudes to school.
- Behaviour is very good.
- Pupils relate very well to others and to adults.
- Pupils are confident and proud of their achievements.

### **Commentary**

10. Pupils' attitudes and behaviour are very good. Pupils say school is "brilliant" and are very keen to talk about the many lessons and activities they enjoy. Parents confirm this. Pupils work well as a whole class as well as in small groups and in pairs. They discuss sensibly and work co-operatively respecting the rights of others to learn. In the playground, pupils of all ages play together in a friendly way. Pupils say no one is left alone to feel "sad" as the buddy system is there to help and works well. 'Buddies' wear yellow caps so everyone knows who they are. They approach and comfort anyone who needs help. Likewise other pupils are free to go to them for assistance. Some Year 6 pupils are given the responsibility of being prefects

and they take pride in the contribution they make to the good order of the school. They speak confidently about their duties and parents agree that the responsibility raises their self-esteem. Prefects will also alert teachers to any problems and they say that when there are disagreements between children teachers deal with it very effectively. Bullying is very rare.

11. Pupils' social, moral, spiritual and cultural development is successfully promoted. Since the last inspection, teachers have benefited from training by the county religious education adviser in respect of multi-cultural provision. As a result, this aspect has improved and pupils are being well prepared for living in a diverse society. In assembly pupils are given time to reflect and in social group time they are encouraged to discuss their feelings and the feelings of others. When they study characters in stories and famous people in history they relate them to their own lives. The very effective way behaviour is managed includes sharing with the pupils the specific observable ways they are expected to conduct themselves. This gives the pupils a very good understanding of right from wrong.
12. Pupils are encouraged to take pride in their achievements and these are recognised through Celebration Assemblies, and Star of the Week awarded in each class. The School Council members take great pride in their work and are pleased they have raised money to improve the school playground by writing to the Governors. They are also proud that they have been instrumental in getting the school to raise money for the Tsunami Appeal. They feel that the teachers take full account of and value pupils' views. Pupils are successfully encouraged to think of others and several charities have recently benefited from pupil collections.
13. A wide range of out of school activities and a residential visit for older pupils also make a very good contribution to developing pupils' self and social awareness. The Creative Arts week with workshops by Indian Dancers and African artists helps to give the pupils a deeper understanding of life in a multicultural Britain.

## Attendance

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

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
School data	3.8	School data	0.2
National data	5.1	National data	0.4

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

## Exclusions

### **Ethnic background of pupils**

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

Categories used in the Annual School Census	No of pupils on roll	Number of fixed period exclusions	Number of permanent exclusions
White – British	239	0	1
Mixed – White and Black Caribbean	1	0	0
Chinese	1	0	0

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

14. The one exclusion last year was appropriately managed.

## QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

The school provides a good quality of education. Teaching is effective and leads to a good quality of learning. Assessment and the use of the information are very good in English and mathematics, but are not as strong in other subjects. Curricular provision is very good and the care and support given to pupils are good.

### Teaching and learning

Teaching and learning are good overall. Assessment is satisfactory overall.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils' writing skills are developed very well in English, but the opportunities to write in other subjects are not always suitably challenging.
- The organisation of the teaching of English and mathematics in classes formed on the basis of pupils' prior attainment ensures that most pupils achieve well.
- Members of staff are very willing to take on new initiatives.
- Very good teamwork between teachers and support staff ensures that work is planned well to meet the needs of all pupils.
- Very good analysis of data helps the school keep a close check on pupils' achievement in English and mathematics and the findings are used well to plan challenging work. However, there is no whole-school approach to assessment in other subjects.

### Commentary

15. During the inspection, teaching was very good or excellent in just over forty per cent of the lessons observed and was good or better in over eighty per cent. This indicates considerable strength in the teaching and its strong impact upon pupils' learning. It also demonstrates an improvement on the previous inspection when around twenty per cent of the lessons seen were judged to be very good and the percentage of good or better teaching was lower.

### Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 34 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
1 (3%)	13 (38%)	15 (44%)	5 (15%)	0 (0%)	0 (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.*

16. The school has made a good start with implementing the national Excellence and Enjoyment Strategy. Teachers are willing to take on new initiatives with regards to the curriculum in order to excite and stimulate pupils. For example, a cross-curricular approach to learning (The Critical Skills Programme) is currently being evaluated by the two Year 5 teachers. In these classes, the pupils are being presented with stimulating challenges, which are planned to meet the requirements of the curriculum and develop critical life skills. This approach is helping to ensure that every child has something to offer of value to the group and in so doing raises their self-esteem. Other initiatives include the use of video conferencing for gifted mathematicians.
17. From the observation of lessons and a scrutiny of pupils' books, the teaching of English, mathematics, science, religious education, art and design and physical education is good with some very good and occasionally excellent practice observed. Teaching in ICT is satisfactory overall. Insufficient evidence was found to make a secure judgement about the quality of teaching and learning in other subjects. However, a scrutiny of books in subjects such as history and geography shows that pupils are not always being provided with suitably challenging writing tasks.

18. The organisation of the teaching of literacy and numeracy in classes formed on the basis of pupils' prior attainment is being successful overall in ensuring that most pupils are challenged to reach their potential. In English lessons pupils are given good opportunities to develop their reading, writing, speaking and listening skills. Pupils' learning is well supported by the setting of individual targets. In mathematics, most pupils achieve well. During the week of the inspection, this was especially evident in a Year 6 higher attaining group. However, some teachers do not always plan challenging enough work for higher attaining pupils within the ability group they are teaching. As a result, some pupils become disinterested. In science, all teachers have a secure subject knowledge and plan their lessons well. The lessons observed included a strong practical element that helped pupils' understanding and enhanced the quality of learning.
19. Pupils respond well to their teachers' high expectations and comment that they find most lessons enjoyable. Consequently, learning is good and often very good. Where teaching was excellent, as in a Year 6 numeracy lesson, pupils were challenged for every minute of the lesson to use and apply their mathematical skills very well.
20. The teaching of pupils who have special educational needs is good overall because teachers plan appropriate activities that are matched well to pupils' needs and abilities. The school has appropriately identified some gifted and talented pupils and does its utmost to provide effectively for their needs. For example, a small number of gifted mathematicians take part in video conferencing with two other schools under the guidance of a specialist mathematics teacher. The work they are asked to do provides a good level of challenge and enables them to utilise well their undoubted expertise in the subject.
21. The means of assessing pupils' achievements are satisfactory overall. The headteacher has rightly identified assessment in the foundation subjects as one of the school's main priorities for development in order to raise achievement. There have been some good developments recently. For example, there are very effective assessment procedures in English and mathematics. In these subjects, teachers regularly use a range of appropriate assessments, including statutory and optional National Curriculum tests. The information gathered from these tests is analysed carefully to identify strengths and weaknesses, to guide teachers' planning and to set targets in order to improve pupils' attainment. However, in other subjects there is no whole-school approach to assessment and the use made of the information.
22. The school makes good use of the skills of individual teachers in some subjects such as ICT and physical education. Pupils of all attainment levels benefit greatly from their knowledge and expertise. Teachers also make good links between different subjects and this has a beneficial effect upon the quality of learning and the progress pupils make.
23. Teachers manage their pupils very well and the very good relationships between adults and between pupils and adults mean that a positive climate for learning is established. They make good use of teaching assistants in supporting the needs of small groups or individual pupils.

## **The curriculum**

The very good quality curriculum provides very good opportunities for enrichment. The opportunities for pupils to take part in physical educational activities both in and out of school are excellent. The accommodation and resources have a good impact on pupils' achievements.

## **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- English, mathematics and science have a high profile in the school's curriculum, enabling pupils to achieve well.
- The school has made a good start with implementing the national Excellence and Enjoyment Strategy.
- The improved accommodation is helping to drive up standards.

- Writing tasks in subjects other than English are not always suitably challenging.
- Opportunities for pupils' to take part in sporting activities in and out of school are excellent.

### **Commentary**

24. The quality and range of learning opportunities for pupils are very good and have improved significantly since the previous inspection. All subjects required by the National Curriculum are taught, with English, mathematics and science given good emphasis. Teachers take successful account of the national strategies for teaching literacy and numeracy and, as a result, most pupils achieve well over time and are well prepared for the next stage in their education. There is a clear framework for developing pupils' knowledge, skills and understanding, although there is still scope for improving the match of work to pupils' capabilities especially with regards to writing activities in subjects such as history, geography and religious education. The school has already identified this.
25. The school has made a good start with implementing the guidance contained within the national Excellence and Enjoyment Strategy, which emphasises the importance of an innovative approach to the curriculum in order to excite and challenge pupils. For example, the two Year 5 teachers are currently in the process of piloting a cross-curricular approach to delivering the curriculum using the Critical Skills Methodology whereby learning is given real purpose as children utilise their skills and team abilities to develop knowledge and solve problems. The aim is to provide pupils with the skills for successful lifelong learning alongside meeting National Curriculum requirements. During the inspection, Year 5 pupils achieved very well as a result of this approach to learning. They made significant strides in their understanding of the water cycle and the part played by evaporation and condensation in the process because the activities were carefully planned and well-led. All pupils were involved in the learning and experienced a sense of success. The school, quite rightly, is monitoring and evaluating this approach to judge how well pupils are responding and achieving over time before implementing it further.
26. The accommodation is better than it was at the time of the previous inspection and is used increasingly to drive up standards. Four classrooms have been extended in size and one new classroom built on. The ICT suite, for example, and the introduction of interactive whiteboards in some classrooms have improved pupils' attitudes and achievement in several subjects. Though adjustments to the internal structure have improved pupils' concentration because distracting noise levels are no longer an issue, you still have to go through one classroom to get to other parts of the building, which can interrupt the flow of a lesson. The development of the school grounds has impacted positively upon pupils' behaviour and attitudes. They enjoy being able to use the adventure playground and the seating provided around the school building and under the shade of trees. Colourful and attractive displays and a satisfactory range of resources for learning help to motivate pupils and make a positive contribution to their learning across the curriculum.
27. Teachers ensure that girls and boys have equal access to all aspects of the curriculum with no noticeable differences in the standards achieved during the inspection. The school's provision for pupils with special educational needs is very good and they receive close attention and guidance. The impact of additional support from classroom assistants for these pupils helps to secure their learning. All Individual Education Plans are very good and include sensible, clearly stated targets, which are reviewed regularly.
28. A very good range of extra-curricular activities supports the curriculum very effectively. Significant numbers of pupils actively participate in an excellent range of competitive sporting activities including athletics, football, cricket and netball. The school's very good provision for physical education and its success in developing pupils' skills have been recognised. The school has been awarded the Gold Active Mark for sport and has the Football Association Charter Standard for Schools.

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

Pupils' care, welfare, health and safety are good. The support, advice and guidance given to pupils are good. The involvement of pupils, through seeking, valuing and acting on their views, is very good.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Parents agree that pupils are happy to attend the school and are well cared for.
- The involvement of pupils in the life of the school is good.
- Pupils work in a safe, clean and healthy environment.
- Induction of pupils into the life of the school is good.
- Pupils have a wide range of responsibilities.

### **Commentary**

29. Pupils work in a safe, clean and healthy environment. An annual health and safety inspection is undertaken and action taken where appropriate. However, though some risk assessments are carried out, they are not completed systematically at the moment.
30. The care and welfare of pupils has a high priority in the school. For example, healthy eating and the drinking of water are encouraged and the school nurse holds a monthly 'drop-in' advice session for parents and Year 6 pupils. There are four members of staff who are fully qualified to administer first aid. The school has decided not to have a structured approach to sex education, but features of the personal, social and health education programme such as personal safety give pupils the skills and knowledge to make decisions that affect their lives in and out of school. The school is also very keen to encourage the emotional stability of the pupils and, to this end, training is being provided for staff in areas such as counselling. A SERIS (Supporting Emotional Resilience In Schools) worker is employed to support pupils' emotional wellbeing and a child protection policy is fully in place. The headteacher is responsible for its implementation and has received the necessary training. She has ensured that all staff are aware of what to look for and what action to take.
31. Relationships in the school are very good and pupils confirm that teachers care about them and there is someone they can turn to if they have a problem. The educational and personal support and guidance given to pupils is successful in helping to raise pupils' achievement. Parents agree that pupils are happy and well cared for. The induction of pupils from the Infant School is good. Pupils visit for half a day prior to entry. A meeting is held for parents and a welcome pack is provided.
32. When appropriate, pupils with special educational needs are provided with Individual Educational Plans containing suitable targets. The school has been successful in improving the attitudes, involvement and achievement of boys. This has been achieved by looking at lesson content, the type of books in the library, separate boy and girl classes, and by breaking lessons into short sections or chunks. A co-ordinator for gifted and talented pupils has been appointed and different learning styles are encouraged.
33. The involvement of pupils in the life of the school is very good. Pupils are confident and friendly. The School Council is comprised of two elected representatives from each class. They meet fortnightly and meet with the school's senior management team. Representatives attend the local school council forum. Pupils produce a school newspaper and this is swapped with the link schools. Pupils also contribute to the school's newsletter.
34. Pupils have a wide range of responsibilities in class and around the school. For example, there are prefects, peer supporters, buddies, monitors and talking partners in class. Some Year 6 pupils take the 'Junior Playscheme' qualification so they can help to organise games for other pupils at play and lunchtime. In classes there are 'worry boxes' where pupils can

express any concerns that are worrying them. All Year 5 pupils benefit from an outdoor residential experience.

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

The effectiveness of the school's links with parents is good. The links with the local community are good. The school's links with other schools and colleges are good.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Parents have a very positive view of the school.
- The pupils' annual reports set targets for improvement and tell parents what their child knows, understands and can do in each subject.
- The vast majority of parents take an active interest in their child's work and this assists learning.
- Arrangements for the transfer to secondary school are good.
- The school is supportive of local elderly residents.

### **Commentary**

35. The school provides a good range of general information for parents, including informative weekly newsletters and a list of the curriculum topics their children will undertake so that they can offer support. The prospectus is in parent-friendly language and pupils' annual reports include targets for improvement. There are two opportunities a year for parents to discuss their children's progress with the class teacher and most parents take up this opportunity. The school has improved the presentation of information it sends out to parents since the previous inspection.
36. The school operates an open-door policy, but very few parents help in the school. However, Age Concern volunteers come in to support the work of the school and their contribution is much appreciated. The Parents' Teachers' Association (PTA) is an active group, which raises substantial sums of money for the school through events such as the Christmas Fair and also organises a range of social activities. The school consults parents and there is an annual parents' questionnaire.
37. Information packs are provided for parents new to the school. Training is given for parents to support their child's learning. The vast majority of parents take an active interest in their child's work, including their homework. Pupils who have difficulty doing homework are allowed to do it at lunchtime. Some class teachers supply parents with their child's targets, on a half-termly basis.
38. The school has close links with its local community. For example, the school choir sings at residential homes and the local hospital. Harvest Festival hampers are given to local elderly residents who are also invited to coffee mornings and Carol Services. As well as open days that bring the community into the school, the school's creative arts week attracts local artists. Pupils raise money for charities, like 'Barrow Action Romania' and a representative of the Blind Society comes into the school to work with the pupils. A local business provides personnel support for ICT and design and technology. The school grounds are used by a local football team.
39. As at the time of the previous inspection, the school enjoys close links with neighbouring high schools and infant schools. Most pupils move to the Thorncliffe School and are able to spend time there prior to transfer. The staff from the two schools work well together. Sporting links are very good and pupils compete in a range of sports against other local schools. The school has a link with Dowdales School, which enhances its music and dance provision. Students from three secondary schools and two further education colleges come into the school to carry out their work experience. Teaching students from St Martin's College, Lancaster, carry out their teaching practice in the school. The school has good links with a small rural school

and a multicultural school in Manchester. Such links are providing the pupils with a good insight into the lives of children from varied backgrounds.

## **LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT**

The leadership and management of the school are good overall. The leadership of the headteacher is very good and she is supported effectively by key members of staff. The governance of the school is good.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The headteacher provides very good leadership.
- Subject co-ordinators have a good understanding of their subject's strengths and weaknesses.
- The school analyses its performance accurately in English and mathematics, and takes the necessary action to address weakness through good development planning. However, assessment in other subjects is less well developed.
- The management of provision for pupils' with special educational needs is very good.

### **Commentary**

40. The leadership and management of the school were key strengths when the school was last inspected, and this is still the case. The school is continuing to be very well led and managed by the new headteacher, who has only been in post for a short period of time. She has high expectations for pupils' personal and academic achievement and communicates these clearly to all those connected with the school community. The headteacher has already successfully put in place initiatives to improve the quality of education even further. For example, the focus on developing pupils' critical skills is proving to be successful and members of staff with posts of responsibility are more involved in the leadership of the school. She has created within the school a culture of self-evaluation. For example, under her leadership the school has established very good systems to track pupils' progress in both English and mathematics. The information is being used well to ensure that pupils improve on their previous best. As a result, standards in English, mathematics and science all improved this year.
41. The headteacher believes very strongly in the importance of running a school where each individual matters, and this is evident in the care that is taken to support pupils and staff. As a result, there is a very caring ethos with teachers providing equally for all pupils whatever their attainment, race or background. The headteacher is well supported by the deputy headteacher and makes good use of the particular skills and abilities of specific members of staff not just teachers. This approach is successful in ensuring that the expertise and confidence of staff are developed, and that there is a team approach to school improvement. The headteacher is held in high regard by staff, governors, parents and pupils.
42. The school has made good improvements since the last inspection. There were no key issues, but minor issues have all been successfully addressed. Standards in English and mathematics have risen. Appropriate procedures have been put in place to monitor teaching and classroom provision and, as a result, the quality of teaching and the pace of lessons have improved. The school does not now have an open plan layout and distracting noise levels are no longer an issue.
43. The governance of the school is good. The governors are highly committed, share a common vision and make a valuable contribution to the leadership and management of the school. They fulfil their statutory duties effectively and have an enthusiastic and committed approach to supporting and challenging the school. An appropriate committee structure has been established, the results of statutory testing are debated thoroughly and governors have a good knowledge of the school's strengths and weaknesses. The chair of governors visits the school frequently, works closely with the headteacher and ensures that meetings are well



focused. Governors are appropriately involved in school planning and, by asking the headteacher challenging questions, hold her to account and act as a critical friend.

44. The overall management of the school is good. The office manager is highly effective in ensuring that day-to-day administrative systems are working well. Since the previous inspection, subject co-ordinators have continued to play a leading role in curricular development. Through monitoring teachers' planning and scrutinising pupils' work they get a good understanding of the strengths and weaknesses in their subjects. They use this information effectively to draw up action plans to address any significant issues. The results of statutory and non-statutory tests in English and mathematics are rigorously analysed and all staff made aware of areas for improvement as well as good achievement. However, assessment procedures and the use of the information are not as strong in other subjects.
45. The school's policy for performance management of staff is being implemented effectively. Targets properly reflect both whole-school priorities and individual needs and all staff have ample opportunities to benefit from training courses.
46. The management of the provision for pupils with special educational needs is very good. The co-ordinator provides very good leadership and has a very good understanding of the needs of the pupils. She is well informed and liaises closely with support staff. The contribution made by the classroom assistants is a particular strength of the provision. The co-ordinator responsible for the provision of gifted and talented pupils has ensured that pupils are identified and that work is provided that meets their needs.

#### **Financial information**

##### ***Financial information for the year April 2003 to March 2004***

2003/04 Income and expenditure (£)		Balances (£)	
Total income	500,219	Balance from previous year	52,517
Total expenditure	492,351	Balance carried forward to the next	60,385
Expenditure per pupil	2,169		

47. Financial planning is very good. The school improvement plan is carefully costed, the annual budget is debated rigorously and the principles of best value are applied well to ensure that services and resources provide good value for money. The most recent audit report found that the school's financial systems and procedures were of a good standard. The school's financial reserves are well above the recommended level, but the money has been appropriately set aside to ensure staffing levels remain high despite a predicted fall in pupil numbers.

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

## **SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGE 2**

### **ENGLISH**

Provision in English is **good**.

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

- Standards are well above average and pupils are achieving well.
- Teaching is good.
- Assessment procedures are very good.
- The leadership and management of English are very effective.
- Some writing tasks in subjects other than English are not sufficiently challenging.

#### **Commentary**

48. Achievement is good and pupils are making good progress. Standards are well above average and this represents good improvement since the last inspection when they were in line with national expectations.
49. Pupils enjoy reading and achieve well. Teachers and learning support assistants have been consistent and successful in giving pupils effective strategies to improve their reading and as a result the quality of learning is good. For example, one lower ability pupil was able to explain that he divided a word into syllables to decipher it, whilst another said he would look at the pictures for clues. In Year 6, pupils show very good levels of comprehension, reading with good diction and expression showing they understand the subtleties of the text. They give clear reasons why they like certain books or authors and give informed reasons for their choices; one pupil cited Michael Lawrence "because he's hilarious". Pupils also can use contents pages, indexes and glossaries to successfully find information from books. The school has recently improved its library provision, including the range, quality and quantity of books. The school is aware that the library is not yet being used to its full advantage and has plans to develop it further as a learning resource. Pupils confirm that they would like to use it more and to be allowed to take more books home.
50. Pupils achieve well in writing during their English lessons and standards are well above average. Year 6 pupils can write clearly and in a well organised way and are well aware of the different approaches needed when writing for different purposes, for example, for a letter or a poem. Pupils display a range of writing techniques analysing why a poem is humorous, or considering the behaviour of characters in Aesop's fables. As a result, writing is interesting, creative and imaginative. Writing for English lessons is well presented and pupils apply the skills of spelling, grammar, punctuation and handwriting with increasing proficiency.
51. Pupils' attainment in speaking and listening is well above average. When asked to discuss their work with a partner or in groups they express ideas and opinions with a very good level of logical and analytical thinking as when asked to identify the activities described in a poem. When describing various names used in the poem they commented on the fact that there was alliteration in certain nicknames. They respond very well to questioning with extended answers using a wide-ranging vocabulary.
52. Teaching of English is good and at times very good and this leads to good achievement. The planning is effective and teachers give good opportunities for pupils to develop their skills in reading, writing, speaking and listening. The quality of learning is good because teachers ensure work is well matched to pupils' level of understanding and all pupils, including the most able, are challenged well. Pupils' learning is well supported by the setting of individual

targets. Pupils know their targets and so know what they have to do to improve. Marking which gives encouragement as well as advice for improvement is also helping to raise pupils' achievement. Learning is also supported effectively by homework.

53. Teachers assess individual pupil progress carefully and they use this information to focus on bringing about improvement. A good example of this is the identification of weakness in boys' writing and the introduction of boys' only lessons once a week. This work uses texts and stimuli specific to boys' interests like, "The 10 things found in the Grim Reaper's Pocket" and is resulting in some exciting and vivid writing as seen in one boy's description of a water fight in the garden with his dad and granddad.
54. Support staff work very well with teachers to help pupils who have been identified as having special educational needs. For example, a group of Year 4 pupils were ably helped with their reading by a teaching assistant because she consistently applied the school's agreed approach to the teaching of reading.
55. The co-ordination of English is very good. The subject leader is knowledgeable in her subject. She has time to monitor and, as a result, she has a very good idea how well pupils are progressing, how to identify weaknesses and how to promote improvement across the school.

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

56. Overall, pupils' language and literacy skills are fostered satisfactorily in work across the curriculum, but there is scope for improvement. The school's strong focus on thinking skills, discussion and collaborative work is accompanied by a sustained emphasis on the development of vocabulary. Pupils are provided with good opportunities to talk about their work in all subjects and can use technical terms correctly and with understanding. They are encouraged to read for a variety of purposes but opportunities for writing in subjects other than English are too often not sufficiently challenging. Single word or single sentence answers and use of worksheets which only allow for simple answers in subjects like religious education, science, history and geography, limit pupils' opportunities for more reflective and insightful extended writing.

## **MATHEMATICS**

Provision in mathematics is **good**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Standards of attainment are well above average and pupils are achieving well.
- Pupils are challenged to use their numerical skills to solve mathematical problems.
- The quality of teaching is good overall.
- In some classes insufficient account is taken of the differences in attainment within the ability groups.
- The co-ordinator carries out her duties very well. There is a very good approach to assessing pupils' mathematical skills and the findings are used effectively to address possible areas of weakness.
- More opportunities need to be provided for pupils to use their very good mathematical skills in other subjects.

### **Commentary**

57. The previous inspection found standards to be above average. Inspection evidence shows that there has been an improvement in overall standards and they are now well above average. This represents a good level of achievement. During the inspection there was no significant difference in achievement between different groups of pupils including those with special educational needs.

58. A strength of the school is the good provision made for gifted and talented pupils. In Year 6, for example, inter-active links with two other schools using video conferencing allows gifted mathematicians to be taught by a specialist mathematics teacher. A discussion held with one of the pupils involved demonstrates that she/he found the work challenging, but very enjoyable.
59. Standards of attainment are well above average when compared to schools nationally. However, when compared to similar schools standards are average but are improving. There are three main reasons for this. The teaching of mathematics in classes organised on prior attainment is working well in that most teachers are able to target work more effectively at pupils' actual levels of attainment. Secondly, very good use is made of assessment information in ensuring that possible weaknesses are highlighted and dealt with quickly. For example, in all age groups additional lessons have been provided to ensure that pupils boost their skills in calculator usage. Thirdly, a high focus is being given to developing pupils' ability to select the most appropriate strategy to work out a calculation or solve a problem.
60. Pupils of all attainment levels are being suitably challenged in developing their basic number skills and achieve well. They enjoy manipulating numbers and can quickly and accurately apply known number facts. In Year 6, they can calculate speedily the answers to challenging problems, for example, percentage discounts or the size of internal or external angles. Classroom assistants support individual pupils with special educational needs very well. As a result, they make the same progress as other pupils.
61. The quality of teaching and learning is good overall. Pupils are taught in age group classes based on prior attainment and most achieve well. During the week of the inspection, this was especially evident in a Year 6 higher attaining group. In this lesson, excellent teaching resulted in pupils having to apply their knowledge of the properties of triangles well to solve challenging questions. What was very apparent in this lesson was that both pupils and the teacher really enjoyed mathematics.
62. All teachers have a very good relationship with the pupils and pupils' confidence is bolstered so that, when given the opportunity, they willingly tackle problems. During the week of the inspection, a group of lower attaining pupils in Year 3 were very keen to use a computer programme to help them find answers to questions related to the weight of objects. This was because the teacher knew her class well and made the lesson interesting by utilising ICT. Classroom assistants provided very good support. However, occasionally teachers do not plan challenging enough work for higher attaining pupils within the ability group they are teaching. As a result some pupils become disinterested.
63. The co-ordinator is conscientious and provides very good leadership. She has good subject knowledge. The school has in place a very good assessment system with the information used very well to set targets for groups of pupils. The school recognises that the next step is to involve pupils more in setting relevant individual targets for improvement.

### **Mathematics across the curriculum**

64. A survey of pupils' work shows that they are provided with a satisfactory range of opportunities to use their mathematics skills in most other subjects. For example, good links are made with a historical topic based on the Mary Rose to enable pupils to develop their mathematical skills further. In ICT, pupils produce their own spreadsheets to record statistical information linked to their work in science on the theme of healthy eating. However, bearing in mind pupils' very good mathematical skills, more 'in depth' opportunities should be provided for pupils to use their mathematical skills in other subjects in order to consolidate their knowledge and understanding.

## SCIENCE

Provision in science is **good**.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards are well above national expectations in Year 6 and pupils are achieving well.
- Teaching is good overall and ensures that pupils make good progress.
- Older pupils do not take enough responsibility for their own learning.
- There is no whole school approach to the assessment of pupils' progress in all aspects of science.
- Leadership and management of the subject are very good.

### Commentary

65. Standards achieved in science are well above national expectations in Year 6 and this represents good achievement. Current standards are consistent with those reached in the national tests in Year 6 in 2004 and match the high standards found when the school was last inspected. All pupils, including those with special educational needs and the most capable, make good progress in the subject.
66. The school carefully analysis its National Curriculum test results and takes appropriate action to remedy any areas of concern. For example, it was noticed that in 2004 girls' attainment had risen for the fifth consecutive year whilst boys' attainment was in line with the previous year. Staff have concentrated on strategies to combat this trend and are carefully monitoring their effectiveness. Actions taken include the introduction of smart boards to increase the amount of visual learning which is a proven help to boys in particular and the introduction of more practical work. During the inspection no significant difference in the performance of boys and girls, or the very few pupils from minority ethnic groups, was noticed.
67. A careful examination of work completed in science books and discussions held with pupils shows that all elements of the subject are covered thoroughly. During the inspection, Year 3 pupils made good progress when learning about the different types of teeth and how we use them, while Year 4 pupils conducting an experiment to show that some solids dissolve in water to form a solution. In Year 5, pupils showed that they had a good understanding of the water cycle and the process of evaporation and condensation involved. In Year 6, pupils worked in groups and conducted a number of investigation to show that mould on food is caused by micro-organisms and that different conditions can effect the rate at which it decays.
68. The school has recently focused on improving provision and the quality of teaching and learning with regards to scientific investigations. The introduction of a standard Scientific Investigation Planning Board has brought about a more formal and organised whole-school approach to the carrying out of an experiment. It is particularly successful with the younger pupils in ensuring that they are taught and understand the main elements of an investigation. It was very noticeable during the inspection that younger pupils have a good understanding of what makes a test fair. However, teachers do not provide older pupils with the opportunity to set up their own investigations or choose their own method of recording their findings, as the improved practice has not had time to impact upon older children.
69. As at the time of the previous inspection, the quality of teaching and learning is good overall and, as a result, pupils make good progress. All teachers have a secure subject knowledge and plan their lessons well. Individual lessons form part of a coherent science programme which ensures that pupils' key skills and knowledge are being developed systematically as they move through the school. Teachers know exactly what they expect pupils to learn and they explain clearly at the beginning of each lesson what the class is going to do and what the learning objectives are. The lessons observed were well structured and included a strong practical element that helped pupils' understanding and enhanced the quality of learning.

Comments such 'Science is about finding out' encouraged pupils to question and not be afraid of coming up with a wrong conclusion. Scientific vocabulary is introduced and reinforced effectively and tasks capture and maintain pupils' interest. Teachers give pupils useful verbal feedback during lessons and their written comments in pupils' books often identify targets as suggestions for improving future work such as 'Try to add more detail.'

70. The introduction of in-school themed science days has given pupils the opportunity to experience new ways of learning. For example, a 'Bright Sparks' day held in school last term entailed a specialist instructor in electricity working with staff and pupils from Years 5 and 6. The activities the pupils were involved in helped significantly to improve their knowledge and understanding of electricity. Not only did the pupils find it fun but it also raised their awareness of science in their daily lives.
71. The leadership and management of the subject are very good. The co-ordinator is very well informed about the subject. His analysis of statutory test results is very thorough, and he helps teachers to formulate strategies to improve the achievement of pupils. A whole-school approach to the assessment and recording of pupils' achievements in their scientific investigations has been introduced and effective use is now being made of the information. However, this does not apply to other aspects of the subject. The school is aware of this and is in the process of putting into place a standard approach to the use of assessment information.

## **INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY**

Provision in ICT is **satisfactory** overall.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The ICT suite is being used well to develop pupils' skills.
- Good use is being made of the interactive whiteboards and as a result pupils are eager to learn.
- Resources have been improved. However, resources for teaching control and modelling skills are limited.

### **Commentary**

72. Standards match those expected nationally and have been maintained since the time of the previous inspection despite national expectations in the subject being raised considerably during that time. Most pupils are achieving at least satisfactorily as they move from year-to-year, with some good achievement directly related to the quality of teaching in lessons. What is very clear is that the school recognises the importance of ICT as an aid to learning. For example, innovative practice involving video conferencing is being developed to help to cater for the needs of gifted and talented mathematicians.
73. An examination of previous work and discussions held show that pupils in Year 6 have good word-processing skills, which they use to good effect when, for example, producing their own poetry or stories. Most choose an eye-catching letter heading and suitable font, and cut and paste pictures to enliven the text. They have produced good PowerPoint presentations based on the story of the three pigs including voice-overs. What is less apparent is the development of pupils' skills in control and modelling and this is directly related to lack of suitable equipment in this aspect. The school is aware of the need to build up resources.
74. The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory overall with some very good features and as a result standards are set to rise. A developing feature of the teaching and of pupils' learning is the way in which some lessons start with a whole-class session around the computerised whiteboards that are in some classes. Teachers use the whiteboards well to provide compelling demonstrations of the skills to be learnt. The quality of this resource and its good use mean that pupils are eager to learn. When pupils practise and develop their skills

in the computer suite, their success is aided by the way in which they have been taught how to work co-operatively. The presence of additional adult support in some lessons ensures that good attention is given to supporting different levels of learning need. However, support is not always available. Two lessons seen during the week of the inspection were of a very good quality. Pupils benefited from being given clear instructions about what they had to do and were given time to practise and refine their skills. For example, in one lesson they produced a very detailed and accurate plan of their classroom.

75. Work in ICT is now being planned systematically to enhance learning in other subjects and this is helped by the presence in most classes of interactive whiteboards. The ICT suite itself is adequate and the staff are beginning to make the most of the facility. The co-ordinator provides very good advice to other teachers and also in-serve training.

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

76. The use of ICT in other subjects to develop and consolidate pupils' skills is broadly satisfactory. There is some evidence of its effective use as a teaching tool in some subjects such as mathematics and for pupils to support their learning in design and technology, history, mathematics and art and design. In addition, there were some examples in other subjects, such as PSHE of its use in producing posters. However, the general lack of substantial evidence of its use reflects the school's own identification of the need to develop its use across the curriculum further.

### **HUMANITIES**

77. Only one lesson was seen in history and geography. It is, therefore not possible to make a secure overall judgement about provision, teaching and learning in these subjects. However, evidence from work in books, displays and discussions with pupils indicates that pupils are acquiring sufficient knowledge, skills and understanding to reach the nationally expected standard in both subjects. At the time of the last inspection, standards in geography were found to be average and above average in history.
78. The quality of teaching and learning were good in the lessons observed. In the **history** lesson seen pupils were asked to work like archaeologists and interpret the contents of bags full of artefacts from modern everyday life. They were working in groups and were expected to classify the artefacts and arrange a presentation showing what these demonstrated about modern life. The groups worked enthusiastically but some opportunities were missed to move them on with their thinking and test out new ideas when the teacher missed chances to intervene.
79. In the **geography** lesson seen pupils' technical vocabulary was developed well as they talked about the 'scientific processes' in the water cycle and how it relates to the formation of rivers. They confidently used words such as 'evaporation, condensation, precipitation and collection'. Again the pupils were expected to work in groups and their roles in the group were carefully identified to suit their particular skills and to challenge them. For example, some were expected to be scribes and others artists. The work was carefully structured so the pupils were clear about their task and what they were expected to learn. The lesson was well supported by both Year 5 teachers and support assistants. Staff encouraged the pupils to view their work critically so they were able to improve and as a result pupils' learning was good.
80. A scrutiny of pupils' work across the school in geography showed that, where pupils are given the opportunity for extended pieces of writing, they produce thoughtful insights as in the work describing Bombay. In history, they have produced some imaginative and realistic accounts of events as in the letter from an Iceni Warrior retelling a battle scene. However, where there is an overuse of worksheets and colouring exercises, pupils are not sufficiently challenged in a way that deepens their understanding of the subject and opportunities for practising their

writing skills are lost. Work on the invasion of Britain done by Year 4 entailed cutting and sticking pictures which sequenced the events and a worksheet completed by Year 6 on the Victorians required one word answers “rich” or “poor” to explain class difference. Similarly in Geography at Year 4, work on planning a holiday resulted in single sentence answers.

81. The co-ordination of both subjects is satisfactory and there is clear planning based on national guidance to ensure pupils are gaining appropriate skills and knowledge as they move through the school. There is, however, no whole-school approach to assessment and how the information is to be used to improve standards and provision. Teachers make good use of a range of visits and artefacts such as the display of replica ancient Greek objects in Year 3 to support learning.

## Religious education

The provision in religious education is **good** overall.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching is now good.
- The subject makes a good contribution to pupils’ spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
- Pupils are encouraged to relate religious principles to their own lives.
- The opportunities for pupils to write are not sufficiently challenging.
- Assessment is underdeveloped.

### Commentary

82. As at the time of the previous inspection, standards by Year 6 are in line with the Cumbria Agreed Syllabus. Pupils in Year 6 say that they find the subject interesting and show satisfactory levels of factual knowledge, for example, about holy books, festivals and the different places of worship of the religions studied.
83. The scheme of work for religious education has been reviewed and standards are improving throughout the school. Less emphasis is being placed on writing to record learning and more emphasis on role-play, discussion, drama and hot seating to make the learning more relevant. As a result, greater depth is now being achieved in pupils’ understanding because the focus has moved from learning about religion to what can be learned from/through religion. For example, through discussion pupils in Year 3 demonstrated good perception and a shared understanding of the very different qualities that constitute ‘leadership’ and then made relevant links to the leadership shown by Moses.
84. During the week of the inspection the quality of teaching and learning was good in the lessons observed. However, the improvements made to the way the subject is taught have not had sufficient time to impact positively upon the standards achieved by the pupils in Year 6. The different teaching techniques now being used suit pupils’ preferred learning styles and as a result the quality of learning is good. For example, the high priority being given to discussion and working in groups provide good opportunities for pupils to explore issues that affect people of all religions and are relevant to their own lives such as prayer and worship. Though, the school has decided to place less emphasis on writing to record learning, teachers do not always ensure that when pupils are expected to write, the tasks are appropriately challenging. Visits to the Manjushri Centre (a Buddhist Temple) help to give pupils a deeper understanding of one of the world religions they are studying.
85. Religious education makes a good contribution to pupils’ spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. This is evident from pupils’ attitudes and behaviour, which show that the teaching of religious education is not about imparting knowledge, but about challenging pupils’ thinking and perceptions.



86. Leadership and management of the subject are good. The co-ordinator has worked hard to ensure that teachers share her vision for teaching the subject and have sufficient guidance and resources to help them. Good improvements have been made since the previous inspection. The policy and scheme of work has been updated to incorporate both national guidance and the locally agreed syllabus. The school is aware of the need to develop a consistent whole school approach to assessment and how the information is used to inform future planning. Resources are good.

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

87. Owing to inspection priorities, insufficient evidence was obtained to make secure judgements about standards or the quality of teaching and learning in **design and technology** and **music**. However, teachers' planning indicates that, throughout the school, pupils are introduced to the full design and make process and cover an appropriate range of work. Photographic evidence in the co-ordinator's file of work completed in previous years would indicate that pupils are achieving well in the subject and take a pride in their work. For example, pupils in Year 3 investigate different kinds of photograph frames before designing and making their own whilst, in Year 4, the pupils have made their own storybooks and included moving pictures. Pupils in Year 6 have produced some very good hand puppets for use behind a boxed theatre. The quality of the finished product in this class was above that found in most schools and had been carefully planned out and evaluated. The pupils made good use of ICT in this project to record how they went about doing the work. The curriculum is suitably planned, using national guidelines, and there are sufficient resources.
88. In **music** the standard of singing in acts of worship and hymn practices is good and pupils demonstrate a good sense of beat and dynamics. A small group of recorder players accompanied the singing very well and demonstrated good instrumental skills. In the lessons seen, good opportunities were provided for pupils to develop their skills in composing and playing music in response to a poem or to a part of a story. The school provides some opportunities for pupils to learn to play orchestral instruments. Evidence from video recordings clearly shows that music is an important part of school life and plays a prominent part in end of term productions which are of a very good quality. The school has a suitable range of instruments, but some are worn and in need of replacement.

### **Art and design**

Provision in art and design is **good**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Standards are above average and pupils achieve well.
- Pupils use the work of famous artists effectively to inform their own work.
- Good links are made with other subjects.
- There is no whole-school approach to assessment and the use of the information.
- The leadership and management of the subject are good.

### **Commentary**

89. The school has maintained the good standards in art and design which were found when the school was last inspected. The subject has a high profile and there is evidence of good work in each year group. For example, Year 3 pupils have looked at the work of L. S. Lowry and have created their own pictures of an industrial landscape that reflect elements of the artist's work very effectively. In Year 4, pupils achieved well when making bold abstract interpretations of self-portraits, after discussing the work of Picasso. Year 6 pupils have sketched and coloured figures engaged in a variety of movements and actions such as performing a cartwheel, undertaking a handstand, running or dancing. The work on display was of a high quality and reflected good skill development. A scrutiny of pupils' portfolios of

work completed in previous years confirms that good standards are well established and that effective links are made with other subjects such as history when producing Tudor portraits. Pupils would, however, benefit from more opportunities to create three-dimensional art.

90. Although only a few lessons have been observed during the inspection, it is clear from pupils' work that teaching and learning are good. Teachers are enthusiastic about the subject and have high expectations for pupils' technical achievements. As a result, pupils try hard and produce good quality work. In a good lesson observed during the inspection, the teacher encouraged the pupils to consider carefully the materials they were going to use to create a collage of 'The Iron Man'. She was not over-directive, but allowed the pupils to experiment with the range of resources provided. However, there was no evidence during the lesson of pupils being allowed to evaluate their own work and that of others in order to improve its quality. An extra curricular Art Club is available weekly to extend the performance of gifted and talented artists. Art work from a local secondary is displayed around the school and is evaluated by Art Club students to develop their own work.
91. The subject is well led and managed by the headteacher who is the co-ordinator. She is very enthusiastic and has a good knowledge and understanding of the subject. She monitors teachers' plans and children's work in order to ensure that pupils are being presented with an appropriate range of experiences. There is currently no whole-school approach to assessment and use of the information to inform future planning. Resources are good.

## **Physical education**

Provision in physical education is **good**.

### **Main strengths and weakness**

- Pupils achieve well.
- Teaching is good overall with some very good features.
- There are excellent opportunities for pupils to take part in a range of sporting activities out of school.
- The leadership and management of the subject are very good.

### **Commentary**

92. As at the time of the previous inspection, standards in most of the aspects of physical education inspected were above average and the school has maintained its high commitment to the subject.
93. The school offers a very good programme of physical education activities through the year, including orienteering and swimming. It provides an excellent variety of sporting activities outside school and has improved the number of extra-curricular activities on offer since the last inspection. Very good links with the local Sports College have been made. Pupils are keen to participate in the many after school clubs and inter-school matches. For example, a group of pupils were observed taking part in an after-school gymnastics club. The standard of their performance was well above that found in most schools. The school's teams have been highly successful in competing with other schools.
94. In the lessons observed, teaching was of a good quality overall. In one very good lesson in Year 3, good links were made with the history curriculum in a well performed dance enactment of a Greek battle. Pupils were also observed in another lesson linking movements together well when performing a dance based on Ted Hughes' story, The Iron Man. The level of performance in this lesson was very high.

95. The school has access to some very good resources for physical education. For example, during the week of the inspection very good use was made of the excellent resources of the lottery funded 'Hoops' Sports Centre to develop pupils' basketball skills. The school has ensured that all classes have a good amount of time available for pupils to develop their skills in all aspects of the subject.
96. The co-ordinator provides very effective leadership and along with other members of staff gives up time after school to ensure that pupils have very good opportunities to take part in a wide range of activities. As such, provision in the subject is one of the school's strengths.

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

97. Personal, social and health education and citizenship were sampled, as not enough lessons were seen to support an overall teaching and learning judgement. The school provides good opportunities for pupils to learn respect for the values and beliefs of other pupils and adults, and to develop their own self-worth and confidence. Planned discussion sessions (circle time) highlight the need to be aware of people's feelings. For example, pupils in a Year 6 class identified closely with the theme of 'Kindness' during circle time and showed good awareness of the need for this in their every day lives.
98. The school views pupils' personal development as important and addresses it well in several ways. The outcomes of the school's approach are clearly seen in the good attitudes, behaviour, relationships and personal development of its pupils. Through class discussions and the School Council, pupils are given very good opportunities to express their views about issues that affect them and to play their part in developing the school and its community into the kind of place they want it to be. They are encouraged to take on responsibilities such as being a prefect or a librarian. These jobs mean a great deal to the pupils and they undertake their duties very conscientiously.
99. Through extensive opportunities for sport and recreation, sex education and input on drugs awareness, pupils are encouraged to develop a safe, healthy lifestyle. Most pupils participate in at least one of the excellent range of clubs and extra-curricular activities on offer.
100. Very good relationships exist in the school at all levels. A recent focus on a collaborative approach towards learning in Year 5 is being successful. Pupils were observed working together to achieve shared goals. Through religious education and links with other schools, pupils are taught to respect the beliefs and cultures that are different from their own.
101. The co-ordinator is effective in her leadership and management. She is currently working at bringing together the many strands of the provision into the scheme of work.

## PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

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

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