

# INSPECTION REPORT

**Sandylands Community Primary School**  
Morecambe

LEA area : Lancashire

Unique Reference Number : 119138

Headteacher : Mr. R.K. Freeland

Reporting inspector : Sonja Oyen  
7167

Dates of inspection : 15<sup>th</sup> – 19<sup>th</sup> November 1999

Under OFSTED contract number: 707507

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

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## INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school : Nursery, Infant and Junior

Type of control : County

Age range of pupils : 3 - 11

Gender of pupils : Mixed

School address : Hampton Road  
Morecambe  
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LA3 1JJ

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Appropriate authority : Lancashire County Council

Name of chair of governors : Mr K Dyer

Date of previous inspection : March 1996

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

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Mrs S Oyen – RgI	English	Attainment and progress Teaching Leadership and management
Ms L Brock - Lay Inspector		Attendance Support, guidance and pupil's welfare Partnership with parents and the community
Ms L Spooner – Team Inspector	Information technology Under fives Religious education	Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development
Mrs V Brittain – Team Inspector	Science Design and technology Music Equal opportunities	Attitudes, behaviour and personal development
Mr M Heyes – Team Inspector	Mathematics Art Physical education	Staffing, accommodation and learning resources The efficiency of the school
Mrs L Parkinson – Team Inspector	History	The curriculum and assessment
Mr B W Potter – Team Inspector	Geography Special educational needs	

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## MAIN FINDINGS

### What the school does well

- Sandylands is a happy school – it has a friendly, family atmosphere despite its size and split site.
- Pupils enjoy school. Relationships are very good and the quality of pastoral care is high. The headteacher takes the lead in ensuring that pupils and staff feel valued and part of the school family.
- Children get off to a good start in the nursery where the quality of teaching and provision is good.
- Pupils like reading, read aloud with good expression and talk well about what they have read.
- The provision for pupils with special educational needs is very good. Pupils are well supported and the work of all support staff is very well managed.
- Provision for pupils’ spiritual and moral development is good and very good for social development.
- The school works in good partnership with parents and the community.
- The unity of the staff, together with good quality professional development, has contributed highly to moving the school forward and to improvements in pupils’ attainment.
- The school is well led and ably managed.
- Financial management is good.

### Where the school has weaknesses

- I. Standards in English and science are below those expected nationally.
- II. Standards are low in writing at the end of Key Stage 2. The girls particularly do not do as well as expected.
- III. Many teachers, especially at Key Stage 2, direct the pupils’ learning too much. There are too few opportunities for pupils to make their own decisions about how things should be done.
- IV. Not all pupils make the progress they should. Higher attaining pupils are not always challenged sufficiently.
- V. The school prospectus omits notification of parents’ right to withdraw their child from collective worship and religious education.

The following less important weaknesses should also be considered :

- VI. the lack of systems to track the progress of children under five in the six areas of learning
- VII. the limited use in the Early Years Unit of existing space, staff and time to promote children’s progress especially in physical and creative development
- VIII. the limited effect on pupils’ progress of extending the literacy and numeracy “hours” to 75 minutes .

**The school’s strengths outweigh its weaknesses. Measures to address the identified weaknesses will form the basis of the governors’ action plan, which will be sent to all parents or guardians of pupils at the school.**

### How the school has improved since the last inspection

In the three years since the last inspection, improvement has been satisfactory. The school has addressed the three key issues and other points raised in the 1996 report. However, ways to assess pupils’ progress and attainment in information technology and religious education remain a point for development. Praised aspects, such as “*the very caring and supportive atmosphere*”, “*the commitment of staff*” and “*the very good relationships throughout the school*” have been maintained and continue to give Sandylands a distinctive character and a high reputation for pastoral care. Each pupil now has a Record of Achievement and the good quality content and presentation of those from last year’s Year 6 pupils show how the policy is being implemented well in some classes. Subject coordinators are now taking a more prominent role in initiating and managing curriculum change. This is most marked in English,

mathematics and science where the coordinators' monitoring of the quality of teaching and provision is highlighting areas for further development and improving practice. All coordinators have their own action plans and targets and there is a good team spirit towards school improvement. The school is beginning to track trends in standards and to predict pupils' attainment. The school profile is changing – there has been an unprecedented number of pupils leaving and joining the school in the last term – but staff are aware of what needs to be done to maintain and also to raise standards. There is satisfactory capacity to continue to improve.

## Standards in subjects

The table shows the standards achieved by 11 year olds in 1999 based on the National Curriculum tests:

Performance in	Compared with all schools	Compared with similar schools	<i>Key</i>	
English	D	C	<i>well above average</i>	A
Mathematics	C	B	<i>above average</i>	B
Science	E	D	<i>average</i>	C
			<i>below average</i>	D
			<i>well below average</i>	E

Standards have improved since the last inspection, especially in English and mathematics. In the 1999 national tests, pupils' results in mathematics brought the school in line with the national average. One in four pupils did well for their age and reached Level 5. This was well above the average for similar schools. Girls and boys did equally well and benefited from focussed teaching and revision sessions. In English and science however, standards remain below those seen nationally. Although pupils' reading attainment is just below the national average, their writing attainment is far lower and it is this which lowers English standards overall. In 1999, girls' writing attainment was markedly low.

Children in the nursery make good progress in all six areas of learning and attain some of the Desirable Learning Outcomes before they leave. Taken overall, the children's attainment on entry to school is close to that expected for their age. By the age of five, and certainly by the end of the reception year, most have attained the standard expected especially in reading and number. In other areas, a small number of children have not attained all the Desirable Learning Outcomes.

Since the last inspection, standards have improved at Key Stage 1 in English, particularly in reading. One in three pupils reached a higher level than expected for their age in the 1999 national reading tests which was above the average for similar schools. In writing, mathematics and science, test results were well below the national average.

In information technology, pupils' attainment is satisfactory at the end of Key Stages 1 and 2. In religious education, pupils' attainment is in line with the expectations of the locally Agreed Syllabus. Standards are average in all other subjects.

## Quality of teaching

Teaching in:	Under 5	5 - 7 years	7 - 11 years
English	Satisfactory	Good	Satisfactory
Mathematics	Satisfactory	Satisfactory	Satisfactory
Science		Satisfactory	Satisfactory
Information technology		Satisfactory	Satisfactory
Religious education		Satisfactory	Satisfactory
Other subjects	Satisfactory	Satisfactory	Satisfactory

The overall quality of teaching is satisfactory. It is at least satisfactory in 99 per cent of lessons and good in one in three. This pattern is seen at both Key Stages 1 and 2. Very good teaching occurs in one lesson in twenty overall but this rises to one in eight at Key Stage 1 where the teaching is of high quality for one Year 2 class. In the nursery, the teaching is consistently good. The teacher and nursery nurse work well as a team and there is particular strength in promoting the children's personal and social development. The teaching in the reception classes lacks the sparkle of the nursery where learning is fun. There is good teaching in English and physical education at Key Stage 1, and in many lessons in English, mathematics and music at Key Stage 2.

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

## Other aspects of the school

Aspect	Comment
Behaviour	Good; most pupils behave well at all times; a small number, usually boys, are easily distracted and quick to become restless when sessions are overlong or lack stimulus.
Attendance	Good; above the national average; pupils are punctual.
Ethos*	Good; staff and pupils share a commitment to raising standards and providing care and support for all; pupils "want to come to school".
Leadership and management	Good; senior staff work in partnership and the school is well led and ably managed; subject coordinators are leading change and improvement.
Curriculum	Satisfactory ; the curriculum is broad and balanced and there is good extra curricular provision for Key Stage2 pupils; assessment is satisfactory but there is insufficient tracking of the under fives' progress in all six areas of learning.
Pupils with special educational needs	Very good provision, support and management; the high level of teacher support and the very close monitoring of pupils promotes good academic, behavioural and personal progress.
Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Good overall; very good provision for social development through the caring and encouraging atmosphere.
Staffing, resources and accommodation	Good; a high number of teaching and support staff for the number of pupils; very good programme of professional development for all staff; good collection of books, materials and items to support teaching and learning.
Value for money	Good.

\* *Ethos is the climate for learning: attitudes to work, relationships and the commitment to high standards.*

## **The parents' views of the school**

### **What most parents like about the school**

- IX. Their children like school
- X. The teachers are very approachable and willing to discuss queries and concerns parents might have
  - The school's "open door" – parents are encouraged to play an active part in the life of the school. Parents feel welcome and valued.
- XI. Their children achieve good standards in their work and behaviour
- XII. They have a good understanding of what is taught – the school liaises well with parents.

### **What some parents are not happy about**

- There were no commonly held areas of concern but the following were raised by a few parents :
- XIII. The amount of homework : too little for the
    - Parents are not always told soon enough that their

Inspection findings support in large part the parents' views. From starting in the nursery, pupils enjoy school. The head teacher and staff are very successful in achieving the aim of "*we want children to want to come to school*", and in making all welcome. The school tries very hard to keep parents involved and well informed about events, the curriculum and pupils' progress. Many parents help in school and at home and this has a positive impact on their children's progress especially in reading. The staff work hard to encourage pupils and standards are improving. There are some inconsistencies in the amount and timing of homework. The school is looking at ways to address this to the benefit of all.

## KEY ISSUES FOR ACTION

To raise standards and continue to improve the quality of teaching and learning, the governing body, headteacher and staff should :

- Improve pupils' attainment in English, especially in writing at Key Stages 1 and 2 by
  - boosting the profile of writing across the curriculum
  - increasing the opportunities for pupils to write independently from the nursery onwards
  - providing an increased range of purposes and audiences for pupils' writing
  - ensuring that all coordinators are aware of literacy within their subject and ways to promote its development, especially writing
  - tracking the attainment of pupils' progress in writing and taking steps to support pupils as necessary.

*Paragraphs 10, 21, 22, 105, 117, 121, 122, 123, 125, 128.*
  
- Raise standards in science at Key Stages 1 and 2 by
  - ensuring that pupils have sufficient opportunities to investigate freely, to test out their own ideas and to develop their own ways of recording their findings.
  - raising teachers' expectations of what pupils can do and achieve
  - providing further guidance for staff on how to develop pupils' skills in investigating and problem solving.

*Paragraphs 9, 11, 109, 139, 143, 146, 148.*
  
- Promote pupils' independence as learners by
  - sharing existing good practice in organising space, time and resources to enable pupils to get what they need and to work independently
  - increasing teachers' confidence in using a range of teaching strategies including class, group and individual work across the curriculum
  - extending existing systems to reward pupils for initiative, collaboration and independent learning

*Paragraphs 32, 34, 39, 78, 136, 146, 171, 177.*
  
- Ensure that the school prospectus includes all legally required items  
*Paragraph 76.*

## · INTRODUCTION

### Characteristics of the school

- 1 Sandylands Community Primary School is on the western side of Morecambe. The school has two sites. The Early Years Unit, comprising of a nursery built in 1993, and two reception classes housed in a separate temporary building, is a short walk from the main site where Years 1 to 6 are based. The school serves an area of well-established private and rented housing. Twenty two per cent of the pupils are entitled to free school meals. Families have a choice of several schools in the locality and most pupils come from the immediate area.
- 1
- 2 There are 431 pupils on the school roll showing only a slight drop from 446 at the time of the last inspection in 1996. There are two classes for each year group and class sizes vary from 28 to 34. The reception year children are in classes of 30. All the reception year children start school in September and there is a programme of part-time schooling for the initial few weeks. Many of the reception year children have attended the school nursery. Twenty-eight children attend the nursery in the morning and 27 in the afternoon. At the time of this inspection, all of the nursery children and 45 of the 60 reception class children were under the age of five. Children's attainment on entry to school is similar to that expected for their age.
- 1 There are currently 140 pupils (32 per cent) on the school's register of special educational need which is above average. Twelve pupils in school and three Nursery children have statements of special educational need. Three pupils are from ethnic minority families. No pupil has English as an additional language.
- 2 The school's mission statement highlights a commitment to "*working in partnership with parents to promote the enjoyment of learning through a broad and balanced curriculum, whereby each child has equal opportunity to realise their full potential within a secure, caring environment.*"
- 3 The school's aims echo the mission statement and include "to create a positive, interesting, stimulating and caring environment"; to foster good relationships; to encourage the development of sense of responsibility, self discipline and creative thinking. The headteacher sums up these aims in the statement : *We want our children to want to come to school.*
- 4 The school's priorities for this year are to raise standards in writing and reading; to develop target setting in relation to pupils' attainment; to implement the National Numeracy Strategy and raise standards in mathematics; to continue to improve the quality of the teaching and learning environment and to further improve communication with parents.

## Key Indicators

### Attainment at Key Stage 1<sup>1</sup>

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1  
for latest reporting year:

Year	Boys	Girls	Total
1999	31	36	67

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Number of pupils at NC Level 2 or Above	Boys	23	21	19
	Girls	32	30	28
	Total	55	51	47
Percentage at NC Level 2 or above	School	83	76	70
	National	82	83	87

Teacher Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Number of pupils at NC Level 2 or Above	Boys	23	20	22
	Girls	31	29	29
	Total	54	49	51
Percentage at NC Level 2 or above	School	81	73	76
	National	82	86	87

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<sup>1</sup>

Percentages in parentheses refer to the year before the latest reporting year

## Attainment at Key Stage 2<sup>2</sup>

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2  
for latest reporting year:

Year	Boys	Girls	Total
1999	39	32	71

National Curriculum Test Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Number of pupils at NC Level 4 or Above	Boys	21	28	28
	Girls	20	20	22
	Total	41	48	50
Percentage at NC Level 4 or above	School	58	68	70
	National	70	69	78

Teacher Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Number of pupils at NC Level 4 or Above	Boys	21	32	29
	Girls	20	22	22
	Total	41	54	51
Percentage at NC Level 4 or above	School	58	76	72
	National	62	69	75

### Attendance

Percentage of half days (sessions)  
missed through absence for the  
latest complete reporting year

		%
Authorised Absence	School	5.2
	National comparative data	5.6
Unauthorised Absence	School	0
	National comparative data	0.5

### Exclusions

Number of exclusions of pupils (of statutory school  
age) during the previous year:

	Number
Fixed period	2
Permanent	0

### Quality of teaching

Percentage of teaching observed which is :

	%
Very good or better	5
Satisfactory or better	99
Less than satisfactory	1

## **PART A: ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL**

### **EDUCATIONAL STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS AT THE SCHOOL**

#### **Attainment and progress**

- 1 Standards are lower than seen in most schools in English and science. Mathematics standards are in line with most schools.
- 2 At the end of Key Stage 2, the majority of pupils reach the level expected for their age in English, mathematics and science. A small, but significant number of pupils reach a higher level. Compared with most schools, the school has a higher number of pupils with special educational needs. In the current Year 6, these pupils account for almost one in two and the attainment of most pupils with special educational needs is lower than expected for their age, especially in English. This needs to be considered when viewing how standards compare with other schools. In the 1998/9 cohort of Year 6, one pupil in two had special educational needs, four had statements of special educational need and an additional eight received support from outside agencies. Several of these pupils joined the school in Year 5 or 6 and did not benefit fully from the good provision and support for special educational needs available throughout the school. However, the school is rightly proud that several pupils with special educational needs attained Level 4. In 1998/9, the entitlement to free school meals was also higher than in the current year and places the school in a different band for when comparisons are made against national averages.
- 3 Since the last inspection in 1996 standards have risen and are more uniform across the subjects than indicated in the 1996 report. The improvement in standards is in keeping with the national upward trend but is best in English and mathematics. When all pupils' results are taken into account, standards are in line with the average for all schools nationally in mathematics but below in English. However, when compared with similar schools, standards are above average in mathematics and in line in English. In science, standards have remained much the same over the last few years but the low percentage of higher attainment brings overall standards well below the national average and also below the average of similar schools.
- 4 In the 1999 Key Stage 2 tests, in English, six out of ten pupils reached Level 4, as expected for their age, which was well below the national average and also below the average for similar schools. As seen nationally, pupils fared better in reading than in writing but the difference in attainment between the two was more marked than seen in national figures. Whilst seven out of ten pupils reached Level 4 in reading, just under four in ten did so in writing. This was well below the national average and unlike the national trend, the percentage of girls attaining Level 4 was lower than the boys in reading and writing. Whereas the boys' attainment was not too dissimilar from national averages, the girls' attainment was lower in reading and markedly below in writing. Only one girl in three reached Level 4 in writing which was half the national figure. The unusual girls' lower attainment accounts largely for the lower standard when compared with other similar schools. The percentage of boys and girls attaining the higher Level 5 in writing was similar to the national average but below in reading.
- 5 In mathematics and science, seven out of ten pupils attained Level 4 and the school met its targets. However, in mathematics, one in four pupils reached the higher Level 5 and this was a significant high achievement for the school placing it well above the average for similar schools. Relatively few pupils reached Level 5 in science compared with the national trend and this lowers the overall science standard. In both subjects, but particularly in mathematics, the results reflect the programme of revision and focussed teaching for one Year 6 class given by the classteacher, deputy headteacher and headteacher following an unsettled period of supply teaching for the pupils early in the school year. The boys did slightly better than the girls in mathematics and science reflecting national trends.

- 6 Inspection evidence shows that, as in the last school year, there is a wide spread of attainment in the current Year 6. Although pupils' attainment in mathematics and science is on line to reach the school's targets, pupils' poorer attainment in writing indicates that the school is unlikely to achieve its Level 4 target of 70 per cent in English in 2000.
- 7 On entry to the nursery, the children's overall attainment is below that expected for their age. They make good progress in the nursery year. The nursery staff's high emphasis initially on developing the children's personal and social skills and then on extending the other areas of learning has a positive effect on the children's overall progress and attainment. They make very good progress in taking care of their own needs and when most of the children move into the reception year, their attainment is close to or above the standard expected. However, a significant number of children who join the reception year have not attended the nursery and the overall attainment is just below average. This is confirmed by the results of the baseline assessment and the teachers' records.
- 8 By the age of five, and certainly by the end of the school year, the reception children have made at least satisfactory progress and the majority have attained the national standards (Desirable Learning Outcomes) in personal and social development, language and literacy, mathematics, knowledge and understanding of the world, physical development and creative development. This sustains the "sound and often good" standards noted in the last inspection. In personal and social development the children make good progress and at five, are confident and often quite mature in how they conduct themselves. Many get off to a really good start in reading and number and at the age of five are working towards, or have attained Level 1 of the National Curriculum. They are reading independently and fluently, and know their numbers to ten and often to twenty. The children make satisfactory progress in writing their name and forming letters correctly but many remain dependent on an adult to help them when they write and are content to copy the adult's writing.
- 9 Since the last inspection, standards have risen at Key Stage 1 in English, mathematics and science but particularly in English. However, standards are lower than in most schools nationally. Reading and spelling standards are better than those in writing although there is a wide spread of attainment in all. In the 1999 end of Key Stage 1 national tests in reading, the percentage of pupils attaining Level 2, as expected for their age, was broadly in line with the national average. One in three reached the higher Level 3 which was above the national average and was a marked improvement on the previous year's result. In writing, the 1999 results were well below the national average and also the average for similar schools. Whilst a small number of pupils did well for their age, the higher number of pupils just in the early stages of writing lowered the overall standard.
- 10 In mathematics and science, the percentage of pupils reaching Level 2 was well below the national average and the average for similar schools. Very few pupils did better than expected for their age. Standards rose in mathematics compared with 1998 but not sufficiently to bring the school close to the national average. One in two pupils were only in the early stages of working confidently with number above ten. In science, pupils' investigative skills were less secure than their scientific knowledge.
- 11 Unlike the national picture, the girls did better than the boys in mathematics as well as in English and science. Their higher attainment was most marked in writing. Inspection evidence confirms this and shows that whilst most Year 2 pupils are on line to attain Level 2, a significant number are likely to attain the higher Level 3 in reading and in mathematics where the numeracy hour is lifting standards.

- 12 Standards of listening and speaking are as expected for pupils' ages. As noted in the last inspection, standards of listening are generally good. Most pupils listen carefully to adults and each other, speak clearly and explain themselves well. Some are reticent to speak before a large audience but in class and in group work they contribute ideas and talk about their own experiences. Group reading times in the literacy hour and circle time sessions help to foster pupils' skills in putting forward, explaining and justifying their opinions. Pupils' make at least satisfactory progress due to the good relationships with their teachers. In some classes, the teachers' skill in questioning and encouraging the pupils boosts their progress.
- 13 The school's strategy for literacy is satisfactory. Reading has been given high priority in curriculum development in the last two years and the school works in strong partnership with parents to help develop pupils' recognition of words and their appreciation of stories. The school has rightly placed attention this year on raising standards in writing. Work in the literacy hour is raising pupils' awareness, especially at Key Stage 1, of spelling patterns, sentence structure and story structure. Pupils cope with reading and writing across the curriculum but the quality of their writing is often lower than their knowledge in the different subjects.
- 14 From starting in the nursery, many pupils make good progress in reading. Families hear their children regularly and this is reflected in the number of books read and the pupils' developing skills to talk about their favourites and to summarise storylines. Pupils make good progress at Key Stage 1 and reading standards are good. The literacy hour is helping pupils to look carefully at the structure of texts and to acquire appropriate terms to talk about them. By the end of Key Stage 1, pupils are reading fluently and often with good expression. They know some of the features of non-fiction books but occasionally do not understand the meanings of words and phrases. The good quality of the teaching of the literacy coordinator is accelerating the progress of her class of Year 2 pupils. Progress is satisfactory at Key Stage 2 and is enhanced by pupils' liking of reading and interest in books. Pupils receiving additional literacy support are making good progress especially in their knowledge of word patterns. This is aiding their spelling as well as word recognition in reading. Pupils in all year groups at Key Stage 2 are making at least satisfactory progress in appreciating the language and formats of poetry. Progress is often good when pupils discuss the ways poets use language forms, such as metaphors, to create effect. By the end of Key Stage 2, most pupils cope well with fiction and non fiction across the curriculum. They read fluently and accurately. Higher attaining readers use characterisation and phrasing well when reading aloud and are fairly competent at finding and extracting information from a range of written sources. Pupils with special educational needs make slower progress and often need help to interpret what they read.
- 15 Writing standards are lower than expected for pupils' ages at the end of both key stages, but especially at the end of Key Stage 2. Pupils' initial progress is slower than might be expected in Year 1 but as pupils gain confidence in "having a go" at spelling the rate of progress increases. In Year 2, many pupils are making good progress in writing stories, reports and instructions. They use appropriate language and higher attainers are beginning to revise their work. However, they do not always reach a high enough standard due to insufficient directed teaching in how to improve their use of punctuation and how to develop their ideas.
- 16 At Key Stage 2, pupils make satisfactory progress in learning the "mechanics" of punctuation, grammar and spelling rules. Many pupils, however, do not apply these consistently in their writing in English and other subjects. By the end of Year 6, pupils write in a range of formats such as reports, stories and poems. Higher attaining writers express their ideas well and organise their longer pieces of writing into paragraphs. Not all pupils write neatly in a joined style. The errors in spelling, punctuation and grammar lower the overall standard.
- 17 The school's numeracy strategy is satisfactory. The school has identified the need to boost pupils' number skills. The rehearsal of number bonds, counting patterns and multiplication tables is increasing pupils' facility in handling number and in solving problems, especially at Key Stage 2. This is helping to accelerate progress in meeting the school's numeracy targets. Where the teachers use games and aids such as number cards to facilitate pupils' involvement in class mental arithmetic sessions, the pupils' enthusiasm increases and good progress is made. At the end of Key Stage 1 and 2, most pupils have a secure facility with number which they use in solving number problems in mathematics and other subjects. Pupils are becoming more confident in explaining their reasoning and the strategies they use when solving a problem. By eleven, the majority of pupils have a sound understanding and competence in using the four rules of number in a

range of mathematical situations. They apply this knowledge when working in design and technology, history and science but the teachers do not always exploit the potential of these situations. Lower attaining pupils still need help in seeing how to apply their knowledge and coping with more complex calculations. Pupils make satisfactory progress at both key stages in the other elements of mathematics. They develop a sound understanding of shape, space and measures and data handling including the use of the computer to collate and present information in a range of forms such as line graphs and pie charts.

- 18 Standards in science are lower than expected at the end of both key stages. They make satisfactory progress overall at both key stages but most pupils in Years 2 and 6 are making good progress due to the good teaching of the science coordinator and the deputy headteacher. Pupils' skills in carrying out investigations develop gradually but pupils, especially the younger ones, have little opportunity to revisit an investigation or to decide how it might be carried out. By the end of Key Stage 1, pupils have some understanding of a fair test. By the end of Key Stage 2, not all pupils are confident in planning an experiment as they have had too few opportunities to develop knowledge and skills in controlling variables. Higher attaining pupils are more used to carrying out the teachers' tests rather than devising their own. However, progress and attainment is improving in this aspect of science as the teachers become more secure in its management and organisation. At the end of both key stages, pupils have made satisfactory progress in acquiring knowledge about life processes, materials and physical processes. This is enhanced by the revisiting of topics in different year groups. By the end of Key Stage 2, pupils have a sound if simple understanding of aspects such as gravity, friction and habitats.
- 19 Standards in information technology meet national expectations at both key stages. The school has kept pace with changes in information technology resources and pupils make satisfactory progress at both key stages in using information technology as part of their subject learning. Pupils use computers in most subjects to find out information using CD-ROM, to play word and number games, to word process their writing, to handle data and to control the movement of other equipment through a sequence of instructions. Pupils with special educational needs make satisfactory progress and often good progress when they are assisted by a friend or allowed time to practise their skills.
- 20 In religious education, standards at the end of both key stages are in line with those outlined in the locally Agreed syllabus. Pupils make satisfactory progress and assemblies and circle time sessions enhance pupils' understanding and tolerance of different views, beliefs and principles.
- 21 In art, design and technology, geography, history, music and physical education, standards are generally as expected for pupils' age at both key stages. All pupils make at least satisfactory progress in all subjects but in design and technology at Key Stage 1, progress is good. The teachers' good teaching of skills ensures pupils make good progress in understanding the design-make-evaluate process. At Key Stage 2, there is good progress in some music lessons when a teacher uses her expertise and personal enthusiasm to develop pupils' skills in composing and performing.

27

### **Attitudes, behaviour and personal development**

- 22 This is an area of strength that has been sustained since the last inspection. Pupils' attitudes, behaviour and personal development are good. Relationships with others are very good. This contributes highly to the overall good quality of learning and to pupils' personal and social development.
- 23 Pupils' attitudes to learning are good. They are eager to learn and ninety eight per cent of parents who responded to the inspection questionnaire agree that their children like school. From starting in the nursery, pupils are interested in what is happening and to see what is new. Many pupils of all ages but especially the younger ones, show a thirst for knowledge and are keen to get started on activities. Year 2 pupils were totally absorbed and enthralled when discussing their instructions on how to make a finger puppet. Older pupils know what they like and Year 5 pupils were highly motivated to sing and perform their own music. Year 3 pupils responded enthusiastically to poetry and at the choir practice, pupils were quick to point out examples of alliteration in their songs. Pupils generally settle quickly to work. They listen well to each other and to adults and are always willing to answer questions and discuss their ideas. Pupils show good

levels of concentration; Year 1 pupils worked hard to find which material would be best to make a waterproof coat for a dog and Year 4 pupils concentrated hard on improving their rugby skills despite being out in the cold wind.

- 24 The personal and social development of children under the age of five is very good. The nursery and reception year children have quickly settled into school and acquired good working habits. They know the routines and where things are kept. They try hard to please their teachers and often tell each other what should be happening and how things should be done. The nursery children are highly independent within the nursery setting and work and play happily together. Even the youngest three year olds show a good, mature ability to wait their turn and to share resources with others. When playing a game, four children followed the rules and organised themselves without fuss. Reception year children are very confident within the Early Years' unit and know what is expected of them. Many show a good level of social maturity and ability to take care of their own needs. They behave sensibly, settle quickly and are pleased with their own achievements. They usually relish stories, sit still and listen very attentively. Only when sessions are overlong or when they are not clear as to what they have to do, do they show inattention or restlessness. The children clearly enjoy school and they are keen to tell others what they are doing.
- 25 In lessons and as they move around school, pupils behave well; they respond positively to the high standards set by staff and accept the consequences of not following school and class rules. Last year there were two short-term exclusions from school due to pupils' behaviour but the number is falling. Pupils play and work well together and during the inspection there was no evidence of bullying. Pupils are polite and friendly to each other, staff and visitors. Most show good self-discipline and a good level of tolerance of those who sometimes find it hard to control their emotions. Even the older pupils like receiving stickers and praise for good behaviour and all respond warmly when one or two are rewarded for good conduct. Pupils show a good level of respect for school property. Many behave responsibly in picking things up and tidying away. There is no damage or litter around the school buildings and pupils use resources with care.
- 26 Relationships amongst pupils and between staff and pupils are very good. The school is a very harmonious family community where there is a high level of respect, concern and affection for one another. Pupils are loyal to their class-mates, the staff and the school. There were several occasions during the inspection when individual pupils spontaneously supported others who were upset in class or in the playground. In one class one pupil readily offered her tambour to another who was disappointed in what was left when he came to choose an instrument. In the playground, younger pupils are well looked after by older pupils who often include them in play activities. From an early age, pupils co-operate well with each other and show good skills in working as group. Year 5 pupils listened thoughtfully to each other's ideas as they devised ways to muffle the sound of a clock in a parcel. Few opportunities were seen in lessons for pupils to organise and take responsibility for their own learning. However, members of the Health club in Year 6 have organised and carried out a health survey of the school building and reported back their findings to staff. At present they are designing posters in preparation for a talk they intend to give to younger pupils about Road Safety.
- 27 Pupils are encouraged to reflect on their own values and beliefs. In religious education they are beginning to respect the values and beliefs of others. Year 6 pupils have discussed and written about the feelings of refugees displaced from their own lands. In assemblies, pupils think about what it might be like to be different, such as Anne Frank hiding during the war.
- 28 Pupils' personal development is good. Most show good skills in organising themselves and getting on well with others. However, this is not always used to best advantage in prompting independent learning and the development of ideas. Pupils with emotional and behavioural problems respond well to the support, counselling and personal targets set by teachers to help them to develop their social skills. Many pupils are given opportunities to exercise responsibility in class as they prepare for lessons and they respond well. Classes take turns to be responsible for litter picking around school. Older pupils perform duties sensibly around such as helping in the office and acting as monitors for the cloakroom and library. During the inspection, Year 6 pupils took responsibility for the organisation of poppy selling in aid of Remembrance Day.

34 **Attendance**

29 Pupils' attendance is good and above the national average for primary schools. This is an improvement on the satisfactory attendance level reported in the 1996 inspection. Unauthorised absence is below the national average. Attendance during this autumn term is 95% showing the school is on target to maintain its good record. The school actively encourages consistent and punctual attendance and good attendance is expected and rewarded. Even children under five are maintaining good attendance levels.

30 The school prospectus includes a statement that informs parents of their responsibilities for good attendance and the effect poor attendance has on attainment and progress. Any instance of non-attendance or recurring lateness is followed up promptly and investigated. Registration periods are efficient and often take place as pupils read. This provides a calm, orderly start to morning and afternoon school. The computerised system is helping the school to be pro-active in identifying any emerging patterns of poor attendance.

36 **QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED**

36 **Teaching**

31 The quality of teaching is satisfactory overall with many good lessons throughout the school and across the curriculum. This sustains the judgement made in the last inspection. The quality of the teaching contributes well to pupils' positive learning attitudes and to the ethos of the school.

32 Across the school, teaching is at least satisfactory in 99 per cent of lessons. It is good in one lesson in three and very good in one in twenty. The profile of teaching is similar across the stages. For children in the nursery, the quality of teaching is consistently at least good. In the reception classes, the teaching is satisfactory. At Key Stage 1, the teaching is satisfactory overall. It is good in one lesson in three and very good in one in ten. The teaching for one class of Year 2 pupils is a strength of Key Stage 1 as lessons are consistently at least good and very good in one in three. The one unsatisfactory lesson at Key Stage 1 was in mathematics and foundered on the lack of challenge, slow pace and lack of practical activities. At Key Stage 2 the teaching is satisfactory. It is good in one lesson in three and very occasionally is it very good.

33 A common strength of the teaching throughout the school is the teachers' conscientious approach and their care and concern for the pupils. They have responded positively to in-service training and advice from subject co-ordinators, especially in the teaching of English, mathematics, science and pupils with special educational needs. There is a high degree of consistency in approach and strong team spirit which has ensured the smooth introduction of both the literacy and numeracy hours and the effective use of team teaching to support pupils with special educational needs. The teachers plan and prepare thoroughly and usually identify clearly what pupils are to learn. However, the teachers do not develop or build strongly enough on pupils' skills to manage themselves. There are too few planned experiences for pupils to decide how they will organise their own learning or develop their own ideas.

34 National guidance is being used effectively to plan work in literacy and numeracy and all teachers have a secure understanding of subject programmes of study in the National Curriculum. The use of computers is integral to most lessons and the teachers identify appropriate learning targets. However, opportunities are missed in both the literacy and numeracy hours to use information technology. When teachers assist small groups and individuals at the computer, their comments and support enhance pupils' progress.

- 35 There are strengths in the teaching of English, especially at Key Stage 1, in mathematics and science, music and physical education. Teachers' subject specialisms and areas of personal expertise are used well in teaching their own class and in supporting others, such as in science and music. Even though the teacher did not know all the pupils in the class, her good subject knowledge, confident style and lively pace meant that Year 5 pupils made good progress in composing, performing and evaluating their own musical piece.
- 36 For children under five, the quality of teaching in the nursery is good in all six areas of learning. It is very good in personal and social development and there is continuity for the children who move into the reception classes where the teaching is good in this aspect. The nursery teacher has a very good understanding of young children and how they learn and she values highly the children being as independent as possible. She and the nursery nurse have organised the nursery to encourage the children to get and return what they need and there are very clear routines and procedures. Both adults are careful not to do anything for the children that they can do for themselves but they provide constant encouragement and praise. Their enthusiasm, high level of interest in each child and ability to talk with the children on an equal footing, does much to promote the children's good progress.
- 37 In the reception classes, there is less dynamism in the teaching. Class sessions are well planned and resources are well prepared. However, in the afternoon there is often less direct teaching and the children merely choose an activity while a teacher hears children read. Whilst this promotes decision making and initiative on the part of the child, there are shortcomings. On occasion the helping adults in the class do too much for the children and there is not enough leeway for the children to develop ideas in their own way. Opportunities are missed to observe children as they work and play and to record their progress and attainment. The Early Years staff collaborate well with the adults who support children with particular needs. They regularly discuss the children's progress and share information with parents.
- 38 At Key Stage 1, there are many strengths in the teaching especially for one class of Year 2 pupils. All the teachers give time to organising their classrooms and displaying their pupils' work attractively. Classroom routines are well established and relationships are good between teachers and pupils. The teachers are generally secure in their knowledge of the curriculum but occasionally the challenge is too low especially for the higher attaining pupils. Where the task gives pupils scope to develop their own ideas, such as experimenting with magnets to help car shapes "travel", they often make good progress. Joint planning of year group teams ensures good continuity of practice and shared ideas. In the most effective lessons, the teachers build on the pupils' previous learning and help the pupils to see how what they know is relevant. The Year 2 teacher's encouraging style and constant questions about "Putting on a show" helped pupils to make good progress in relating what they knew about magicians and conjurers from a previous book. Her high expectations and lively approach gave the lesson pace and purpose. Similarly, in a dance lesson, the teacher and three other adults all took part and provided good demonstrations for the Year 1 pupils. The teacher's encouragement to improve the quality of their curls and stretches not only kept the pupils fully engaged but also developed their stamina and performance.
- 39 At Key Stage 2, the staff work well together. In several classes, a team of teachers work with the pupils over a week but joint planning ensures continuity of content. There is good teaching in many classes and during the inspection, there were several good lessons for a class of Year 3 pupils whose keenness to learn and confidence in their own knowledge led to good discussions with the teacher and good progress in learning new aspects. Pupils are being taught well the "mechanics" of literacy and numeracy. In several literacy and numeracy hours, the good level of planning and preparation led to a good learning pace and frequent reviews of what pupils had achieved. However, in other lessons, the objectives were not always made clear and the pace was too sedate to sharpen the knowledge and skills of the higher attaining pupils. The effective use of games and practical tasks in the numeracy hours is less evident in literacy work and often other adults play little active part in the initial stages of lessons. The shared questioning of Year 5 pupils by three adults helped them to "brainstorm" and to look more critically at aspects of government and politics. The pupils made noticeable progress in their depth of understanding and ability to justify their opinions. The teachers' warm, relaxed relationships with the pupils allows free exchange of ideas in the classroom and out. Praise is used well to reward pupils. Whilst there is some detailed marking and comments to pupils on how they might improve, this is done more carefully in English than other subjects.

- 40 At both key stages, the quality of teaching for pupils with special educational needs is at least satisfactory and most often good, especially when pupils work alongside their classmates but with the guidance of another teacher or support assistant. In planning work for these pupils, the teachers take the targets and content of individual education plans and statements of special educational need into account, and often consult support assistants. The close supervision and support for pupils often benefits others nearby as the adult explains and provides clarifying examples of what has to be done. Support assistants' daily records of pupils' response and progress towards their targets are used well to plan further work and provide appropriate resources.
- 41 The teachers expect pupils to take their reading books home and to learn spellings and multiplication tables. Other homework extends class themes and topics.

### **The curriculum and assessment**

- 42 The quality of the curriculum is satisfactory and promotes effectively pupils' intellectual, physical and personal development.
- 43 Since the last inspection, subject coordinators have worked to develop the overall curriculum and to provide support in implementing initiatives in the curriculum such as the literacy and numeracy hours. The curriculum is broad and balanced and comprises all subjects of the National Curriculum as well as religious education which follows the content of the locally Agreed Syllabus. The school nurse assists in delivering a programme of sex education and drugs awareness.
- 44 The curriculum for children under five is satisfactory but there are some inconsistencies between the curriculum for the nursery children and those in the reception classes. There are no formal arrangements for the Early Years' staff to plan jointly or to share planning to ensure continuity of experience for those children who move into the reception classes. Both the nursery and reception year staff use effectively themes such as stories to provide interesting activities and to link experiences. In the nursery, the curriculum addresses the six areas of learning recommended nationally and promotes effectively the children's progress towards the Desirable Learning Outcomes. High priority is given to the children's personal and social development and to learning through play. In the reception classes, although attention is given to all six areas of learning, more emphasis is placed on the development of reading, writing and mathematics. The literacy and numeracy hours have been introduced and account for most of the morning timetable. Whilst the nursery children have daily periods of guided outdoor play, the reception year children have set playtimes and physical education lessons. These prepare the children well for Key Stage 1 work.
- 45 The assessment of children's progress and attainment in the nursery and reception classes is inconsistent. The nursery teacher conducts her own assessment of the children at the beginning of the school year. Their progress is recorded through observations of them in different nursery activities, such as writing a letter to someone, but there is no recording of progress in all the areas of learning or of the children's attainment of the Desirable Learning Outcomes. A record of achievement is gradually compiled and completed for each child at the end of the nursery year. In the reception classes, good use is made of the baseline assessment information to compare the children's attainment at the start and end of the reception year. The teachers record each child's progress in English, mathematics and science but do not record the children's progress towards their attainment of the Desirable Learning Outcomes in the other areas of learning.
- 46 The curriculum for pupils at Key Stages 1 and 2 is broad and balanced. As in many schools, 50 per cent of the time is given to the teaching of English and mathematics although the school gives a higher amount of time to mathematics than in other schools. The literacy hour is well established and the school is implementing the numeracy hour. The teachers use the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategy frameworks to guide their planning and identify clear objectives for pupils' learning as well as details about lesson structure. This addresses a criticism about lack of clarity and detail in the last report. Year group teams plan together giving parity of content for all pupils in the year. Recently issued national guidance on curriculum content in art, design and technology, geography, history and physical education is being used along with the school's own science, information technology and physical education schemes. Information technology is seen as an integral part of each subject curriculum and included as such in long-term plans.

Subject coordinators monitor teachers' curriculum planning but there is no systematic monitoring of practice to check the quality and content of what is being taught or the effectiveness of approach selected to deliver it.

- 47 Very good provision is made for children with special educational needs. Teachers know the pupils very well and their progress is closely monitored. The high level of classroom support from teachers and classroom assistants enables a high degree of small group and one-to-one work, much of which is closely related to the targets in individual education plans. These are detailed, realistic and often address personal as well as academic development. The school is providing Additional Literacy Support for lower attaining pupils in Years 3 and 4. This is appropriately focussing on spelling patterns, word recognition and sentence work. It is too early to judge the effectiveness of this curriculum initiative but the school is monitoring pupils' progress and know the programme is boosting progress and will raise standards in the long term.
- 48 The school offers a good range of extra curricular activities and clubs. These are for Key Stage 2 pupils and provide a wide range of sports and music activities. There is a poetry club, and a science club which occasionally visits places of interest such as museums on Saturdays. The swimming club makes use of the pool at the local secondary school. Over 150 pupils and 13 adults take part in these activities which account for four hours weekly in winter and three hours in the summer. The Year 6 pupils also go on a residential visit to Ambleside where a programme of different activities extends the physical education, geography, history and personal and social education curriculums. As pupils work as classes, groups and teams this experience contributes well to their social and cultural development.
- 49 At both key stages, there is a wide range of satisfactory assessment, recording and reporting procedures. A programme of formal tests is conducted each year and the school now has a wealth of information to guide the prediction of attainment, the setting of targets and the analysis of trends especially in English, mathematics and science. This is augmented by teachers' own records of pupils' progress in spelling, reading and mental arithmetic. A level of attainment is given to samples of work which are periodically placed in each pupils' record of achievement providing a satisfactory indication of progress. Not all teachers keep detailed records of pupils' progress and attainment in information technology skills or in religious education. Statutory requirements are met in end of key stage assessments, the annual recording of pupils' progress and the reporting to parents.
- 50 The use of assessment information to inform teachers' planning is satisfactory. Whole school short term planning includes assessment opportunities that are often linked to learning objectives. However, these do not always provide sufficient specific criteria to guide the observation and evaluation of pupils' learning. Not all teachers are following the practice of identifying pupils whose attainment went beyond the objectives, or those pupils who did not succeed.
- 51 The school's new marking policy gives good guidance and the core curriculum group has begun to monitor its effectiveness in helping teachers to identify the next steps in pupils' learning across the curriculum.

57 **Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development**

- 52 The school makes good provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, including that for children under five. This reflects the views of most parents who feel that the school's values and attitudes have a positive effect on their children and sustains the standards in provision highly praised in the last inspection.

- 53 Good provision is made for spiritual development. The school's mission statement permeates much of what happens during the day. The daily act of worship makes a very positive contribution to this and the school meets statutory requirements for collective worship. The separate assemblies for children in the reception classes, pupils at Key Stage 1 and those at Key Stage 2 enable assembly themes to be discussed at a level meaningful to the pupils. A special assembly is held each week for all pupils to join together to celebrate achievement and success in a range of school activities. In some assemblies, very good opportunities are provided for pupils to reflect on the deeper meaning of life. In a Key Stage 2 assembly on the theme of the effects of war, pupils' own poems on loneliness were read and shared. Religious education makes a satisfactory contribution to this aspect of the pupils' development. Insufficient time is given to develop opportunities for pupils to reflect on and discuss religious and spiritual issues in greater depth. Attractive displays around the school make a good contribution to the ways pupils are encouraged to reflect on the work and achievements of others especially in art.
- 54 The provision for moral development is good. The school's aim to teach the principles that help pupils to distinguish right from wrong is evident in all aspects of school life. All adults act as good role models for the pupils. A comprehensive Care and Control policy is in place and the school's Code of Conduct, prominently displayed in classrooms and other parts of the school, was drawn up in partnership with the pupils. Moral issues are taught through a range of subjects. Pupils have looked at the meaning of the parable of the Good Samaritan and discussed what life must like as a refugee. In geography, pupils learn about the environmental implications when making decisions about the use of land. Concern for the school environment is fostered through several initiatives such as pupils being given responsibility for collecting litter and the proposals for a millennium garden. Opportunities to learn about moral responsibility in the wider world are encouraged by fund-raising for charities such as Poppy Day and Children in Need. Pupils have also given gifts to children from Chernobyl who visited the area.
- 55 The quality of provision for social development is very good. The headteacher plays a highly visible role in creating a community spirit and in showing care for and interest in all. Pupils are encouraged to support each other and social acts are recognised and praised. Special assemblies celebrate pupils' good work and behaviour and this raises pupils' confidence and self-esteem. The school works very hard to provide a climate where pupils feel confident to talk about their worries and concerns. All adults provide very good role models in the way they talk with pupils about what is happening in their lives. The "Help Box" respects pupils' right to privacy and all concerns are followed up through discussion and counselling. Each pupil is valued and records are kept of any incidents of bullying, racism or non-accidental injury. Provision has been enhanced by the school's involvement with "Signposts" to set up a system of positive response to conflict. Extra-curricular activities provide good opportunities for social development as pupils work with others from different year groups. The annual residential visit to Ambleside for Year 6 pupils provides very good opportunities for them to mix socially as well as to participate in adventurous and character-building activities. Many subjects, such as art, science and design and technology offer good opportunities for pupils to share resources and to develop relationship and team skills. Good opportunities are created for the development of responsibility. From starting in the nursery and reception classes, and at Key Stages 1 and 2, pupils are given jobs to do in and around the classroom. Older pupils act as games leaders with younger pupils in the playground.
- 56 Provision for cultural development is satisfactory. Pupils explore different cultures through the curriculum. They study the work of famous artists and learn about their own heritage through visits to places of interest such as Ribchester Roman Museum. Opportunities are provided for pupils to learn to play a musical instrument and all pupils listen to a range of music during assemblies. The introduction of the Literacy Strategy has enhanced pupils' appreciation of different types of literature. Pupils' multi-cultural awareness is fostered through religious education where all pupils learn about Christianity and other major faiths and through geography and history where pupils are given insights into the beliefs and customs of other cultures. However, there are few opportunities for pupils to develop their understanding of ethnic minority groups who live in Britain and their heritage culture.

62 **Support, guidance and pupils' welfare**

- 57 A strength of the school is its very caring and supportive ethos. The quality of the support and guidance for pupils is very good and the level of concern for their welfare is high. This sustains and possibly increases the quality of provision noted in the last inspection.
- 58 Class teachers are responsible for the day-to-day guidance of pupils with support from senior management staff. A key figure in the pastoral system is the deputy headteacher who offers counselling to both pupils and parents. Very good relationships exist within the school and pupils respond well to adults' interest in them. The Sandylands Code of Conduct includes the shared responsibilities of staff, pupils and parents and is included in the Home/School Agreement.
- 59 Pupils receive good guidance from staff who know the pupils very well and are aware of their personal achievements. Pupils' academic progress is monitored throughout the school and targets are set. Pupils receive good personal and social education which equips them with the skills and knowledge to make informed decisions. In the nursery and reception classes, high store is set on pupils' developing independence and initiative and staff have high expectations of pupils' skills in taking care of their own needs. Year 5 pupils took a circle time session very seriously and showed respect for the beliefs and feelings of each other. Despite a recommendation in the previous report that the school should find a way of monitoring and recording the delivery and effectiveness of personal and social education, this is only at an early stage of development although it is well developed in the nursery. The co-ordinator is conducting an audit of personal and social education in each year group and intends to draw up a programme that can be monitored from one year to the next. Pupils with special educational needs receive much personal support and encouragement. Individual education plans are detailed and identify clear targets for academic and personal improvement.
- 60 Procedures for monitoring and promoting discipline and good behaviour are very good. All adults in school remind pupils of classroom ways of working and school rules. Pupils who find it hard to control their behaviour and emotions receive very good quality support from staff and other pupils. The deputy headteacher takes a lead role in discussing pupils' behaviour with them and in rewarding pupils who meet their targets. Pupils confirm that any incidents of bullying are dealt with quickly and effectively.
- 61 Procedures for monitoring and promoting attendance are very good. The teachers know pupils' families well and make quick contact when pupils are absent without known cause. The school has good links with relevant agencies and works closely with them. The headteacher's phrase "*we want our children to want to come to school*" is uppermost and cases of prolonged absence are investigated.
- 62 Procedures to monitor and promote pupils' well-being, health and safety are good. There is an appropriate policy for child protection. The designated teacher has received training for his role and has shared his expertise with all members of staff. Sex education is related to the development of children as they progress through school and is delivered through the curriculum and personal and social education with help from the school nurse. The school has a very high number of members of staff who are fully qualified to administer first aid and appropriate procedures are followed in the case of accidents. A concern however, is the need for children in the reception year to walk to the main school for physical education lessons and school meals. Before they leave they change into light clothing ready for physical education lessons which, even though they wear their outer coats/jackets, is not ideal. The health and safety policy states the various duties of school staff and the teacher governor on the premises sub-committee and the caretaker conduct a site survey each term. The caretaker is alert to any day-to-day problems and deals effectively with many of them himself. The local education authority also conducts risk assessments of the building. Parents' concerns are listened to and the school has done much to increase security procedures.

63 The school's high concern for pupils is seen in the effective induction programme for children starting nursery and school. Good guidance is given to Year 6 pupils before transfer to high school and all spend an induction day in the school of their choice. The school is in regular contact with the receiving high schools and relevant information is passed to them. Feedback information from one high school shows that Sandylands pupils cope well on transfer. For pupils with special educational needs, additional liaison work is undertaken and the school has access to a range of agencies to provide support and advice as needed.

69 **Partnership with parents and the community**

64 The quality of partnership with parents is good. Parents praised the "open door" approach of the school in the meeting with inspectors before the inspection, and 95 per cent of the replies in the questionnaires returned agree that the school encourages parents to play and active part. 98 per cent agree that they would find it easy to approach the school with problems or concerns. As was noted in the 1996 inspection, parents feel welcome in the school and feel that all the staff value their help in activities in and outside of the classroom. Their involvement makes a strong contribution to pupils' progress in school and at home.

65 The senior management, teaching and non-teaching staff work hard to foster and develop positive links with parents and families some of whom have had a long association with the school. Efforts are made to encourage more parents to participate in school life and from this, some have begun careers in education. The school is justifiably proud of the achievements of these parents. The Friends of Sandylands School has contributed funds for a variety of resources in the school and the association works hard to organise social and fund-raising activities for all the community. The strength of the relationship can be seen in the 201 replies to the annual questionnaire sent to parents seeking their views on school development. The deputy headteacher makes time to talk with and counsel parents and she offers them good support. Time and effort are also given to arranging times for parents to attend the review meetings for children who have special educational needs.

66 The quality of information for parents is good. General communication with parents is effective and they are kept informed about events and activities through an interesting school newsletter with occasional contributions from pupils, a class newsletter informing parents about the topics to be taught - a development arising from the findings of the last inspection - and a separate nursery newsletter which contains good information for parents on activities and meetings. The school prospectus is user-friendly and there is a separate information leaflet for parents of nursery and reception children. Parents at the meeting with inspectors said that the school has held workshops for them on literacy, numeracy, described as "fun", and also on the annual national tests. Parents of nursery children have been involved in the Family Numeracy Project with the reception children being involved in a Numbers Games Loan. End of year reports to parents on their children's progress are informative and show that teachers know pupils well. Most teachers weave targets for future development into the comments.

67 The school links effectively with its community and pupils' involvement extends the curriculum and contributes much to their personal and cultural development. The school's work to develop and extend these links has been recognised in the award of Investor in People status. Charities benefit from a variety of school fund-raising and social events. The choir sings to elderly citizens at Christmas and there are good links with local churches. Visitors have included Morecambe Football Club who coach Year 6 pupils and Lancaster and Morecambe College students who coach pupils in football. Year 6 pupils visit the college for an activity morning. Teachers have benefited from advice given by specialists in other fields and there is good support from external agencies. Pupils have studied the local community and have visited Heysham Power Station as part of science work. A local van and car hire firm provides free transport for pupils' residential visit to Ambleside. The police and fire services talk to pupils about personal safety and a retired train driver has offered good advice to pupils about rail safety.

68 Since the last inspection, the school has sustained its good links and close working relationships with high schools particularly with the main receiving high school, Heysham High. Representatives from all the high schools are invited to an open evening for parents at the school and once a choice is made, there are visits from appropriate Year 7 tutors as well as an induction day for Year 6 pupils in the school of their choice.

## 74 **THE MANAGEMENT AND EFFICIENCY OF THE SCHOOL**

### 74 **Leadership and management**

69 The quality of leadership and management is good and sustains the judgement given in the 1996 inspection. The school is well led and ably managed by the headteacher and senior management team.

70 The governing body is proud of the school and through its committee structure meets statutory requirements although parents' right to withdraw their child from collective worship and religious education is omitted from the school prospectus. Many governors have good knowledge of the life of the school from their frequent visits. The headteacher is highly committed to the pupils and staff and takes a very active role in the life of the school, particularly in ensuring that all feel valued. His lead and supportive stance contribute significantly to the closeness of the school community and to the family atmosphere highly appreciated by parents. Much is also due to the high quality of the pastoral management of the deputy headteacher. She is very skilled in counselling pupils with behavioural and personal needs and working alongside other staff to ensure that pupils are encouraged to concentrate and learn. Her caring, calm, warm approach is central to the school's ethos of concern for all. The staff work well together and sustain "*the very caring and supportive atmosphere*", "*the commitment of staff*" and "*the very good relationships throughout the school*" praised in the 1996 report. These aspects continue to give Sandylands its distinctive character and its high reputation for pastoral care and are contributing to raising standards.

71 Improvement in the three years since the last inspection has been satisfactory. Academic standards have risen, especially in English and mathematics and the school has sustained many of the strengths identified and also addressed the three key issues. However, not all of the points for development mentioned throughout the 1996 report have been as well considered and some remain aspects for attention. An example is the systems to assess and record pupils' attainment and progress in information technology and religious education which are still not up and running. One key issue, the charging policy, was quickly settled but the other two, due to their nature, have taken longer to implement and have yet to be fully established. The policy for records of achievement has been fully implemented throughout the school. Unfortunately, the standard of presentation varies and does not always show pupils' work to best effect. The more impressive examples are to be found in the nursery and in Year 6.

72 The school has shown most improvement in response to the first key issue relating to the development of the role of the co-ordinator in monitoring the planning and delivery of the curriculum. Since the last inspection, the headteacher has delegated more responsibility and the school management structure has been strengthened. The three senior managers have clearly defined areas of school responsibility and leadership. Their shared management with the headteacher of the day-to-day work of the school ensures its smooth running on both sites. The introduction of a Core curriculum group – the subject leaders in English, mathematics, science, information technology and assessment - has created a strong team with a focus entirely on curriculum development. The group is steering change through monitoring the quality of the curriculum and teaching. This has highlighted aspects of good practice and indicated areas for change especially in writing, investigative science and number work. The unity of the staff, good team spirit and a positive stance towards staff development has been a key factor in recent work and inspection evidence indicates that pupils' attainment is improving. All subject leaders have their own action plans and targets and there is an accepted shared approach to school improvement. The school is beginning to track and analyse trends in standards and to use available information to predict attainment. As the school profile changes – there has been an unprecedented high number of pupils leaving and joining the school this term – staff are becoming increasingly aware of what needs to be done to maintain and raise standards. The school's potential to improve is satisfactory.

- 73 The quality of strategic planning is good. The headteacher, senior staff and governors work together to plan, monitor and review the direction for the school. The current one year school development plan came from a thorough evaluation of last year's work and consultations with parents, governors and staff. The plan is well structured and sets out clearly action, success criteria and individual responsibilities. Although there are tasks and objectives, some of these are too general, particularly when referring to standards such as "*further improve performance in mathematics*", to allow governors to evaluate critically the effectiveness of action taken and to monitor the effectiveness of the literacy and numeracy strategies in the school.
- 74 The management of the provision for children under the age of five is satisfactory. The Early Years co-ordinator regularly visits the Early Years site and supports staff in the classroom. Although it is not included in the school development plan, the Early Years team are already considering the implications of national guidance.
- 75 The management of special educational needs is very good and a true strength of the school. The school follows the recommendations of the Code of Practice and also its own statement of "*an inclusive policy to raise pupil achievement*". The deputy headteacher, in her role as special needs co-ordinator is very skilled and shares her expertise and skill in training others to maintain good quality support for pupils in the classroom. Pupils' records are well maintained and a particular strength is the regular evaluation of the effectiveness of procedures used through the tracking of pupils' progress and success in achieving the targets in their individual education plans.
- 76 The school is meeting its aims in large part. Its strength in its "*caring environment*" and its success in meeting the headteacher's stated aim of "*we want our children to want to come to school*". School and curriculum policies are guiding its work and staff and governors are becoming increasingly aware of the need to monitor and evaluate trends in pupils' attainment in order to set appropriate targets in the drive to raise standards overall and enable pupils to "*develop and mature to their full potential*".

## 82 **Staffing, accommodation and learning resources**

- 77 The school is well staffed with suitably qualified teachers with a wide range of experience and expertise to meet the demands of the National Curriculum, religious education and pupils with special educational needs. There have been very few staffing changes since the last inspection and teachers new to the school are all experienced and have particular subject specialisms. Several senior members of staff have additional management qualifications. The teachers working with children under the age of five are not specifically qualified in early years education but have experience, in-service training and personal interest in teaching this age group. There is some use of personal expertise to teach music and science. The skills and expertise of the deputy headteacher, the headteacher and a nursery nurse have been used to support other schools.
- 78 There is a good number of support staff with appropriate experience and skills to support pupils in the nursery and in the reception classes, pupils with special educational needs, those needing literacy support and also to work with parents to extend their awareness of literacy and numeracy support. The school has recently employed an information technology technician whose work frees other staff from servicing computers and other equipment.
- 79 Arrangements for the professional development of all staff, led by the staff development officer, are very good. Governors are committed to the professional development of teaching and non-teaching staff and the school has been awarded 'Investors in People'. Curriculum training requirements are appropriately identified through school development planning and staff appraisal. Since the last inspection, attention has been given to the development of the role of the co-ordinator, as identified in a key issue, but recent priority has rightly been given to the training needed to implement the Numeracy Strategy. The appraisal process is half-way through its cycle. There are effective systems in place to support new and newly qualified members of staff.

- 80 The number of hours worked by administrative staff is average for a school of its size.
- 81 The accommodation is satisfactory and allows the curriculum to be delivered effectively although there are several unsatisfactory aspects. The school is on a split-site with the Early Years' unit a short walk from the main school but there are good procedures to ensure links are maintained between the two sites. The nursery is purpose built and although small offers good space for different activities as well as an entrance area and secure outdoor play area. The classrooms for the reception year children are spacious with access to a kitchen and large shared area. The playground is small but there are grassed areas and a plan to landscape these as a millennium project. Whilst the nursery and reception year children have a sense of feeling "special" older pupils do not benefit from the constant presence of these children in the main school.
- 82 The main school has been added to over time and there are four classrooms in two sets of demountable classrooms on the rear playground. As these have no toilets, Year 3 and 4 pupils must make their way across the playground in all weathers to the main building. This also restricts their access to the library and other facilities openly available to other year groups. Classrooms vary in size and some of those for Years 1, 3 and 4 are only just adequate. The hall is not large enough for all classes to gather together comfortably. The school environment is very well maintained by the site manager and cleaning staff. Attractive displays of pupils' work make the school a welcoming and interesting environment for pupils and visitors alike.
- 83 The range and quality of learning resources in the school is good overall and this has been sustained since the last inspection when it was also a good feature. There is particularly good provision in information technology, reading, mathematics and physical education. Particular attention has been given to enhancing the provision to develop older boys' reading interests and also pupils' multi-cultural awareness. Resources are accessible to staff and pupils. The library areas are well organised and adequately stocked although the non-fiction collection requires some updating. The school uses visits and visitors well to extend the curriculum and to develop and enhance pupils social and cultural development.
- 89 **The efficiency of the school**
- 84 The overall efficiency is good and sustains the strength reported in the 1996 inspection. Resources are managed and used well. There are particular strengths in the efficiency of school administration given its split site. The school runs smoothly and day-to-day organisation and administration procedures are efficient.
- 85 Financial management of the budget is good. All educational developments are costed and success criteria identified in the school development plan. The Governing Body has decided to add funds to those allocated to support pupils with special educational needs. This allows key staff to support class teachers during lessons and contributes significantly to helping pupils control their behaviour and develop more positive learning attitudes as well as in turn to their academic progress. A planned overspend last year and this year is drawing on school reserve funds but will still leave a healthy balance to carry forward to the next financial year. The nursery funds are managed as part of the overall school budget but used appropriately to provide trained teaching and support staff as well as necessary resources.
- 86 Financial administration and control are good. The headteacher monitors spending and governors are kept up-to-date on the school's finances. The financial sub-committee looks carefully at spending trends and has considered the implications of changes to the number of pupils on roll. Governors have responded to points raised in the audit of the school this year. A charging policy has been drawn up in response to the key issue of 1996.
- 87 Good use is made of teaching expertise and the placing of teaching strength to support pupils' attainment and progress. Teaching strength in the nursery provides very good value for money, and the consistently good teaching for one class of Year 2 pupils is raising standards at Key Stage 1. Senior staff use release time well to monitor the quality of provision and to ensure systems are running smoothly. Subject co-ordinators' use of release time to monitor teaching and learning has had a positive impact on curriculum development especially in science and in the implementation of the literacy and numeracy hours. However, there are many occasions when support staff and teachers are part of the class audience rather than active participants in promoting pupils' progress.

- 88 The information technology technician provides good value in servicing equipment and assisting with computer provision in school. Not all the equipment is used to the full and during the inspection, there were too many lessons where computers were not in use.
- 89 The teachers and support staff generally use the accommodation and learning resources well but there is some lack of flexibility in re-organising rooms to suit the activities planned. Available space is not always recognised as potential learning areas. In the Early Years' unit, insufficient attention has been given to using all staff and available space to provide indoor activities to promote the children's physical development. The walk to the main school takes valuable time and is not the most efficient solution to problems of provision.
- 90 Although teachers' planning refers to literacy and numeracy hours, in practice many of these extend to almost 75 minutes. In several cases, the work merely expands to fill the time and the added benefit is minimal.
- 91 The school gives good value for money given its context, average funding and higher than average number of pupils with special educational needs. On entry to the reception year, pupils' attainment is close to or above that expected for their age. Reading standards are good at Key Stage 1. Standards are improving at Key Stage 2 in writing, mathematics and science reflecting the school's focus on raising pupils' attainment. The school works successfully to develop pupils' positive attitudes to learning and is strong in supporting pupils' personal development. Pupils with special educational needs are very well provided for and make good progress. Many do well in end of key stage tests. Parents value the school highly and it provides a good service to the local community.

## **PART B: CURRICULUM AREAS AND SUBJECTS**

### **97 AREAS OF LEARNING FOR CHILDREN UNDER FIVE**

92 At the time of the inspection 55 children attended the nursery on a part-time basis and each of the two classes for reception year children had 30 children. Fifteen children were already five. The children's attainment on entry to the nursery is generally below that expected for their age in all six areas of learning. Children make good progress overall in the Nursery and by the time they enter the reception year, their attainment is only just below the national expectation for children of this age. Inspection evidence indicates that attainment in all six areas of learning is good overall in the nursery and satisfactory in the reception classes. This represents a satisfactory standard of attainment overall and broadly reflects the judgement of the previous inspection. By the age of five, and certainly by the end of the reception year, most children have achieved the nationally agreed Desirable Learning Outcomes.

93 The children's personal and social development is very well emphasised in the nursery and the children make very good progress. This provides a secure basis for the reception year when the children continue to make good progress although opportunities for them to develop their skills as independent learners in the reception classes are not as well developed.

94 Progress in listening and speaking is very good in the nursery and good in knowledge and understanding, physical development and creative development. In the reception classes, children make good progress in listening and speaking, reading and aspects of knowledge and understanding of the world. Progress is satisfactory overall in all other areas of learning. This is confirmed by the results of the assessments made at the start and end of the reception year. There are slight differences between the two classes reflecting different strengths in teaching.

### **100 Personal and social development**

95 In the nursery, the children settle very quickly into the routines and there is a very happy and industrious atmosphere. The children know the nursery teacher and nursery nurse, and the layout of the nursery from their visits before they attend for a full session. Most relate openly and confidently to adults and are eager to explore new learning. A particular strength is the children's high levels of independence. After only four weeks of attending full sessions, the children take care of their own needs, decide what they wish to do and often concentrate for long periods of time. When playing games they take turns, wait patiently for their turn and work together to put things away. They enjoy their time in the nursery and behave well. In the reception classes, the children develop these skills and most are quite mature and sensible for their age. They are attentive and willing learners who try hard to please their teachers. When sessions are overlong or when the pace is slow, some lose their concentration and fidget but generally, the children are interested in what is happening. They were very keen to be chosen to place different foods into categories and to play musical instruments. Two girls worked extremely well as partners in finding the right pocket on an Advent calendar to match their numbers. The shared joy when they succeeded was a fitting end to almost 30 minutes of intense and absorbed concentration. In both the nursery and reception classes, the children have a well-developed sense of right and wrong and a concern for others.

96 The quality of teaching and provision in personal and social development is very good in the nursery and good in the reception classes. The nursery teacher places the independence of the children as a very high priority and she and the nursery nurse work very hard to promote this in the autumn term before widening the curriculum further in the other terms. They have high expectations of the children's ability to make their own decisions, to accept responsibility for their own actions and to get what they need. This is well supported by good organisational procedures and clear, firm and consistent management of the children. Both adults are very warm and encouraging and their on-going assessment of the children's progress gives them a very good understanding of their needs and personalities. In the reception classes, the staff have a relaxed, open relationship with the children. They expect them to behave and to conform. Occasionally, the high number of adults and their organisation of activities remove chances for the children to find, choose and return resources independently.

102 Language and literacy

- 97 By the age of five, the attainment of the majority of the children is above that expected for their age in listening and speaking. A significant number are also reading the first books in the reading scheme and by the end of the reception year, many are fluent, independent readers. Attainment in writing is less well developed but broadly in line with national expectations. The children's handwriting is generally clear and legible although the majority of the children are not able to write their news or a simple story without the help of an adult.
- 98 In both the nursery and the reception classes, the children listen attentively to adults. They enjoy listening to stories and rhymes, have their favourites and are often keen to talk about them. One reception class sat very still and were oblivious to other things happening as they listened to and looked at the pictures in the book "Mr Bear babysits". Nursery children handle books carefully and sometimes choose to sit in the armchair and tell each other stories. When playing in the Post Office, they make marks as they write letters and address envelopes. A few know how to form letters in their name. In the reception classes, the children recognise alphabet letters, know their sounds and write them correctly. Many can write their first names unaided.
- 99 The quality of teaching and provision is good in the nursery and satisfactory in the reception classes. All staff value reading and provide lots of opportunities for children to look at books, take them home and share them with others. They give careful attention to the work on display in their rooms and there are many labels, questions and comments for the children to read and refer to. In the nursery, the use of toys such as Elmer the elephant heightens the children's interest and understanding of the story. The reception teachers have introduced the literacy hour and are using stories well to provide a range of related activities. However, more attention is being given to the development of children's reading skills than to writing and the teachers' expectations of what the children can do in writing are too low. The children are used to copying the adult's writing and less encouragement to "have a go" and use their knowledge about letters and words. Too often, especially in the afternoons, the children are left to choose their own activities whilst adults hear children read. Although individual profiles are passed on from the nursery and records are kept of the books children have read, there is no ongoing record of children's progress in language and literacy overall.

105 Mathematical development

- 100 The children's attainment in mathematics is as expected for their age. Nursery children count, sort and match objects and compared containers as they play in the sand and water. Some name correctly simple shapes such as squares and circles when choosing a biscuit. In the reception classes, the children count aloud to 20 and a few to 30 with the help of an adult. They recognise, count and order numbers correctly to 10 and when looking at other numbers use the correct order and number such as "it's a one and a six" (16). The majority recognise squares, rectangles, circles, triangles and higher attaining children know a hexagon and show a simple understanding of reflective symmetry. By the end of the reception year, the children record simple sums using addition and equivalence signs.
- 101 The quality of teaching and provision is good in the nursery and satisfactory in the reception classes. Much of the nursery environment and way of working promotes the children's mathematical development. The children know about doing things in the right order and know that only a certain number are allowed at each activity. Staff ask questions about quantity, size and shape as they work with the children and keep a record of children's progress. The reception teachers have introduced the numeracy hour and are giving appropriate emphasis to the development of the children's mental number skills. Lessons have clear objectives for children of differing attainment and often include appropriate practical activities such as matching shapes or cutting bread in half to make triangular or rectangular sandwiches. However, the high use of worksheets constrains the children's responses and activities. Helping adults are well prepared but occasionally, over direct the children and miss opportunities to let them develop ideas and show what they know. Effective use is made of computer programs to reinforce number recognition and awareness of value. A nursery nurse runs a course on family numeracy and parents choose games and numeracy packs to use with their children at home.

107 Knowledge and understanding of the world

102 Children make good progress overall and most achieve the standard expected for their age with many attaining at a higher level. In the Nursery, the children develop a sense of time passing and set times through the routines of the day. They know about people's jobs such as Postman Pat and the people who work in the Post Office. They independently use the computer mouse to control events on screen and know how to operate simple machines. When playing in the sand they experiment with different containers and smooth off surplus sand so that the bucket is "just full". Children in the reception classes recognise different foods from their appearance and packaging and sort them into different categories according to "crunchiness". They know that cheese and butter are made from milk. They have a developing awareness of the seasons and of religious festivals. They know that the Advent calendar marks the days before Christmas. Many have well developed skills in handling the computer mouse and using the typewriter and concept keyboards to operate different CD-ROM and computer programs. In looking at sail-boats, they select a sail shape and predict whether it will make their boat faster than others with other shaped sails.

103 The quality of teaching and provision is good in the nursery and satisfactory, but with strengths in the reception classes. Topics such as "Bears" are used well to link activities and to develop ideas across all areas of learning. In the nursery, parcels and what might be inside, were introduced as a natural development of the Post Office. Good use is made of actual items, books, photographs and the outdoor environment to interest the children. Occasionally, the adults supervise the children too closely and miss opportunities to allow them to choose resources and methods and to develop key skills in fixing and joining things for themselves.

109 Physical development

104 Physical development by the age of five is as expected for the children's age. Nursery children demonstrate appropriate control when steering and manoeuvring wheeled toys outside. In the nursery, they make satisfactory independent attempts to use scissors and to join materials with glue. A few show good skills in matching jigsaw pieces and manipulating small pieces of construction toys. In dance, they find their own space and demonstrate good body control in response to music. Reception children handle pencils, crayons and brushes with increasing control. They throw, catch, roll and retrieve a ball with reasonable accuracy when working with a partner and demonstrate awareness of the safety of others when running in a large space.

105 The quality of teaching and provision is good in the nursery and satisfactory in the reception classes. Good use is made of the outdoor area for daily sessions of play but the reception children do not have regular access to the wheeled toys. A structured programme of dance and physical education lessons supports the children's development. However, insufficient attention has been given to ways of using available time, adult support and indoor space in the Early Years unit to do this. Too much time is lost and inconvenience caused in walking the children to and from the main school hall.

111 Creative development

106 Children in the Nursery attain standards in creative development that are higher than national expectations. They print with shapes and colours and create their own versions of a patchwork elephant. Having been shown techniques and procedures, they work with little or no direct supervision to produce expressive pieces of work, for example, fireworks and large tonal shapes in one colour. They respond well to music through body movement, singing and they have a repertoire of songs. In the reception classes, the children learn a range of skills and techniques in using paint and other materials but often work to the direction of an adult rather than make their own decisions about how things should look. They clap and tap their knees in time to music and choose appropriate instruments to represent animals and sounds of everyday things. By the age of five they can name a range of percussion instruments and play them correctly to make their own music and accompany singing.

- 107 The quality of teaching and provision is good in the nursery and satisfactory in the reception classes.
- 108 The staff usually prepare well and ensure that the children have everything they need. Occasionally however, this restricts the children's choice and opportunities are missed to develop their appreciation and evaluation of what they have done. Themes and topics are used well to provide role play situations, such as the Three Bears' house or Postman Pat's van.

114

## **ENGLISH, MATHEMATICS AND SCIENCE**

### **114 English**

- 109 Standards overall are below those expected for pupils' age. Standards have risen at both key stages since the last inspection but this is more marked at Key Stage 1 where standards are now close to the national average.
- 110 In the 1999 Key Stage 1 national tests, the percentage of Year 2 pupils who reached Level 2, as expected for their age, was broadly in line with the national average in reading but well below in writing. Eight out of ten pupils attained Level 2 in reading and one in three pupils reached the higher Level 3, which was above the national average. Three out of four pupils reached Level 2 in writing and, in line with the national average, a small number reached Level 3. Pupils' higher attainment in reading raises the overall standard and the school is doing as well as other similar schools in reading but below the average in writing. Inspection evidence shows that most pupils are on line to achieve the level expected for their age in reading and writing.
- 111 In the 1999 end of Key Stage 2 tests, the percentage of pupils reaching Level 4 as expected for their age was well below the national average. A significant number of pupils had special educational needs in reading and writing and did not attain the level expected for their age. When the percentage of higher Level 5 attainment is taken into consideration, the overall results remain below the national average but in line with those of similar schools. Pupils' higher attainment in reading than writing was more marked than seen nationally. Twice as many pupils reached Level 4 in reading as in writing. The boys' attainment was closer to the national average in both reading and writing. The girls' low attainment in writing keeps the overall results below the average when comparing the school with similar schools. Only one girl in three reached Level 4 in writing but half of them did well for their age and reached the higher Level 5. Inspection evidence indicates that standards are similar to those of 1999. Attainment varies but only a small majority are on line to attain Level 4 in English by the end of Key Stage 2 and the target of 70 per cent is unrealistic.
- 112 At the end of Key Stage 1 and 2, most pupils attain the expected standard in speaking and listening. They make satisfactory progress and many are confident speakers. From starting in the nursery, most pupils converse easily, ask questions and put across their point of view. However, there is also a significant number of pupils of all ages who are less skilled in explaining or in answering questions at length. Pupils usually listen carefully to instructions and are attentive, appreciative listeners of stories, poetry and music. At story time, reception year children often sit spellbound. Pupils develop satisfactory skills in speaking before the class but there are few opportunities to take on roles or for older pupils to develop their skills in debating and arguing a case. Year 2 pupils gave clear and detailed instructions to the class on how to make a finger puppet and Year 6 pupils, in circle time, spoke clearly and competently about their hopes and ambitions.
- 113 Standards in reading are good at Key Stage 1 and satisfactory at Key Stage 2. Boys and girls are doing as well as others nationally and the percentage that reaches a high standard is above the national average. By the end of the reception year, many pupils are already reading independently and by the end of Key Stage 1, they are fluent, accurate readers. When reading aloud they use good expression and engage with the text, pointing out details in the pictures and sharing in the humour. Pupils have a good sight vocabulary and a good knowledge of letter patterns which they use to identify unfamiliar words. They know about the contents and index pages in information books but are less secure in their reading and comprehension of non-fiction. Lower attaining readers often need much support as they read but their willingness to have a go and their liking of reading adds much to the standard attained. By the end of Key Stage 2, most pupils cope well

with any text including encyclopaedias, poems by T.S. Eliot and “Dr Who” books. Most read fluently and accurately. The higher attaining readers read aloud with expression and characterisation and understand well what they read. They use the sense of the passage and familiarity with words to work out new words and use their alphabet knowledge well to look up information in dictionaries and reference books. Lower attaining readers find it hard coping with non fiction texts and are less fluent in their reading of stories and poems. They also find it hard to infer and deduce information from what they have read.

- 114 Key Stage 1 pupils make good progress in reading. The good teaching, the class reading sessions in the literacy hour and parents’ willingness to hear their children read at home have a positive effect on progress. Over the inspection week, Year 1 pupils made good progress in understanding the storyline and events in “Farmer Duck” and in identifying where punctuation such as exclamation marks helped them to alter their voice when reading aloud. Year 2 pupils predicted the content of a new information book from the blurb on the back, the title and the contents page. Progress slows overall at Key Stage 2 but there are many literacy lessons where pupils make good progress in appreciating how authors use language for effect. During the inspection, Key Stage 2 classes were using poetry as the basis for literacy work. Year 3 pupils made good progress over the days in appreciating the style and rhyme pattern of “Rockpool rap” and similarly, Year 5 pupils made good progress in identifying the metaphors in Edwards’ poem “The word party”. They make slower progress in realising the issues within stories and in interpreting author style. This is improving with literacy hour work and as pupils gain wider experience of different texts and authors. At both key stages, pupils with special educational needs and those receiving additional literacy support are making good progress, especially in word recognition.
- 115 Standards in writing overall are below average. Too many pupils are not reaching the level expected for their age and this is most marked at Key Stage 2. However, standards are improving at Key Stage 1 as the teachers are giving high, appropriate attention to pupils writing independently and are encouraging them to develop their own style. At Key Stage 2, many pupils find writing difficult. They often find it hard deciding what to say and how to organise their writing.
- 116 By the end of Key Stage 1, most pupils are writing independently and often using joined handwriting. Many write at some length and are beginning to revise their work and to correct spellings and punctuation. A significant number of Year 2 pupils have already achieved Level 2 in writing and are writing stories, instructions, invitations and reports. Their spelling is good and they often include interesting phrases and words such as “after a short while” or “meanwhile”. The good quality of content is lowered for some by their inconsistent use of appropriate punctuation. Many are confident in using the typewriter keyboard to word process their work and know how to use some function keys to correct and present it. By the end of Key Stage 2, pupils write accounts and reports competently. Higher attaining writers produce long stories with chapters and paragraphs. They are familiar with different formats in poetry and use interesting words and phrases when composing their own haiku or limericks. Not all pupils write in a neat, legible style. Many however, present their work well but are less conscientious in using their knowledge of grammar, punctuation and spellings in their free writing. Many make errors in spelling and punctuation and this lowers the standard. Pupils’ word processing skills are satisfactory.
- 117 Progress in writing is good at Key Stage 1 but then slows and is satisfactory at Key Stage 2. When they enter Key Stage 1, few pupils are confident, independent writers as they are more used to copying an adult’s writing. The literacy hour is helping Year 1 pupils to realise sentence structure and to begin to spell simple words for themselves. A significant number of pupils have yet to show an interest in writing and to recognise all letters and their sounds. This slows spelling progress. At Year 2, the teachers’ enthusiasm for language is having a positive effect on pupils’ progress. In the English co-ordinator’s class, the pupils are making noticeable progress in spelling, writing and handwriting. They use appropriate technical terms to talk about their writing and, because of the quality of the teaching and marking, are evaluating their own work and deciding how it can be improved. At Key Stage 2, the rate of progress varies but is satisfactory overall. It is good in some classes and lessons reflecting the teachers’ degree of confidence and expertise in teaching writing. All pupils make satisfactory progress in developing their knowledge of grammar, punctuation and spelling. They also make satisfactory progress in knowing how to write for a range of purposes including descriptions of characters, rules and instructions, reports and accounts. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress when they are supported by a teacher or other adult who helps to keep them concentrating on the task and aware of what they have to do. Over time, pupils are making

steady if slow progress in handwriting, spelling and writing.

- 118 Pupils' attitudes to English are good at both key stages. Pupils enjoy reading and are keen to read to others. They talk about their favourite books and authors and find poems that they like. When the pace slows, a small number of pupils, more often boys, become restless and occasionally disrupt the others. Pupils know the routines of the literacy hour well and usually organise themselves with little fuss. They concentrate hard and in the plenary, are keen to talk about what they have done. Year 3 pupils were keen and eager to find rhyming words and there was a purposeful working atmosphere settled to write their own. Pupils with special educational needs enjoy their group and individual sessions. They look forward to playing games, reading new books and seeing how many words they can remember.
- 119 The quality of teaching is good at Key Stage 1 and for pupils with special educational needs. It is satisfactory at Key Stage 2 overall although there are good literacy hours. The literacy co-ordinator's teaching is at least good and sometimes very good. Her enthusiasm, detailed planning and conscientious preparation of support materials act as a good example for others and the Year 2 pupils in her class are equally enthusiastic about reading and writing. Her work has much influenced the quality of teaching throughout the school but especially at Key Stage 1. All the teachers are using enlarged texts well to teach text, sentence and word level work and to highlight authors' and illustrators' style. As part of reading, appropriate time is taken at Key Stage 1 to show similarity between words, how they are spelt and how letters are formed correctly. Group activities are well thought out and good use is made of magnetic letters and word games.
- 120 At Key Stage 2, whilst the quality of the initial class session is often good, the independent group work and plenary sessions are less so and often lack the vitality of those at Key Stage 1. Too often the work involves copying out or worksheets which many pupils are relatively slow to complete. Guided reading times are often well managed and teachers use questioning well to probe the pupils' understanding of what they are reading. Questions as to what the poet really meant helped Year 5 pupils make good progress in understanding the use of metaphors. As in the last inspection, most lessons are well planned but the learning objectives are not always specific enough or used in the plenary session to evaluate what pupils have learnt. Many of the literacy "hours" are nearer 75 minutes in length and too often the work merely extends to fill the time and pace is lost.
- 121 All the staff have taken a serious approach to the literacy training and support staff are now working very productively with Year 3 and 4 pupils receiving Additional Literacy Support. In line with national guidance, they have prepared many resources and are using them effectively. Pupils with individual education plans receive good support in reaching the literacy targets set. The school has very wide range of materials to support these pupils and the Special Needs co-ordinator conscientiously maintains records of their progress. A good range of books, tapes and CD ROMs has been purchased to maintain boys' interest in reading at Key Stage 2.
- 122 The coordinator has a good understanding of the strengths and weaknesses in the curriculum and what needs to be done to raise standards. The school meets the statutory requirements of the English curriculum but the coordinator is aware that some aspects, such as drama, are insufficiently covered. She is working very hard to improve and raise the quality of English teaching throughout the school and in her short time at the school, has initiated many changes and increased staff confidence in delivering the literacy hour through her monitoring of teaching and helpful advice. Her action plan appropriately identifies the need to develop pupils' writing skills and to develop pupils' skills in reading non-fiction. She has written a clear marking and presentation policy but this has yet to be implemented fully by all staff to ensure that their comments help pupils to know how they can improve their writing.

128 **Mathematics**

- 123 Standards have risen at Key Stage 2 since the last inspection. Booster classes and preparation for the 1999 end of Key Stage 2 national tests helped to raise pupils' attainment. This brought results in line with the national average and above the average for similar schools. The percentage of pupils achieving the higher Level 5 rose to one in four. This was also in line with the national average and well above the average of similar schools. The boys' attainment was higher than the girls and well above the national average but little evidence of disparity in current Year 6 boys' and girls' attainment was noted in the inspection. Most are on target to achieve Level 4 as expected for their age by the end of the school year.
- 124 In the 1999 national tests at the end of Key Stage 1, the percentage of pupils attaining Level 2, as expected for their age, and the higher Level 3, was well below the national average and the average of similar schools. The girls did better than the boys whose attainment was well below that of boys nationally. Standards have not risen much since the last inspection. Findings from the inspection however, indicate that most Year 2 pupils are working at the level expected for their age and standards are rising, especially in number. In mental mathematics work, boys often do well and show a good grasp of number patterns.
- 125 By the end of Key Stage 1, pupils count up to 100 and identify missing numbers correctly in a number square. They count in twos, fives and tens and know that multiplication is repeated addition. Most pupils have developed effective mental strategies to cope with simple number problems. They add and subtract to twenty and have a good awareness of double numbers. They have a sound knowledge of shapes, space and measures and recognise a range of shapes including hexagons and pyramids.
- 126 By the end of Key Stage 2, pupils are confident and reasonably quick in number calculations to 1000. They are secure in the four rules of number and have a sound understanding of fractions, averages and decimals. Pupils use protractors correctly to identify angle types and use appropriate mathematical terms to explain how to assess whether shapes are congruent.
- 127 Pupils' progress at both key stages is satisfactory over time and good in many lessons. Pupils make sound progress in working with number and in developing and applying mathematical knowledge, skills and language. Year 1 pupils build on the good progress made in the nursery and reception year. They count forward and backwards to and from 20 and work out addition and subtraction sums to 20. Higher attaining pupils recognise and record numbers to 100 and their understanding of place value is more like that of Year 2 pupils. Key Stage 2 pupils learn multiplication tables and make satisfactory progress in solving number problems. Year 3 pupils have a sound understanding of division and the pattern of number. By Year 4, pupils talk in more depth about the relationship between multiplication and division. In one lesson, a class of Year 5 pupils made good progress in using plotting co-ordinates and using axes correctly on a treasure map. Higher attaining pupils extended this work by plotting positive and negative numbers. In all year groups, pupils with special educational needs make at least satisfactory and often good progress due to the high level of adult support.
- 128 Pupils' attitudes are good. Many look forward to the numeracy hour especially the mental mathematics session. Year 2 pupils were highly motivated to take part when they were given number cards. In most classes, pupils show good application when at work, behave well and respond positively to challenges. When given the opportunity, pupils collaborate sensibly. Year 2 pupils helped each other to find the answer to multiplication questions on the computer.
- 129 The overall quality of teaching is satisfactory at both key stages. At Key Stage 1 there are many good lessons and the teachers are implementing the numeracy hour well. Following one unsatisfactory lesson, a Year 2 teacher amended her planning, increased the pace and introduced new resources and practical activities. This raised the quality of the teaching and ensured pupils made at least satisfactory progress in understanding multiplication. At both key stages, most teachers demonstrate a secure knowledge and understanding of mathematics and of the National Numeracy Strategy. Appropriate emphasis is placed on developing pupils' use and understanding of mathematical language through teachers' questioning and comments.

- 130 Teachers' planning generally identifies clear learning objectives and this indicates improvement since the last inspection when this was a shortcoming in some lessons. Most teachers share with pupils the learning objective for the lesson and follow the recommended format of beginning the numeracy hour with a mental calculation session and ending with a plenary. In the better lessons, quick-fire questioning, the targetting of questions to individuals and reviews of what has been achieved are promoting good progress. However, some teachers need further professional development in understanding what is required in leading an effective numeracy hour, in using imaginative approaches to develop pupils' skills in mental mathematics and using information technology to support pupils' learning. Not all teachers encourage pupils to use a range of strategies to solve mathematical problems. Homework is used effectively in some classes to support class work through the learning of multiplication tables and number bonds.
- 131 The subject is well led by the two co-ordinators. They are enthusiastic, lead by example, demonstrate effective teaching and pass on ideas from recent training in the implementation of the numeracy strategy. At both key stages there is an agreed focus on the development of pupils' number skills. The good displays of mathematics and number around the school enhance work in lessons but do not always set challenges or encourage the pupils to use the information displayed. The curriculum fully meets the requirements of the National Curriculum but the policy and scheme of work are being updated to reflect national guidance. The co-ordinators monitor teachers' planning and classroom practice and provide support and advice as necessary. The school has made a positive start in implementing the National Numeracy Strategy and has the potential to raise standards and meet its targets.
- 137 **Science**
- 132 Teacher assessments of Year 2 pupils' attainment in 1999 were well below the national average and that for similar schools. Only three out of four pupils achieved Level 2 as expected for their age. One in ten reached the higher Level 3 but this was also lower than the national average. The girls performed better than the boys unlike the national trend where boys and girls did equally well. Pupils' attainment was similar in all aspects of science. Inspection evidence shows that attainment is lower than expected for pupils' ages at Key Stage 1.
- 133 The percentage of pupils attaining Level 4, as expected for their age, in the 1999 end of Key Stage 2 national tests was below the national average but broadly in line with that of similar schools. However, the low number of pupils attaining the higher Level 5 brings the overall result to well below the national average. The boys' attainment was higher than the girls' unlike the national trend of similar attainment. In order to raise standards, particularly for the higher attaining pupils, the school is rightly placing more emphasis on investigative work and the development of pupils' recording skills. Inspection evidence shows that these strategies are beginning to prove effective and that many of Year 6 pupils are on line to attain Level 4 by the end of the school year.
- 134 Standards in the last inspection were judged to be "*at least in line with, and frequently above, the national expectation.*" Whilst standards have risen nationally, they have remained much the same at both key stages since 1996 with slight variations year to year reflecting different attainment groups.
- 135 By the end of Key Stage 1, pupils have sound scientific knowledge and skills. They have some awareness of the characteristics of a fair test. Last year, Year 2 pupils realised they needed to have ice cubes of the same size and to place them at the same time when comparing melting times. From practical investigation, Year 2 pupils know that objects can be moved by pushing or pulling and that a harder push will move an object further. They know about materials and some of their characteristics and properties and know that plants need water and light to grow. They are aware of the life cycles of plants and animals and that humans need a balanced diet and exercise to stay healthy. They look for similarities and differences between living and non-living things and record their findings in tables, charts and reports.

- 136 By the end of Key Stage 2, pupils have developed their knowledge of physical and life processes and the process of investigation. However, many pupils' attainment is below that expected for their age as their knowledge is often insecure and their skills in conducting a fair test and comparing conclusions are tentative. Following demonstrations and trials, most Year 6 pupils use a force meter correctly to measure the up-thrust of objects in water. They have a simple understanding of gravity and forces. Pupils' knowledge is most secure in facts about humans as organisms. Their understanding of concepts in other areas of science is often weak; for example the processes of evaporation and condensation. Pupils' scientific vocabulary is quite restricted and they struggle to understand and use words such as "insulator" and "solution".
- 137 Pupils' progress is generally satisfactory in lessons at both key stages with good progress in Years 2 and 6. Pupils with special educational needs often make good progress as they are well supported by a teacher or classroom assistant. Higher attaining pupils make good progress when they are allowed to investigate for themselves. A group of Year 2 pupils knew that blowing was using force and applied this knowledge well to predict the speed and extent of movement when they blew on an object. All pupils in one Year 6 class made good progress in understanding aspects of balanced and unbalanced forces. However, in many lessons and in work seen from last year, pupils' progress is limited by teachers' use of worksheets to direct pupils' investigations and to record their findings. Year 4 pupils became so focussed on answering the questions on their sheet that their observations and investigation of materials to keep things cold were sidelined. Their observations were brief and their responses lacked depth. Too often, pupils have little scope to test out their own ideas. There is some evidence of appropriate open-ended investigations. Higher attaining Year 6 pupils devised a two-way switch for an electric circuit, choosing their own equipment and trying out different ideas.
- 138 The revisiting of topics and concepts in different years at greater depth promotes pupils' progress in key aspects of science. Although pupils conduct investigations, there has been little guidance for teachers on how to develop pupils' skills systematically and progress has been uneven. When pupils are given a problem, such as Year 1 pupils having to find the best material for a raincoat for a pet, they make sound progress in using skills such as predicting, sorting, classifying and comparing results. On some occasions, however, they have insufficient time to try things again and concepts and skills remain insecure. Year 2 pupils have developed well in making predictions about what might happen before they begin to find out. However, Year 4 pupils show little understanding of how to plan a test or of the term "prediction". Many made wild guesses as to which material wrap might be best to delay ice melting and showed little application of everyday experiences to support their views. Year 5 pupils still work together as a class; higher attaining pupils who can independently identify the main key factors to be considered are constrained by this.
- 139 Pupils' attitudes to science are always good at Key Stage 1 and mainly good and never less than satisfactory at Key Stage 2. When pupils are involved in investigations there is a real sense of enjoyment. Year 5 pupils concentrated hard and worked enthusiastically as they devised ways to muffle the sound of a clock in a parcel. Most pupils respond well to questioning and are keen to share their findings. Relationships between pupils are almost always good and this results in good group co-operation. Year 6 pupils organised themselves well to weigh objects and to take turns to carry out the testing.
- 140 The overall quality of teaching is satisfactory at both key stages. There is some good teaching, especially by the science co-ordinator. Teachers' knowledge is sound but there is some lack of confidence in developing pupils' understanding through investigational work. Although the teachers guide and encourage the pupils, the frequent directive style and tight control of pupils' learning often limits the progress made. In the better lessons, teachers use open-ended questioning effectively to prompt pupils' thinking and probe their understanding. Information from the assessment of pupils' knowledge was used well to provide an appropriately challenging investigation for higher attaining Year 2 pupils and activities well matched to the attainment levels of groups of Year 6 pupils.

- 141 Science teaching contributes well to the development of pupils' literacy skills. At both key stages, pupils are encouraged to talk about what their ideas and what they see and do. One class of Year 2 pupils gave good evaluative reports on what they had learned. Teachers have prioritised the use of appropriate scientific vocabulary and the display of key words helps pupils in writing up their findings. Mathematical skills are developed as pupils take measurements and record data.
- 142 The quality of leadership in science is good. The coordinator is committed to raising standards, particularly in the development of science skills, and has introduced a new scheme of work to assist the systematic development of pupils' knowledge and understanding through investigation. The school is following national guidance and meeting the requirements of the National Curriculum. Teachers' half termly planning is thorough and shows clear learning objectives and desired outcomes. Pupils' attainment is assessed in end of topic tests. The curtailing of staff development, due to higher priorities of training for the National Literacy and Numeracy strategies, has meant that less confident teachers have had to rely mainly on the scheme for guidance. In the light of this, the coordinator has revised the programme to target the development of pupils' investigational skills until the next school year when there will be staff development time. At present, in order to raise attainment at the end of both key stages, the deputy headteacher is using her subject expertise to teach Year 2 pupils and the co-ordinator works alongside a Year 6 teacher. Inspection evidence suggests that this is having a positive benefit. The monitoring role of the coordinator is well developed. She evaluates teachers' planning and gives advice and support to colleagues. As seen in the last inspection, her enthusiasm and that of another teacher is shared well with equally interested pupils at a weekly science club.
- 143 There are good resources to develop all aspects of science. Effective use is made of specialist expertise from visitors from the local secondary school and Heysham power station to extend the science curriculum.

## 149 **OTHER SUBJECTS OR COURSES**

### 149 **Information technology**

- 144 Pupils are on target to attain the national expectations in information technology at the end of both key stages. This does not reflect the overall judgement of attainment at the previous inspection when standards in most strands of the subject were generally above those expected nationally. Since then, the school has successfully addressed the weakness identified in control technology and has worked hard to ensure that overall provision is both balanced and up-to-date. Pupils at both key stages make satisfactory progress. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress principally through additional adult support but also through careful matching of task to the needs of the individual.
- 145 Much of what is planned for information technology is integrated into other subjects. Evidence has been gained from observing teachers working with individuals and small groups, from talking to pupils about their work, from the scrutiny of previous and current work and teachers' planning.
- 146 By the end of Key Stage 1, pupils are familiar with the operation of the computer by means of the keyboard and the mouse. They know how to save, print and retrieve their work although some need adult or child help. When word processing, pupils type their work directly onto the screen using different fonts and the full stop, capital letter and question mark keys. They use data handling techniques to produce simple graphs in other subjects, for example, health and growth in science. Control skills are developing satisfactorily through the use of a programmable toy. Younger pupils use the keyboard confidently when writing stories, use the mouse for graphics work and to control events on the screen.
- 147 At Key Stage 2, pupils continue to develop confidence and expertise, consolidating the knowledge already gained. By the end of Year 6, they understand how to organise and present their work in different subjects. They appreciate how and why information is stored and apply this knowledge when, for example interrogating data from bar charts. Pupils create sets of commands for other pupils on how to produce different types of graphs.

- 148 By the end of Key Stage 2, pupils edit their work using a range of applications such as correcting spelling or moving text. Year 6 pupils' health and safety posters combine text and graphics in colourful and interesting ways. Year 6 pupils are learning how to use a digital camera to be able to produce a front page for their record of achievement. Younger Key Stage 2 pupils use graphics to make Roman mosaic tiles, follow research maps to find information on CD ROMs, and use highlighting skills to improve the appearance of their finished work.
- 149 Pupils respond positively and are keen to use the computers. They use the systems sensibly and with a sense of purpose demonstrating a secure understanding and use of appropriate technical language. Pupils in both key stages show confidence and competence in using equipment.
- 150 It is not possible to make a judgement on the quality of class teaching but when teachers intervene appropriately to alert individuals and small groups of children to specific skills and functions the teaching is satisfactory at both key stages. Teachers' weekly planning includes appropriate learning and skills' objectives linked to a range of subjects.
- 151 A comprehensive policy is in place which addresses all strands of the subject and meets the requirements of the National Curriculum. Teachers' long- and medium-term planning provides a clear progression of skills to be developed as pupils move through the school. Information technology is well integrated into the curriculum, principally through literacy, mathematics, science, history and geography. This provides appropriate opportunities for pupils to apply their skills in a practical situation. However, frequently lessons, including the literacy and numeracy hours, make insufficient use of computers as a learning tool.
- 152 The previous inspection identified assessment and recording procedures as a weakness. The school appropriately addressed this and agreed a system. However, its use is inconsistent and there is no continuity of practice to record pupils' progress in developing skills and knowledge in all aspects of information technology.
- 153 Resources are good. Each class has access to at least two and often more computers which offer all needed facilities to ensure progress. In addition, the school has control hardware and a digital camera. Appropriate thought has been given to ensuring that computer software is matched to subjects and to year groups. Through the National Grid for Learning, the school is ready to open its own intranet. A five-year development plan is in place and includes skills training for teachers. The co-ordinators are relatively new to the role but have already been successful in providing a good quality guidance document for staff and promoting efficiency through setting up a log book to identify technical problems. The appointment of a technician for several hours each week relieves teachers of the task of ensuring that all equipment is in working order.
- 159 **Religious education**
- 154 Standards in religious education at the end of both key stages meet the expectations set out in the locally Agreed Syllabus. This is broadly in line with the judgement made in the previous inspection. All pupils, including those with special educational needs make satisfactory progress at both key stages.
- 155 By the end of Key Stage 1, pupils have developed a satisfactory level of knowledge about Christian literature through Bible stories and are beginning to respond with sensitivity to how people might feel in different situations. They have a satisfactory understanding of aspects of Judaism and know that Shabbat is the Jewish holy day of the week and that the Torah is the holy book of Judaism. Teachers' plans indicate that pupils in this key stage will learn about Aspects of Christian worship and the major Christian festivals throughout the year. In line with the Agreed Syllabus, they will also study Hinduism in the summer term.

- 156 By the end of Key Stage 2, pupils have considered a range of aspects of Christianity and all other major world faiths. They know that religious objects and symbols found in places of worship such as churches and synagogues reflect differences in beliefs and customs. Many pupils are developing a deeper understanding of the meaning of symbols. They explain that in Christianity, water is a symbol of washing away sin. They are developing a satisfactory understanding of the point of view of participants in difficult situations. This was evident in their writing on refugees in wartime.
- 157 Pupils' response is satisfactory overall. When their interest is caught, they respond very enthusiastically. Year 4 pupils in a lesson on the symbolic meaning of light in Christianity demonstrated a high level of interest and involvement and good skills in thinking beyond the literal. In all lessons most pupils listen attentively and behave well.
- 158 The overall quality of teaching at both key stages is satisfactory overall with a small amount of good practice. Teaching is most effective when pupils are encouraged to form thoughtful views on religious issues and this helps them towards a greater understanding of religious ideas and symbolism. Teachers generally plan activities appropriately to promote knowledge and understanding. Occasionally, undemanding tasks are set when pupils merely copy information.
- 159 The school complies with the requirements of the locally Agreed Syllabus. The co-ordinator is currently leading the development of a scheme of work. The previous inspection identified assessment and recording procedures as a weakness. Following the inspection the school appropriately addressed the issue in the action plan but there is no agreed, consistent system currently in use to monitor pupils' progress throughout the year. This remains an area for development.
- 160 Improvements in resources have been made since the previous inspection. Provision was judged as satisfactory but is now good. The co-ordinator has worked hard to ensure that there is a good collection of artefacts and literature to support the study of different religions. This study and the discussion of issues make a good contribution to the pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
- 166 **Art**
- 161 Three art lessons, all at Key Stage 2, were seen during the week of the inspection. However, evidence from an examination of teachers' planning, records, pupils' previous work, classroom and corridor displays, and discussions with teachers and pupils allow judgements to be made.
- 162 Pupils' attainment at both key stages is as expected for their age and they make satisfactory progress in developing skills, techniques and an appreciation of the work of others. Standards have been sustained since the last inspection.
- 163 Pupils develop good pencil control at Key Stage 1 and pay increasing attention to details of shape and form in their observational drawings and sketches. This continues at Key Stage 2. Year 3 pupils used a variety of pencils to outline and give depth to sketches of Roman artefacts. By Year 6, pupils produce detailed, fine pencil work. Their portraits of other pupils show appropriate shading and use of tone to show perspective. Pupils develop satisfactory skills in using and combining a range of media and techniques. They learn how to use paint, collage materials, papers, pastels and dyes but, as noted in the last inspection, there is very little use of clay. Year 3 pupils learn how to blend primary colours to make secondary colours and Year 4 pupils sketch, draw, paint and use fabric paints to portray shells. Last year's Year 6 pupils created creditable Egyptian wall-hangings using batik, tie dyeing and paper collage techniques. Pupils also acquire an understanding of the style of famous artists. Year 1 pupils emulate with the style of L.S. Lowry in their own street scenes and Year 3 pupils blend lines, shapes and colours to create an abstract picture in the style of Kandinsky. By Year 5, pupils use elements of an artist's work such as flower designs based on William Morris's work.

- 164 Pupils have positive attitudes to art. They enjoy their work and are proud of what they produce. They like seeing their work on display and are keen to talk and discuss it. They work well together, and co-operate and collaborate successfully in completing their pieces. They are supportive of others and evaluate their work sensitively. Pupils are careful with all equipment, materials and artefacts used in lessons.
- 165 The quality of teaching at both key stages is satisfactory. Teachers plan lessons well, are enthusiastic and have good subject knowledge. Teachers' good relationships with pupils encourage pupils to talk about their work and to express themselves openly. Effective use is made of existing art displays to highlight elements such as double mounting and lettering styles. Occasionally the pace in lessons is slow and adults direct pupils' work too much to allow individual interpretation. Information technology is not used to any great extent in developing or recording pupils' work.
- 166 Art is often twinned with design and technology where it is part of the finishing process. This does not always allow pupils the opportunity to practise skills and techniques previously introduced. The subject is well resourced and the co-ordinator intends to revise the policy and scheme of work in line with national guidance.
- 172 **Design and technology**
- 167 In addition to the three lessons observed, other evidence has been gained from a scrutiny of pupils' work, displays, photographs and discussion with pupils and staff. At both key stages, pupils make at least satisfactory progress, and their attainment is as expected for their age and sometimes better. This sustains the standards reported in the last inspection. Pupils with special educational needs often do as well as others due to the practical nature of the work.
- 168 Key Stage 1 pupils make good progress in developing design and making skills and in working with a suitable range of tools and materials. In Year 1, pupils experiment with different ways of making hinges before making houses with opening doors. Year 2 pupils design and make finger puppets. They use a design brief to sketch the intended product and to list the materials they will use. They carefully make a template to create the basic shape and understand why size is important. Pupils' scissor and sewing skills develop well. Most pupils use a simple running stitch to sew round the shape, building on earlier experiences of sewing using cards with ready-made holes, in preference to gluing their puppet as they know it is more durable.
- 169 At Key Stage 2, pupils develop their knowledge and skills in working with soft and rigid materials and in finishing techniques. Older pupils produce working models with motors and also create their own recipes such as millennium biscuits. Pupils develop a good understanding of investigate, design, make and evaluate process in response to a problem. Year 3 pupils looked at commercially produced photograph frames before using card to make their own. They used appropriate techniques to thicken and join card and created flaps, tabs and loops to ensure their frames were stable. By Year 5, pupils are competent in generating ideas, gathering information and explaining why they think their design for a musical instrument will meet the set criteria. Their drawings are detailed and often well annotated.
- 170 Pupils' response in lessons is good or better. They show enthusiasm for what they are doing and concentrate well. Year 2 pupils were totally absorbed in sewing and persevered even though many found it difficult and frustrating when the thread knotted.
- 171 The quality of teaching is at least satisfactory at both key stages. Pupils in one Year 2 class made particularly good progress because of the high quality of the teaching. Questions such as "Is it secure?" and "How can you make it better?" enabled pupils to evaluate their products so far in terms of fitness for purpose and the quality of their stitching. The teachers support and guide the pupils and adult helpers are generally well deployed and briefed although, on occasions, too much help is given.

- 172 A new scheme of work has been adopted from the beginning of this term. It follows national guidance and ensures appropriate coverage of the National Curriculum programmes of study. There is no whole school assessment policy. The coordinator advises staff and monitors termly plans. The wide range of tools and materials support and enhance pupils' learning.
- 178 **Geography**
- 173 At both key stages, pupils' attainment is as expected for their ages. The high achievement of pupils at Key Stage 2, noted in the last inspection, is not evident although a strength is pupils' awareness of their environment and how they may conserve and improve it.
- 174 All pupils, including those with special educational needs, make satisfactory progress.
- 175 They acquire knowledge of geographical facts about places and peoples, and develop skills in using atlases, maps and directions. They become increasingly aware of their local area, its geography and environmental issues. At Key Stage 1, pupils develop an understanding of geographical features and how to refer to them. Year 1 pupils consider what they see on their walk to school, identify buildings and features from photographic evidence, conduct traffic surveys and draw their own simple maps. Year 2 pupils, use terms such as "island" and "mainland", know that an island is surrounded by water and that Morecambe is a seaside place on the mainland of England. Using information from the story of Katie Morag, they have drawn a map of the island of Struay and use simple co-ordinates to locate places. They have definite opinions about the things about their own area they do not like such as litter and busy roads that they feel spoil their town.
- 176 This knowledge and simple geographical skills provides a sound basis for work at Key Stage 2. Year 3 pupils look at other countries and contrasting localities. They study the effects of world weather on life and conditions. By the end of Year 4, pupils have a raised awareness of local environmental issues from a visit to Rayner's Field, a local site which is the focus of development controversy. Their observations and the information they collect enable them to form opinions and views about possible solutions. Year 5 pupils develop their skills in using atlases, globes and maps to locate places important to the Ancient Greeks and look at Morecambe as a settlement. By the end of Key Stage 2, pupils have developed their skills in making and interpreting maps, and using symbols, legends, keys and co-ordinates. They have a satisfactory understanding of some of the more common symbols and features of Ordnance Survey maps. They are aware that the closer the contour lines, the steeper the slope. They know the stages of the water cycle and study the power and effect of water in eroding the land.
- 177 Pupils have good attitudes to their work and respond well to learning about their environment, both locally and further afield. They show interest in and listen carefully to their teachers. Year 2 pupils eagerly talked about the map they had drawn and Year 4 pupils co-operated well to pool their knowledge and answer questions.
- 178 Only one lesson was observed. It is not possible to make a firm judgement about the quality of teaching at both key stages but from all evidence, such as teachers' planning and work on display and in pupils books, it is clear that teachers' knowledge and understanding of the subject is satisfactory. Effective use is made of visits, books, photographs and maps to engage the pupils in developing and applying geographical skills.
- 179 The policy for geography is out of date and the school is basing much work on recommended national guidelines that provide structure and progression. The curriculum is enhanced by visits for each year group, initially local walks and culminating in a residential visit for Year 6 pupils at Ambleside.

185 **History**

180 All pupils, including those with special educational needs, make satisfactory progress in history. At both key stages, pupils generally attain the standard expected for their age.

181 At Key Stage 1, pupils develop an understanding of the differences between the past and present and begin to appreciate historical enquiry. They acquire knowledge about how the way of life has changed over time. By looking at evidence in books and photographs and from direct observation of houses on a walk, they compare houses now and in Victorian times. Pupils know of some famous people from the past. Year 2 pupils know that Florence Nightingale worked to improve the conditions for men injured in the Crimean war. They are developing the ability to make fair assumptions from given facts.

182 Key Stage 2 pupils develop their historical knowledge and understanding of different periods. They discover why people invaded Britain and realise the difference between invaders and settlers. They develop a good understanding of the legacy of different peoples and the impact of previous civilisations on today's society. Year 5 pupils are aware that the Ancient Greeks had their own alphabet and that they lived by the democratic principle of local and national government. Year 6 pupils have a good grasp of rationing and its effect during and after World War II.

183 Pupils' response in lessons is generally positive. They enjoy looking at artefacts, such as Roman armour and sword. Year 5 pupils worked well in groups to brainstorm their ideas about modern government and others were really keen to decipher Greek words and names. Year 6 pupils were very interested to hear that bananas were not part of war time rations. Occasionally, pupils are restless when the lesson pace is slow or they are not sure what they have to do.

184 The quality of teaching at both key stages is satisfactory overall. In two Key Stage 2 lessons seen it was good. In the better lessons the teachers choose activities well to motivate the pupils and build on their knowledge. They encourage the pupils by posing questions and offering points of view to be considered. The discussion of the knock-on effects of rationing allowed Year 6 pupils to realise and infer consequences for themselves such the lack of milk resulting in little cheese. As noted in the last inspection, the teachers make good use of a range of source material, visits and links with other subjects. A display of photographs in Year 6 shows that dance was used to help pupils empathise with the invaders and the invaded and also to perform the 'Lambeth Walk'. Although many worksheets are used, some of poor quality, there are also good opportunities for pupils to write their own accounts.

185 The co-ordinator monitors teachers' medium term plans to ensure appropriate coverage but has not as yet monitored the quality of teaching. The national scheme of work has been adopted this term and is to be reviewed during the academic year. Resources have improved since the last inspection, including books also used as part of the literacy hour.

191 **Music**

186 The majority of pupils' attainment is appropriate for their age. At both key stages all pupils, including those with special educational needs, are making satisfactory progress. A strength is the active involvement of pupils in music making and the inclusion of listening, appraising, composing and performing in all lessons seen during the inspection.

187 At Key Stage 1, pupils develop an awareness of rhythm and pattern in music. Year 1 and 2 pupils appreciated the need to sing a lullaby "gently" and Year 2 clapped and sang correctly rhythm patterns demonstrated by the teacher. Key Stage 1 pupils learn to play percussion instruments to accompany themselves and at Key Stage 2, pupils show good knowledge of the sounds made by different instruments. Year 3 pupils chose instruments carefully to represent the sounds of different weather types and Year 5 pupils created their own simple group compositions using non-standard notation. By the end of the key stage, pupils compose a sound piece using their own market seller chants. Year 6 pupils clapped complex rhythm patterns to a steady beat and maintained their own part well in a three part performance.

- 188 Each key stage has singing time when classes come together to sing a wide range of hymns and songs they have practised and memorised in class. Pupils sing together tunefully, with expression and with a growing awareness of pitch, duration and tempo.
- 189 Pupils' response to music is always positive and behaviour is good. They like music lessons, become fully involved, work hard and their enjoyment is obvious. Year 2 pupils spontaneously applauded a classmate who clapped a complex rhythm pattern without faltering. Pupils choose instruments without fuss and wait patiently to use them. Groups work together well when composing and listen to the contribution of others. They listen attentively and comment on the work on others.
- 190 The quality of teaching in Key Stage 1 is satisfactory. In Key Stage 2 the teaching is mainly good and never less than satisfactory. All lessons are well planned and organised to involve all pupils. Where teaching is good, the teachers' good subject knowledge, confidence and enthusiasm are passed on to pupils. These lessons move at a brisk pace, challenge the pupils and ensure good progress by all. At Key Stage 2, the leadership of lessons by one teacher with subject expertise alongside less confident members of staff is providing support and guidance in how to teach music effectively. This is helping to overcome the concern raised in the previous inspection report about the lack of expertise of some teachers.
- 191 Provision for music is good and there are good opportunities for pupils to develop their musical talents. A significant number of pupils receive weekly instrumental tuition from specialist teachers from the local education music service. The school has a choir, recorder and guitar clubs run by enthusiastic staff and pupils are well taught and make good progress especially in reading music. These groups perform regularly in assemblies. Recorded music is chosen to illustrate assembly themes and pupils listen to, and discuss, a wide range of music. Pupils have the opportunity to listen to live performances of music from their own and other cultures and this makes a sound contribution to their cultural development. Pupils' social skills are developed as they work together to perform and compose.
- 192 The new music coordinator has good subject expertise and is keen to raise standards in school, particularly in singing. The comprehensive policy and scheme of work give a useful structure for non-specialists and cover all aspects of the National Curriculum programmes of study. The co-ordinator monitors teachers' planning and gives support and advice when needed.
- 198 **Physical education**
- 193 Pupils' attainment overall is as expected for their age at both key stages but older pupils show good skills in games particularly in football and mini-rugby. Many pupils also achieve high standards for their age in swimming through their attendance at the after school swimming club.
- 194 During the inspection, dance, gymnastics, games and swimming activities were observed. Over the year, the school provides a balanced programme of physical education. Pupils play team games, participate in gymnastics and athletics activities and respond to music through dance. Pupils in Year 5 have swimming lessons and Year 6 pupils experience outdoor adventurous activities in the summer term as part of their visit to Ambleside. Pupils also have access to a wide range of extra curricular activities including soccer, mini-rugby, basketball, netball, running, swimming, athletics, quick cricket and rounders.
- 195 At both key stages, pupils make satisfactory progress. They develop their physical skills, perform with increasing competence and have a developing understanding of the effect of exercise on the body. Pupils with special educational needs often do as well as the others. All pupils develop an appreciation of how to move to music. Year 1 pupils learn to plan a sequence of movements and in one lesson, as "lively cherries" practised different ways of moving. Year 2 pupils build on these skills and create their own dance sequence. In the playground and in lessons, Key Stage 1 and 2 pupils show developing knowledge of rules when playing team games and use their skills to attack or defend. Year 3 pupils' developing skills in passing, receiving and catching balls are applied well in Year 4 when they handle and pass rugby balls. By Year 6, pupils dodge opponents and pass balls with a high degree of accuracy.

- 196 Pupils demonstrate positive attitudes and many choose to take part in extra curricular activities. They respond well to challenges and enjoy sustaining energetic activity over a long period. Most contribute well, often make a great effort to improve their performance and behave well. The good relationships with staff and other pupils add much to their enjoyment and willingness to take part. Pupils co-operate well in groups and are willing to help others who have less well developed skills. They are proud and eager to demonstrate when they do well. The subject makes a positive contribution to pupils' social and moral development.
- 197 The quality of teaching at Key Stage 1 is good and satisfactory at Key Stage 2. The outstanding teaching reported in the 1996 inspection was not evident during this. At both key stages, teachers structure the lessons well and include appropriate warm-up and cool-down activities. They give clear instructions and explanations and encourage pupils to develop skills. In the better lessons, pupils make marked progress due to the teachers' explicit outlining of how to improve with demonstrations and evaluations of pupils' skills. Teachers act as good role models, dressing appropriately and showing an enthusiasm for physical education.
- 198 The subject is well led and managed by an enthusiastic co-ordinator who is a physical education specialist and a qualified trainer in the commercial scheme used. The policy and scheme of work provide well structured guidance for teachers. Good use is made of the school's large playground and of the field on the Early Years' unit site.
- 204 **Swimming**
- 199 The inspection of this school included a focused view of swimming which is reported below.
- 200 By the end of Key Stage 2, nine out of ten pupils swim 25 metres. Pupils who can not swim 25 metres receive support on transfer to secondary education. Pupils begin swimming lessons in Year 5. The school has use of the 25 metre indoor heated pool at the local secondary school and pupils travel there by bus. The swimming teachers are well qualified and the quality of teaching is at least good and sometimes very good. Pupils make good progress in the 30 minute lessons. The teachers demonstrate swimming strokes and waste no time in moving pupils on to the next challenge such as swimming on their backs with a float whilst they practise leg movements. In both lessons seen, pupils made good progress in performing the breast-stroke and showed developing confidence in their own abilities.
- 201 The physical education co-ordinator is a qualified swimming coach and takes 24 pupils to the pool for extra-curricular swimming. Her tuition raises pupils' attainment and the school has twice won the local swimming gala.

## **PART C: INSPECTION DATA**

### **207 SUMMARY OF INSPECTION EVIDENCE**

- 202 The inspection was carried out by a team of seven inspectors, including a lay inspector. Two inspectors were in school for two days and the others for four days giving an inspection of 24 days. During the days in school, the team observed 99 lessons or parts of lessons accounting for 77 hours. An additional 52 hours was spent in other inspection activities, including observation of Additional Literacy Support groups and Special Educational Needs support. Inspectors visited both school sites and also accompanied pupils to the swimming baths.
- 203 The inspectors heard 43 pupils read and talked to many pupils about their work this year and in previous years. A range of assemblies, registrations and classroom routines were observed as well as playtimes and lunchtime activities. Pupils were observed entering and leaving school. The current work of several pupils from each year group was examined along with work from 1998/9, photographic and tape recorded evidence of work in previous terms and work on display around the school. Inspectors also looked at class books, school reports, assessment records, pupils' records of achievement and teachers' planning files. The inspectors interviewed all subject and aspect co-ordinators, the special educational needs co-ordinator, the nursery teacher and the Early Years co-ordinator. Meetings were also held with the headteacher, the deputy headteacher, the Chair of the governing body and the school secretary.
- 204 School documentation was scrutinised including the school development plan, the special needs register, individual education plans, attendance records, curriculum planning from this and previous terms, examination results, minutes from meetings of the governing body and school management teams and budgetary information.
- 205 Parents' views were received at a meeting prior to the inspection attended by nine parents. The inspectors also considered the information from 55 questionnaires returned and the additional comments on six of them.

## DATA AND INDICATORS

### Pupil data

	Number of pupils on roll (full-time equivalent)	Number of pupils with statements of SEN	Number of pupils on school's register of SEN	Number of full-time pupils eligible for free school meals
211 YR – Y6	431	12	129	85
Nursery Unit/School	27.5	3	3	0

### Teachers and classes

#### Qualified teachers (YR – Y6)

Total number of qualified teachers (full-time equivalent)	16
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	13.1

#### Education support staff (YR – Y6)

Total number of education support staff	2
Total aggregate hours worked each week	64

#### Qualified teachers (Nursery school, classes or unit)

Total number of qualified teachers (full-time equivalent)	1
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	27.5

#### Education support staff (Nursery school, classes or unit)

Total number of education support staff	3
Total aggregate hours worked each week	52

Average class size:	31
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### Financial data

Financial year:	98/99
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	£
Total Income	734194
Total Expenditure	744785
Expenditure per pupil	1532
Balance brought forward from previous year	91975
Balance carried forward to next year	81384

## PARENTAL SURVEY

Number of questionnaires sent out:

486

Number of questionnaires returned:

67

### Responses (percentage of answers in each category):

	Strongly agree	Agree	Neither	Disagree	Strongly disagree
I feel the school encourages parents to play an active part in the life of the school	49	46	4	0	0
I would find it easy to approach the school with questions or problems to do with my child(ren)	55	43	1	0	0
The school handles complaints from parents well	29	41	27	3	0
The school gives me a clear understanding of what is taught	39	55	6	0	0
The school keeps me well informed about my child(ren)'s progress	43	45	9	1	1
The school enables my child(ren) to achieve a good standard of work	43	49	6	1	0
The school encourages children to get involved in more than just their daily lessons	38	51	11	0	0
I am satisfied with the work that my child(ren) is/are expected to do at home	40	42	13	4	0
The school's values and attitudes have a positive effect on my child(ren)	41	50	9	0	0
The school achieves high standards of good behaviour	37	54	7	1	0
My child(ren) like(s) school	67	31	1	0	0

### Summary of responses

NB Percentages of responses are rounded to nearest integer, sum may not = 100%  
 Percentages given are in relation to total number of returns, EXCLUDING nil replies