

INSPECTION REPORT

GREENGATE JUNIOR SCHOOL

Barrow in Furness

LEA area: Cumbria

Unique reference number: 112206

Headteacher: Mr Colin Smith

Reporting inspector: Mr Brian Griffiths
2607

Dates of inspection: 18 - 21 March 2002

Inspection number: 194255

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Junior School
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	7 - 11 years
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Greengate Street Barrow in Furness Cumbria
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Appropriate authority:	Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr Joe Wardman
Date of previous inspection:	28 April 1997

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Team members			Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
2607	Brian Griffiths	Registered inspector	Music	What sort of school is it? How well is the school led and managed? What should the school do to improve further?
9348	Mary Le Mage	Lay inspector		Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development How well does the school care for it's pupils? How well does the school work in partnership with parents and carers?
10269	David Figures	Team inspector	English Religious Education Art and Design	The school's results and pupils' achievements
17085	George Mitchell	Team inspector	Science Geography	How well are the pupils taught?
15551	Patricia Mitchell	Team inspector	Mathematics Design and Technology Physical Education Special Educational Needs	
14591	Richard Perkin	Team inspector	Information and Communication Technology History English as an Additional Language Equal Opportunities	How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils?

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REPORT CONTENTS

	Page
PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT	6
Information about the school	
How good the school is	
What the school does well	
What could be improved	
How the school has improved since its last inspection	
Standards	
Pupils' attitudes and values	
Teaching and learning	
Other aspects of the school	
How well the school is led and managed	
Parents' and carers' views of the school	
PART B: COMMENTARY	
HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?	10
The school's results and pupils' achievements	
Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development	
HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?	13
HOW GOOD ARE THE CURRICULAR AND OTHER OPPORTUNITIES OFFERED TO PUPILS?	15
HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?	17
HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS	19
HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?	20
WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?	21
PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS	22
PART D: THE STANDARDS AND QUALITY OF TEACHING IN AREAS OF THE CURRICULUM, SUBJECTS AND COURSES	26

PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Greengate is a larger than average community junior school catering for 362 boys and girls between the ages of seven and eleven years. It serves the centre of Barrow-in-Furness on the south Cumbrian coast. No pupils are from ethnic minority backgrounds; two have English as an additional language and one of these is at an early stage of speaking English. These are low proportions. Thirty two per cent of pupils are on the register of special educational needs and over five per cent have statements of special need: these proportions are well above the national average. Pupils' special needs are very varied but moderate learning difficulties and challenging behaviour predominate. One hundred and twenty six pupils – more than one in three – take free school meals and this is above the national average. A further 150 regularly bring packed lunches and a substantial minority of these are believed to be eligible for free school meals but do not apply for them. The school is part of the Barrow Education Action Zone and is involved in a wide range of local community initiatives. The attainment of pupils now in Year 6 was well below average when they started at this school. Whilst the attainment of successive age groups has improved, the attainment of the current Year 3 pupils was below average when they started here; the lowest test scores were in reading and writing and many pupils had immature attitudes to learning.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

This is a very good school that continues to improve. From a much lower than average base, pupils achieve well even though standards are overall below nationally expected levels. Pupils develop well as caring, rounded individuals. Their good levels of achievement are largely due to the almost uniformly good teaching of a rich, active, varied and well-documented curriculum. High quality work is ensured by the very good, clear sighted leadership and management of the headteacher and key staff and the wholehearted support of the rest of the staff and the governing body. High quality team work is seen in almost all situations. Even though expenditure is above average for schools of its type, the good results ensure that the school gives good value for money.

What the school does well

- Pupils reach above average standards in art and design, history and physical education.
- Pupils make good progress in English, mathematics and science; in all other subjects progress is either good or very good.
- Pupils with special educational needs make very good progress because they are very well provided for.
- Teaching is good in all subjects and in all year groups. This contributes to academic standards, to pupils' very good range of personal skills and qualities, and to their very good attitudes to school.
- The curriculum is very rich and stimulating.
- Pupils are very well cared for; the provision made for their spiritual, moral and social development is very good.
- The leadership provided by the headteacher is very good and is well supported by staff and governors.

What could be improved

- Standards in English.
- Standards in science.

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

Improvement since the last inspection, in May 1997, has been very good and has been brought about by very well focused leadership and dedicated team-work on the part of all staff. Overall standards required improvement; this has taken place in the majority of subjects. The provision for information and communication technology (ICT) has improved greatly – hence the improvements to standards in the subject. The provision for pupils' personal and social development, which was less than satisfactory, is

now very good. In 1997 the daily act of collective worship failed to meet statutory requirements and it is now a major positive feature of the school. Improvements made to the teaching of English and science are beginning to have an impact on standards but need to have more. The overall quality of provision, including teaching, required improvement; this is now good. The overall atmosphere for learning and the management of the school were good and are now very good. The widespread commitment from staff and governors to continuing improvement puts the school in a good position to make further progress and to reach the demanding targets that it sets for itself.

STANDARDS

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

Performance in:	compared with				Key
	all schools			similar schools	
	1999	2000	2001	2001	
English	D	E	E	C	well above average A above average B average C below average D well below average E
mathematics	E	C	E	C	
science	E	D	E	C	

The trend in the results of national tests in English, mathematics and science has been significantly upwards since the last inspection. The greatest improvements have been made in the numbers of pupils reaching the nationally expected levels, although too few pupils reached higher levels and this has kept scores in the above table as low as they are. Improvements have been at a faster rate than nationally. The most recent results were all in line with those seen in similar schools. The work of the current Year 6 is better than in previous years. It is at national average levels in mathematics and below average in English and science. This is an improvement on the very low standards of these pupils when they entered the school, so that they achieved well in all three subjects. Standards in art and design, history and physical education are above those expected nationally of eleven-year-olds and in these subjects pupils are achieving very well. Standards in design and technology, geography, ICT, music and religious education are at the levels typically expected and in these subjects pupils are achieving well. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress, as do those for whom English is an additional language.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Very good. Pupils are eager to come to school and this has a significant effect on the atmosphere of the school and the progress that pupils make.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Good. Pupils behave well in lessons and around school largely because the school supports them very well in this aspect of their development.
Personal development and relationships	Very good. Pupils are enthusiastic about learning, they enjoy success and become increasingly mature and self-disciplined. Their relationships with adults and other pupils are very positive and productive. This is as a result of the good teaching they receive, that stresses these aspects alongside academic attainment.
Attendance	Satisfactory.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils in:	Years 3 – 6
Quality of teaching	Good

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

Teaching and learning are good in all subjects, including English and mathematics, and in all year groups. The needs of all pupils are met fully. Teachers have good understandings of all subjects. Consequently they plan well-sequenced lessons that usually have clear objectives, helping pupils to make good progress. Teachers successfully pay special attention to the development of pupils' basic skills in literacy, numeracy and ICT. Pupils are expected to behave well, work hard and reach high standards; they respond with interest and enthusiasm, taking great pride in their achievements. A feature of the school is the very effective use of well-planned and interesting displays that not only make the school an attractive place but also celebrate pupils' work and stimulate their thinking. Pupils are interested and highly motivated because of the wide range of, often very imaginative, approaches to teaching. A good programme of interesting visits and visitors further enhance learning. Teachers carefully assess pupils' progress in order to plan lessons that build on what pupils already know, understand and can do. Homework and the very full range of out-of-school activities help pupils to extend, practice and develop the ideas and skills taught in lessons. There are a few occasions when lesson objectives are not sufficiently precise to allow for the pace of learning to be sustained, and in these instances pupils make insufficient progress. Overall, however, teaching ensures that pupils make good use of their time at school.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Very good. The very rich, broad and balanced curriculum very effectively meets statutory requirements. It is significantly enhanced by excellent links with the community and a very rich programme of visits and visitors. There is a very good range of activities taking place outside lessons. Pupils have very good equality of opportunity because the school very successfully provides for the needs of all pupils.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Very good – so these pupils make very good progress.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	Good. Pupils are helped successfully to learn in English and they make good progress.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Very good. There are many rich opportunities for pupils to reflect on life and to celebrate their own achievements and those of others. Very good provision for moral and social development ensures that pupils have a very clear understanding of right and wrong and a very well developed respect for the feelings and beliefs of others. Opportunities to learn about and celebrate their local culture and to appreciate and enjoy art, music, drama and literature are many. The pupils' understanding of cultures other than their own is good though less well developed than the aspects above.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Well. Pupils' all-round development is carefully monitored and supported in order to enable pupils to do well.
Partnership with parents	The school has good links with parents and works well with them. There is a sound contribution by parents to children's learning.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Very good. The headteacher has a clear vision for the school that is fully shared by the staff. This guides the school's thorough planning and its determined actions to secure improvement.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Well - and getting better. Governors are very supportive of the school. Many of them have extended their keen interest into helping to monitor its performance. This ensures that their decision making is well informed, although governors are more reliant on the headteacher than they need to be.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Very good. The monitoring of teaching by key staff has been used to improve teaching and learning. The overall management of teachers' performance makes a very strong contribution to improving pupils' rates of learning and the standards that they reach. The attainment of each pupil and of year groups is carefully analysed in order to set challenging targets for further improvement.
The strategic use of resources	Very good. Spending is very carefully directed towards the school's agreed priorities and activities that enhance pupils' attainment. All pupils benefit from spending from all sources – for example, the well directed use of Education Action Zone funding as well as the school's own funding. Care is taken to ensure that best value is obtained from expenditure.
Staffing, accommodation and learning resources	An adequate number of teachers is supported by a good level of learning and support staff. The accommodation is satisfactory and there is a good range of learning resources.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The school's high expectations of pupils • The quality of teaching • The progress that their children make • The quality of leadership and management • The approachability of staff • Their children's increasing maturity and sense of responsibility 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The quality of the information about children's progress • The amount of homework • The school's working relationships with some of them

Parents think that this is a good school and this view is endorsed by the inspection. Inspectors agree with parents' positive comments but find that in the areas in which some parents expressed dissatisfaction the work of the school is good.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and pupils' achievements

- 1 The trend in pupils' results in English, mathematics and science since the last inspection has been sharply upwards with a marked increase in 1999. The proportion of pupils attaining standards appropriate to eleven-year-olds in English has doubled in that time. In mathematics this proportion doubled by 2000 but, in common with the national trend, dropped back in 2001. Gains in science results are steady over the period if not so dramatic. On average, pupils' standards in all three subjects when they leave the school are now a year ahead of those of pupils who left four years ago. Nonetheless too few pupils attain the higher levels in the national tests. Results at the age of eleven are well below average in national terms - the national average having also increased. Nevertheless, they are average when compared with those of schools where a similar proportion of pupils is entitled to free school meals.
- 2 The overall findings of the inspection are that the standards of the present generation of eleven-year-olds are in line with the national average in mathematics and below the national average (not well below, as suggested by the test results) in English and science. This means that, taking account of the standards of these pupils when they entered the school four years ago, and the untypically high proportion of pupils with special educational needs in the age group, both boys and girls have achieved well. Many pupils made especially good progress in the short time leading up to taking the national tests, largely due to the energetic input of staff and the good response of pupils. Thus, the test scores reached in all three subjects were markedly higher than the earlier predictions that teachers had made; on average this resulted in around ten extra pupils reaching the nationally expected level than the teacher assessments suggested.
- 3 Pupils achieve well in English given their starting point. However, standards in Year 6 are below average because these pupils have not benefited fully from the changes made to the subject since the last inspection. Although they are good talkers in informal situations, too many pupils have yet to develop sufficient confidence and adequate skills as speakers in more formal contexts. The best readers enjoy books and understand what they read, but others, though they can usually read the words, do not always understand because of their limited vocabulary. Writing is below average because, although many pupils have good ideas, they do not have the skills, the understanding of possible language structures or vocabulary to set them down sufficiently well on paper.
- 4 Standards in science are also below average, for similar reasons, although pupils achieve well in relation to their starting point. The majority of pupils extend their scientific knowledge and skills at a good rate because the curriculum is carefully planned in appropriately graded steps. Occasionally progress is slowed by unnecessary repetition of work and by patchy coverage of the curriculum. Pupils learn to use an increasingly appropriate scientific vocabulary, and to make sensible use of their skills in numeracy and with computers to ensure good progress in science.
- 5 In mathematics, pupils' good achievement leads to standards similar to those to be expected of pupils of this age. This is because in this subject their starting point is not so far behind their contemporaries in other schools and because of the high quality of the teaching they receive. Many pupils use number skills quickly and accurately, use an appropriate mathematical vocabulary and construct and interpret graphs and charts at the level expected for pupils of their ages.

- 6 Standards at the end of Year 6 are above those typical of eleven-year-olds in art and design, history and physical education: pupils of all levels of ability including those with special educational needs and those for whom English is an additional language, are achieving very well. In art, pupils' creativity has been well supported by the artistic flair of the co-ordinator, and work of high quality - for example in textiles and following pupils' visit to a slate mine - has resulted. In history the very good teaching leads to pupils' enthusiasm for the subject and consequently to a wide knowledge and quickly developing skills. Within physical education, standards in swimming are very good and in dance are good.
- 7 In the other subjects - design and technology, geography, ICT, music and religious education - pupils are achieving well and sometimes very well to reach average standards by the time they are eleven. In almost every case, this represents an improvement - in history and physical education a big improvement - on the position reported at the time of the last inspection. This has been brought about by a thorough review of the curriculum, which was unsatisfactory and is now very good. Detailed schemes of work in each subject provide support for teachers' lesson planning; there is now a clear focus on standards in each subject and an informed view of what is to be learned by pupils.
- 8 The progress of pupils with special educational needs is very good because they are well supported by a team of special educational needs teachers and experienced and very competent teaching assistants who work very effectively with them, mostly by withdrawing them from lessons for extra help, or by helping them in the classrooms. The work is carefully structured, based on accurate assessments of need, and taught in small steps with much individual help. Pupils are identified and helped as soon as they start at the school and this is contributing to the very good progress they make. In class lessons adapted work is often provided or pupils are given extra help to complete their work. Pupils with emotional and behavioural difficulties make very good progress and are learning to control their behaviour and work well in the lessons. They receive individual counselling and teachers and their assistants use strategies very successfully to manage their behaviour and to ensure that they learn at a good rate
- 9 Pupils for whom English is an additional language make good progress both in acquiring fluency in English and in other subjects. Relatively recent work on identifying gifted and talented pupils and responding to their needs is beginning to ensure that they make the progress of which they are capable.
- 10 The school rigorously evaluates all its work, setting suitably demanding targets where appropriate. Accordingly, it is in a good position to continue to help pupils improve the standards they achieve.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

- 11 The very good attitudes, values and personal development of pupils at this school have a positive impact on standards reached. This aspect of the life of the school has improved since the last inspection.
- 12 Pupils' very good attitudes to all aspects of school life are to be seen in their enthusiasm for their work and for taking part in school activities, including volunteering for a variety of responsibilities across the school. In lessons, pupils listen quietly to the teachers and to one another, respecting other people's views and sometimes spontaneously applauding the good work of their classmates. They are interested in their work and co-operate well

in groups, supporting each other well. These very positive attitudes to learning result from the consistently good teaching pupils receive and they develop well over the time pupils spend in the school.

- 13 Pupils' behaviour is good. There has been one exclusion in the last year. Pupils behave well in lessons and around the school, respecting one another and remembering good manners most of the time. Occasional inappropriate behaviour in lessons is swiftly and sensitively addressed without detracting from the lesson. When pupils are excited by the prospect of going swimming, movement around the school from a minority of pupils can be a little boisterous. Behaviour in the playground can also be boisterous but it is predominantly harmonious. There were no incidents of bullying seen during the inspection, and pupils are adamant that there is no bullying in the school. Nevertheless, pupils are very aware of the steps to take should bullying occur.
- 14 Relationships between pupils and adults in the school are very good with mutual respect being very evident. All adults in the school provide pupils with consistently good role models. Pupils of all abilities and backgrounds learn and play together well. They welcome newcomers and visitors warmly and have a genuine interest in them, showing them politeness and courtesy.
- 15 The personal development of pupils is very good. The ethos of the school, where pupils are encouraged to consider the impact of their actions on others, has a positive effect on their development. Over their time in school they gain in maturity and move from requiring constant imposed discipline in the early stages to foster good habits, to become relatively self-disciplined members of the school community. They make gains in their personal study skills and become used to judging their own work in subjects such as physical education, design and technology and art. The opportunities to make choices in their learning are well developed in science and in investigating mathematical problems. They are encouraged to influence the daily life of the school through the very active school council.
- 16 Pupils with special educational needs and those for whom English is an additional language are integrated very well into the classes and join in all class activities. They are interested in their work and are able to work collaboratively with other pupils. The success they achieve helps to increase their self-esteem and concentration. The very good relationship between staff and pupils motivates them to work hard and increases their confidence
- 17 Attendance at the school is satisfactory and is broadly in line with the national average. A very small number of pupils have a very poor record of attendance and are monitored closely by the school and the Educational Welfare Officer. Pupils arrive at school on time and registration is completed efficiently in a polite and pleasant manner.
- 18 These findings confirm the positive views expressed by parents at the parents' meeting and in their responses to the parents' questionnaire. The universal commitment to the school's emphasis on pupils' personal development as fully rounded individuals puts the school in a good position to maintain its strength in these areas.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?

- 19 The overall quality of teaching and learning is good and a significant proportion of the lessons seen was very good. No unsatisfactory lessons were seen. This marks a very important step forward since the last inspection when a range of areas for development was identified, with the teaching in several lessons found to be unsatisfactory. The

school's progress in this aspect has been brought about by a systematic programme of improvement, founded upon observations of teaching, and the identification and sharing of the strategies seen to be most successful in promoting pupils' good behaviour, concentration and, most importantly, progress in learning. As a result, good teaching is to be seen in all subjects and in all classes. The improvements have played a significant role in raising pupils' standards.

- 20 Teachers responsible for the co-ordination of subjects have helped to create a more consistently good quality of teaching and learning. They have monitored and evaluated lessons in their subjects and played a big part in promoting the most effective methods. They have helped all teachers to develop better understandings of both the National Curriculum requirements for subjects and the implications of the local agreed syllabus for religious education. Consequently, teachers are able to plan lessons that focus on the key objectives and so help pupils systematically to build their knowledge and skills.
- 21 The development of pupils' basic skills is seen as particularly important. Teachers are very skilled in this area, so that most lessons are characterised by challenging activities, and are well designed to extend pupils' ability to use language and numbers not only in English and mathematics lessons, but also in their work in other subjects. Basic skills in ICT are also very well taught; consequently, it is not unusual to see pupils developing their understanding of, for example, geography, history or science by accessing a CD ROM or web site, or by using a word processor to draft and refine their ideas. A good example was seen in Year 6 when pupils were helped to use computers to create slide shows, including sound and animation, about a recent visit to a science park.
- 22 Lesson planning is usually good, based on clear and appropriate learning objectives, which the pupils are told about, so that they know what they are expected to learn. Plans often include a range of activities designed to help pupils who are at different levels to meet the objectives. This quality is very evident in lessons based on the national numeracy and literacy strategies, which are well established in the school and play an important role in raising standards. There are, however, a few occasions when learning objectives are insufficiently precise and this inhibits pupils' rate of achievement as well as teachers' ability to assess the effectiveness of their lessons.
- 23 Teachers have high expectations of pupils, who respond with good behaviour, high levels of concentration and a keenness to learn. The school has a good working atmosphere, which is enhanced by the effective use of well-planned and interesting displays. These not only create an attractive environment, they also celebrate pupils' work and inform and stimulate their thinking. The whole school has an air of well-organised purpose, which extends beyond classrooms and is mirrored in the relationships established between staff and pupils, which are characterised by mutual respect. The high level of expectation is clearly evidenced in swimming lessons; well-qualified teachers concentrate on helping pupils to improve the quality of their strokes and develop new ones. Pupils are expected to give of their best and, as a result, they work very hard and reach standards well above what would be found in most schools.
- 24 A range of successful teaching strategies is used to stimulate, motivate and challenge the pupils. Teachers are particularly skilled at developing discussions with pupils and in encouraging them to answer and raise questions; consequently, pupils develop oral and reasoning skills, whilst teachers use the opportunity to assess and extend levels of understanding. Lessons often involve well-planned sequences of activities. This was seen working well, for example, in a music lesson for Year 6, where the teacher introduced two songs separately, then helped pupils to sing them at the same time in two groups. Next, chime bars were introduced, which pupils played from simple

notation, then a range of drums was added until, from simple beginnings, pupils were involved in a complex performance, maintaining control of rhythm and tune.

- 25 Pupils are often organised in groups within the same class so that they can concentrate on work pitched to suit their level and, also, develop skills in sharing ideas and working co-operatively. There are a few occasions when this strategy is neglected and pupils at different stages are faced with the same work. This slows the rate of learning. The school makes good use of groupings across the year groups when each teacher works with a group of pupils who are at a similar level, for example, in mathematics. This is an effective strategy that is helping to improve the rate at which pupils achieve.
- 26 A positive aspect of teaching is the use of a short time at the end of lessons to review what has been achieved. This raises pupils' awareness of their own level of success and provides teachers with information about achievement that can be used in the organisation of the next lesson. However, there are times, for example in some English lessons, where this strategy is not used and when pupils would benefit considerably from it. Day-to-day assessment is a good feature of the school; information gained from discussions, observations during activities and the marking of pupils' work and tests is used in the planning of future work, which helps to ensure that lessons build upon what pupils already know, understand and can do. Many lessons begin with a reference to homework, which is set regularly and used well for a variety of purposes. For example, Year 3 pupils were asked to find newspaper articles about environmental issues, Year 4 practised rounding up and down in mathematics, whilst in Year 6 pupils brought in information about current affairs to stimulate discussion and further study.
- 27 Teachers make good use of the full range of learning resources. This helps to interest pupils and motivate them to learn; for instance, the provision of a computer suite and a good number of class based computers ensures that pupils have ready access in order to practise and develop important skills. The school library is well organised to support all subjects and the provision of a computerised index makes it very easy to use and helps develop pupils' independent study skills. The good number of support staff is effectively deployed to help pupils, particularly those who have special educational needs, to make very good progress.
- 28 The teaching of pupils with special educational needs is very good. Often they are withdrawn from class lessons, to work in small groups or individually, on special programmes to improve reading, writing, speaking and listening and mathematics. Here they receive expert teaching of basic skills presented in an interesting and stimulating way and so they work hard and make very good progress. They are encouraged to express their opinions and so they are keen to offer suggestions or try out more imaginative vocabulary. Good communication between the special educational needs teachers and the class teachers ensures that pupils withdrawn from literacy or numeracy lessons learn the same things as the rest of their class. In other lessons teachers use various methods well to support pupils with special educational needs. Sometimes pupils work with others of a similar ability and receive extra help or they work in mixed ability pairs or groups and help each other. In some lessons adapted work is provided. However the individual programmes written for classroom use are not always specific enough to allow the work to be accurately matched to the pupil's needs. The teaching assistants are experienced, well trained and very capable. They provide high quality support for the pupils. For example, caring support for a special needs pupil in a science lesson allowed full participation in a practical activity and helped the pupil to understand the main teaching points. All adults provide good individual help and praise for pupils' efforts and so the pupils become more confident in their work.

- 29 The school has clearly made great strides in reaching a good quality of teaching and learning which is having a significant positive impact on pupils' standards. The ethos of challenge and progress suggests that the school is well placed to continue its development.

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

- 30 The quality of the curriculum has improved greatly since the last inspection. There is a very rich, broad and balanced curriculum that very effectively meets statutory requirements. The national strategies for literacy and numeracy have been effectively integrated into the curriculum alongside the other subjects of the National Curriculum and religious education. An appropriate amount of time is allocated to each subject and, in addition, much of the teaching involves a fruitful mixture of subjects. For example, history and geography are closely entwined in studying the local environment and its history, though teachers are very careful to ensure that the skills relevant to each subject are systematically developed. Similarly, pupils produce high quality drawings of local industrial features that reinforce the pupils' learning about the history of their region whilst at the same time developing their drawing skills. The teaching of almost all subjects includes opportunities for pupils to develop their speaking and listening, reading and writing skills and the teaching of science and geography makes good use of numeracy in measuring and weighing. The use of ICT enhances learning through, for example, the use of spreadsheets in mathematics. Pupils research information on the Internet for activities in English before word-processing a report or creating a slide presentation of the information.
- 31 The work of each year group is planned effectively from a range of long-term and medium-term curricular plans. However, this works less effectively in science, where pupils sometimes repeat work in different years. The curriculum is further enriched by the teachers' awareness that pupils have different learning styles; this enables them to vary the approaches used and to base much of the learning on pupils' own experiences.
- 32 The provision for pupils with special educational needs is very good. Any problems are identified as soon as pupils start school and strategies are well thought out to help individual pupils. There are many initiatives to help pupils with special educational needs to learn. There are, for example, programmes to help pupils with dyslexia to improve their reading and writing, and small group literacy and numeracy lessons for others. These are well organised and expertly taught by teachers and specially trained assistants. Individual education programmes written for pupils who attend the withdrawal groups have clear targets for pupils to reach against which progress is reviewed regularly. However the individual programmes written for classroom use are not always specific enough to allow work to be accurately matched to the pupil's needs for all subjects. The grouping of pupils for extra help is flexible and pupils move in and out of the groups as needs are met or identified. Pupils with special educational needs are full, respected and valued members of the school.
- 33 The small number of pupils for whom English is an additional language are well supported; teachers and support staff are aware of their needs and, where necessary, these pupils have an individual educational plan that teachers adhere to well both in planning and in practice. Where pupils are identified as being particularly talented at, for example, music or sport, the school makes particular arrangements to boost that talent. For example, dancers and musicians are given the opportunity to develop their skills and perform in concerts, while talented swimmers and team-game players have ample opportunities for competition and expert coaching to hone their strengths and skills. The

school is rightly proud of the way in which it caters for the needs of all its pupils; it very effectively ensures that it meets the full range of their learning and personal needs.

- 34 Pupils' personal, social and health education is well taken care of and the school has its own, effective, scheme of work that links closely with other subjects such as, for example, science and physical education. Long-term planning is very good. The policy for sex education is in the process of being formally approved. Older pupils made gains in their understanding about drugs awareness when they took part with pupils from other local schools in a drugs awareness workshop based on music, and sponsored by the police. Class assemblies and other structured discussion times enable pupils to discuss their personal problems and concerns in an atmosphere of trust. The school's decision to appoint a counsellor strongly enhances its careful attention to the emotional and social needs of its pupils. Citizenship education is a very important part of the curriculum and a major contribution is provided by class councils and the school council to which they report. The issues discussed and the decisions that the council has made are prominently displayed for all to see so that the representatives from each class are seen to be accountable to the rest of the school.
- 35 The curriculum is significantly enhanced by excellent links with the community and by a very rich programme of visits and visitors. Parents are very appreciative of the variety of trips that their children undertake and feel that there is a good balance between different approaches to learning. Pupils participate successfully in local drama and art festivals and have won a number of local awards. An example of a productive link with a local organisation is the visit of elderly people to share experiences about World War II. Pupils from Year 6 worked on a project with local industry to make a book to celebrate the centenary of Barrow's building submarines, developing their own literacy skills in the process. The school's partnerships with national and local community groups have been very productive in developing the computer and literacy skills not only of the pupils but also of many parents, who are thereby enabled to play a more active part in their children's learning. Many successful projects have operated as part of the local Educational Action Zone, the Barrow Community Learning Partnership, many of which have strongly enhanced pupils' learning through providing them with resources or with experiences from which to learn, as, for example, an art, music and dance project. Sporting links with the community have led to the school being given the Active Mark Gold award. Coaches for several sports and games visit the school to develop pupils' skills in, for example, netball, football and rugby. Productive links exist with other schools in the area, partly through the Learning Partnership; these have resulted in training in and resources for ICT and a programme of competitive sports activities.
- 36 There is a very good range of activities taking place outside lessons, some as a result of support from the Learning Partnership. These activities are carefully planned to meet the needs of particular groups of pupils as well as providing a rich programme for all. For example, some computer clubs are restricted to those pupils without access to computers at home. On the other hand, activities such as the choir and the annual concerts are open to all pupils who want to take part. The programme of sports clubs ensures that the school is very successful in competitions with other schools, particularly in swimming.
- 37 The school provides very effectively for the personal development of its pupils. They are given many very rich opportunities to reflect on life and to celebrate their own achievements and those of others. Very high quality assemblies are used very well to promote pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. The whole school assembly on Monday morning, for example, set the tone for the rest of the week. Pupils entered the hall quietly to music and reflected on the thoughtful ideas that were projected

onto a screen. The headteacher told them a story that related to the material that their class assemblies had been considering during the previous week. As each class representative brought a class 'worry-bag' (a small bag containing items that represented worries that each class had identified in earlier lessons) to hang on the cross, the pupils were asked to think about the significance of Jesus and his death. Pupils returned to their classes quietly and thoughtfully, ready for the work ahead. Pupils are appreciative of the work that other pupils do and are generous in showing their appreciation.

- 38 The school's very good provision for pupils' moral and social development ensures they have a very clear understanding of right and wrong and understand the importance of teamwork. The teachers' consistent use of the school's behaviour policy means that pupils understand that teachers look for the positive whenever possible but set high standards of behaviour. Local studies of the Leven valley and the history of Barrow ensure that pupils have a good understanding of how their town came to be like it is today; their discussions with local people who share with them their memories of wartime Barrow, bring the past to life most effectively. Very high quality displays throughout the school promote the pupils' appreciation of great works of art and their visits to plays and concerts as well as their own performances ensure that they value music, literature and dance. Some of these experiences relate to cultures other than their own and pupils have opportunities to appreciate, for example, the art of the Aztecs or the embroidery on an Indian rug, and overall, the multi-cultural aspect of the provision is satisfactory.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

- 39 The excellent arrangements taken to ensure the welfare, health and safety of its pupils have improved from the already high standard reported at the time of the last inspection. This is undoubtedly a caring environment where the safety of pupils is given high priority; all statutory checks are in place and the general welfare of pupils is very well catered for in the daily life of the school. The welfare of pupils is so fundamental to this school that it has employed a counsellor to work in the school for one day each week. This is excellent support for pupils in times of difficulty or unhappiness in their lives. The excellent child protection procedures are known by all adults in the school.
- 40 The educational and personal support and guidance procedures make good contributions to the raising of pupils' achievements. There are very good procedures for monitoring and promoting good behaviour. The school's philosophy is to create a climate of expectation and achievement in all areas of school life and this supports pupils in their development of self-discipline rather than relying too much on imposed discipline. However, where adult intervention is necessary it is timely, appropriate and effective. The management of behaviour is very effective.
- 41 The elimination of oppressive behaviour is promoted through the way in which the school manages the pupils' behaviour in general. This results in incidents of inappropriate behaviour very rarely becoming oppressive. Where unacceptable behaviour occurs it is closely monitored and well-documented within the school. Parents are involved appropriately and the situation is dealt with in a way to support the successful rehabilitation of the pupils involved.
- 42 The procedures for monitoring attendance are very good with unauthorised absence being closely targeted and the Educational Welfare Officer working very closely with the school on incidents of poor attendance. The number of pupils with poor levels of

attendance is very low largely because the school provides a rich, vibrant, attractive environment which makes the pupils want to be there.

- 43 Procedures for assessing pupils' academic attainment and progress are good. The school has tackled the weaknesses identified in the last inspection and now has rigorous assessment arrangements, the outcomes of which are recorded systematically. The school carries out all statutory assessment requirements and reports the results to parents. The assessment system for English, mathematics and science is effective, with a range of assessment activities including the optional end of year national tests. In other subjects there are also effective assessment procedures, which are tailored to the needs of the particular subject. For example, assessment in history and geography focuses on the acquisition of skills and in practical subjects such as art, design technology and physical education, the focus is on self-assessment by the pupil.
- 44 The school now makes very good use of assessment information to inform the composition of an extensive range of groups. These may be large or small groups and operate in the normal classroom setting or away from the classroom in small group areas. The school uses these groups to extend the higher attainers, help those with special educational needs and also support those who would benefit from an extra boost to their learning by adjusting the curriculum to meet their particular needs. The well-focused teaching these pupils receive is having a positive effect on the standards in the school.
- 45 The assessment of pupils with special educational needs is very good. As soon as a pupil is identified as having difficulties, these are assessed and strategies are put in place to deal with the problem. An individual programme is written and progress towards the targets is assessed and recorded regularly, with new targets set each term. The provision specified in statements of special educational need is fully implemented.
- 46 The school makes satisfactory use of assessment information to monitor pupils' progress. A clear record is kept of each pupil's attainment in English, mathematics and science year-by-year. It also incorporates a predicted level of attainment for the current end-of-year tests for each pupil and a predicted level of attainment for each pupil by the end of Year 6. This is used to set the annual, suitably demanding, targets for the school.
- 47 Pupils are set academic targets for the end of the current year and individuals are increasingly aware of their importance. For example, pupils are set writing targets but are unclear about how far they have progressed to their predicted level. Whilst teachers keep records of the individual targets they make insufficient reference to them in lessons and in their marking. Consequently many pupils do not focus on their target effectively.
- 48 The procedures for monitoring and supporting pupils' all-round personal development are good. They rely on pupils being well known by the adults they have regular contact with. Pupils feel well supported. Although there are no formal, whole school, procedures to record pupils' personal development except for pupils on the register of special educational needs, pupils are assessed informally against a standard check-list.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

- 49 The effectiveness of the partnership between the school and the parents of its pupils is good. Parents feel that this is a good school and their views of the school understandably show some improvement since the last inspection. Parents find many more things about which to be pleased than matters about which to be concerned.

- 50 The impact of the involvement of parents on the work of the school is satisfactory and parents make a satisfactory contribution to children's learning at school and at home overall. There is a home/school reading system but parental support is variable, as is parental support for homework in general. A significant minority of families does little to support their children's progress. Nevertheless, some parents are very involved, supporting homework and helping in classrooms or with additional out of school activities when they have specific skills to offer. Parents contribute to children's learning by accompanying school visits, therefore allowing them to take place, and by raising funds for the school. A few parents regularly work in school as volunteers. Several parents have trained as 'reading partners' and about half of those trained are still active in the school. Some are now employed part-time as learning assistants, but still continue as volunteer 'reading partners' as well. The contribution of these volunteers is valued by the school and makes a positive contribution to pupils' learning.
- 51 There is opportunity for regular contact with parents through reading diaries, homework, school newsletters and open evenings as well as planned opportunities for informal contact at the start and end of the school day. The school's prospectus contains all necessary information in an attractive and accessible format. It is well supported by a series of year books for each year group, outlining the topics to be taught in the year and approximate associated costs for visits to enhance the learning. The Governors' Annual Report for Parents is excellent, containing all necessary information in a most attractive format. Throughout, it tries to draw parents into a partnership with the school to the benefit of the pupils. All parents receive an annual report on their children's progress that is very clearly and attractively presented. Reports to parents about their children's work cover all subjects of the National Curriculum and religious education, and are of good quality. They have improved since the last inspection. For English, mathematics, science and, very occasionally other subjects, there is a detailed personal report on the pupil's particular strengths and the progress achieved. Reports specify targets for the pupil in English, mathematics, science, ICT and religious education. There is a tendency in the other subjects to report on what a pupil has studied and not clearly report on the pupil's attainment or progress. However, the effort the pupil has put into the subject is reported. Only reports at the end of Year 6 are strengthened by references to levels of the National Curriculum, in order that parents can tell if their child is performing in line with, above or below national expectations. Overall the quality of information provided for parents is good.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

- 52 The very good leadership of the headteacher, the effective support of key and all other members of staff and that of the governing body ensure that the school has a very obvious and positive sense of direction and purpose. A key feature of the school is the teamwork that is seen at all levels and includes all from the newest teachers through to the governing body. The very positive educational direction is articulated in very clearly written statements of the school's overall aims for its pupils. These guide the school's planning for improvement, its policies and practices, the hallmark of which is an unusual degree of consistency one with another. Members of staff undertake appropriate leadership roles and each plays a full part in designing policies and monitoring provision in the areas for which they are responsible.
- 53 The governing body meets its statutory duties very well. There is a mix of very experienced governors and several who are new in the last year. The more experienced governors are very effective and the newer governors bring fresh ideas, involve themselves enthusiastically in training for their role and, alongside more experienced colleagues, in the work of the school. The school improvement plan is designed after

widespread consultation; the results of surveys of parents and pupils are considered by governors working alongside staff. The resulting plan addresses appropriate issues. It is well designed and governors play a part in monitoring its progress. This monitoring is less assured than it should be, as the success criteria are generally not precise enough for it to be clear when they have been fully met. The school's spending patterns are very carefully considered and fully reflect the priorities established in the school development plan. In all of these activities, governors are reliant on the headteacher for guidance. In the light of their positive attitudes and deep knowledge of their community, they could usefully operate more frequently as 'critical friends'.

- 54 Much of the improvement in pupils' standards that has taken place stems from the improvements to teaching that have been ensured by systematic monitoring of the work of all teachers. Regular and helpful feedback to teachers allows them to consolidate their strengths and make improvements where needed. The national scheme for performance management is harnessed well to enhance this process.
- 55 The school's own systems for monitoring the progress of pupils are very well extended by analyses undertaken through the Barrow Education Action Zone. Since the last inspection the school has placed a major emphasis on improving standards, especially in literacy and numeracy. This has been helped considerably by the setting of very challenging targets for individuals and year groups, that are guided by careful analyses of pupils' previous achievement as well as the teachers' well-informed knowledge of their pupils.
- 56 All funds are spent sensibly and for the benefit of the pupils for whom they are intended. In particular, pupils with special educational needs benefit considerably from the wise ways in which they are supported by the school. The effective management of the programme for pupils with special educational needs results in well thought out provision that meets individual needs well. A team of expert teachers and assistants work extremely well with pupils both in the classroom and when they are withdrawn for individual and small group work.
- 57 The learning resources are good, well organised and easily accessible. All these contribute to the high achievement. The school fully understands – and acts on – the need to ensure that all spending gives good quality at the best available cost. Teachers and support staff are fully qualified and all are successfully encouraged to extend their expertise through well-chosen training courses. Administration runs very smoothly and unobtrusively.
- 58 The good qualities of leadership and management that were seen at the time of the last inspection have been improved upon and the widespread commitment of all concerned ensure that the school is well placed to maintain, or even further improve on them

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

- ◆ Improve standards in English. Actions should include the following:
 - Ensure that pupils meet, understand and use a wider spoken vocabulary and more complex language structures;
 - Ensure that in all lessons it is made clear what pupils are to learn and how they are to learn it;
 - Make the learning targets that are set for individual pupils more precise and express them in ways that allow pupils to understand them and so monitor their own progress;

- Make more frequent use of the final part of literacy lessons to remind pupils of, and consolidate, what they have learned.

(See paragraphs 3, 22, 26, 47, 63 - 65, 69, 81, 96)

◆ Improve standards in science. Actions should include the following:

- Monitor more systematically the planning of lessons so that best practice is identified and built on and less successful practice is improved;
- Ensure that lessons do not involve unnecessary repetition of earlier work;
- Ensure that all aspects of the subject are studied in appropriate depth.

(See paragraphs 4, 31, 79, 81- 82)

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	69
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	42

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Number	1	17	36	15			
Percentage	1	25	52	22			

The table gives the number and percentage of lessons observed in each of the seven categories used to make judgements about teaching. Care should be taken when interpreting these percentages as each lesson represents more than one percentage point.

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll	Y3 - Y6
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	362
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	123

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs	Y3- Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	19
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	115

English as an additional language	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	2

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	33
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	21

NB Most of the pupils who join the school later than the usual time of admission are seven-year-olds who do so within a few weeks of the others. The delay is associated with the school being over-subscribed in most years.

Attendance

Authorised absence

%

Unauthorised absence

%

School data	5.2
National comparative data	5.6

School data	0.6
National comparative data	0.5

Both tables give the percentage of half days (sessions) missed through absence for the latest complete reporting year.

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

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2001	38	43	81

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	22	24	31
	Girls	32	28	36
	Total	54	52	67
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	67 (69)	64 (76)	83 (81)
	National	75 (75)	71 (72)	87 (85)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	19	22	24
	Girls	26	24	30
	Total	45	46	54
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	56 (64)	57 (65)	67 (71)
	National	72 (70)	74 (72)	82 (79)

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

Ethnic background of pupils

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	0
Black – African heritage	0
Black – other	0
Indian	0
Pakistani	0
Bangladeshi	0
Chinese	0
White	362
Any other minority ethnic group	0

This table refers to pupils of compulsory school age only.

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers and classes: Y3 - Y6

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	16
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	20.3
Average class size	27.8

Education support staff: Y3- Y6

Total number of education support staff	9
Total aggregate hours worked per week	180

Exclusions in the last school year

	Fixed period	Permanent
Black – Caribbean heritage	0	0
Black – African heritage	0	0
Black – other	0	0
Indian	0	0
Pakistani	0	0
Bangladeshi	0	0
Chinese	0	0
White	1	0
Other minority ethnic groups	0	0

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

Financial information

Financial year	2001
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	£
Total income	826785
Total expenditure	774974
Expenditure per pupil	2146
Balance brought forward from previous year	12224
Balance carried forward to next year	64035

Recruitment of teachers

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	2
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	2
Total number of vacant teaching posts (FTE)	0
Number of vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of a term or more (FTE)	1
Number of unfilled vacancies or vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of less than one term (FTE)	1

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	362
Number of questionnaires returned	171

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	58	39	2	0	0
My child is making good progress in school.	50	46	2	1	1
Behaviour in the school is good.	36	55	5	1	2
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	33	52	11	2	2
The teaching is good.	57	41	1	0	1
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	46	41	11	2	1
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	64	31	3	1	1
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	64	35	1	0	1
The school works closely with parents.	47	37	11	1	3
The school is well led and managed.	56	40	1	1	2
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	53	41	5	0	1
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	53	33	6	2	6

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

ENGLISH

- 59 The trend in pupils' English results since the last inspection has been sharply upwards with a marked increase in 1999. The proportion of pupils attaining standards appropriate to eleven-year-olds has doubled in that time and, on average, pupils' English standards on leaving the school now are a year ahead of those of pupils when they left four years ago. Nonetheless too few pupils are attaining at a high level for their age and because this figure is comparatively low, the National Curriculum tests in 2001 show results at the age of eleven that are well below average in national terms. Nevertheless, they are average when compared with those of schools where a similar proportion of pupils is entitled to free school meals.
- 60 The overall findings of the inspection are that standards are below the national average (rather than well below as the 2001 tests suggest) at the age of eleven. This means that, taking account of the low standards of these pupils when they entered the school four years ago, and the untypically high proportion of pupils with special educational needs in the age group, they have achieved well.
- 61 This improvement has been brought about in a number of ways that meet the criticisms of the last report well and have laid a good foundation for further improvement. The successful introduction of the literacy hour has provided a framework for lessons that is helpful for both teachers and pupils. Careful assessment of pupils' English standards on entry to Year 3 enables the school both to target individual pupils, especially those whose reading level is not as high as their overall ability, and to respond to identified weaknesses. For example, when a number of pupils were joining the school with poor knowledge of letter sounds, a strategy to help them was devised and new resources acquired. The careful tracking of pupils' progress over the four years they are in the school provides information with which to plan future work and set appropriate targets. The curriculum is extended imaginatively, in ways that help to develop enthusiasm for what language can do. For example, pupils in Year 6 were, after three rehearsals, well on the way to presenting a miniature version of TS Eliot's 'Murder in the Cathedral'. They handled Eliot's sophisticated language with a mature understanding and brought to the rehearsal well-choreographed movement that enhanced the text.
- 62 It is too soon for the full benefits of these improvements to be seen in results at the end of Year 6, but they are clearly being seen lower down the school. For example, although reading standards in Years 5 and 6 remain below average, in Years 3 and 4 they are much nearer to those to be expected of eight and nine-year-olds.
- 63 The best Year 6 readers enjoy books and most understand what they read, although when reading aloud, they are not always accurate in articulating the words. The less successful readers in Year 6 have a satisfactory range of strategies for tackling unfamiliar words but their understanding is limited by their lack of experience and limited vocabulary. Pupils in Year 4 at their best are fluent and expressive readers with an appreciation of character and plot. Others can satisfactorily tackle simpler texts. Pupils at all points in the school have a good knowledge of the library and know how to use a book's contents page and the index to find information. The most able pupils in Year 5 are beginning to use skim-reading as a way of finding information quickly.

- 64 Many pupils are confident talkers in informal situations when they control the conversation, but they are less successful as speakers in more formal situations. For example, Year 3 pupils listen with care but struggle to formulate their ideas orally. They lack confidence when talking before the whole class, but will speak confidently with another pupil or an adult. By the age of eleven, the most able pupils discuss their work using a suitable vocabulary to justify their opinions, but others, in class or when talking about their work to adults, are much less skilled in expressing their ideas.
- 65 The standard of pupils' writing is below average. The work of a small minority of eleven-year-olds is good. It demonstrates interesting ideas, careful planning and a convincing structure, for example in an imaginative piece called 'Trapped'. The story opens well, ideas are organised into paragraphs and dialogue is well used. Even here, however, vocabulary is not always accurately chosen and work is sometimes marred by elementary mistakes. More typically, pupils have interesting ideas that are limited by unsatisfactory skills. They find it hard to write down ideas independently: for example, they do not choose their own words to get the effect they want but tend to rely on those supplied by the text being studied. The writing of the less able pupils is often brief, in simple sentences, and does not show a secure grasp of narrative structure. Their handwriting is legible but immature, and the spelling of common words is uncertain. Pupils with special educational needs copy accurately under adult script, but handwriting is very immature.
- 66 Nevertheless, supported by teaching which is good at all levels in the school, pupils of all abilities have made good progress from a low starting point. The most able improve their grasp of narrative structure and their spelling and punctuation improves. The work of others becomes more organised, its legibility improves, and more words are spelled correctly. Those with special educational needs also make good progress and achieve well, taking account of their starting points and their targets. They work well when supported by the special needs assistants and produce work consistent with the ambitious targets set for them.
- 67 The most successful lessons, some of which are very good, are those where teachers know the pupils well and manage their behaviour skilfully through firm, consistent relationships: this results in good and sometimes very good behaviour and a calm working atmosphere. The lessons are characterised by the teacher's use of a good range of methods that keep the pupils involved in the lesson. Skilled questioning draws in pupils of all abilities, keeping them attentive and helping them develop their own use of language. Clarity of objectives and careful planning enable the teacher to explain well and give clear instructions. As a result, pupils know what they have to do and why, they get on quickly, work industriously and make good progress. The good use of praise motivates and encourages them. Additional adults are usually deployed to good advantage to support groups or individuals, who make appropriate progress as a result. Homework consolidates what has been learned and suitably extends the work of the lesson. Many pupils report that they read to someone regularly at home. This contributes positively to their progress. Marking is usually helpful, giving pupils ideas about how they can improve.
- 68 The good quality of teaching represents an improvement on the position reported last time. Areas now for development relate to planning and to the best use of all elements of the literacy hour.

- 69 In the case of lesson planning, some lessons have objectives for pupils' learning which are not sufficiently specific and do not make clear what pupils are expected to learn. In some instances, the final section of the literacy hour is not used to best advantage to review the learning that had taken place in the lesson, and to look forward to the next lesson. In the better lessons, teachers used the final ten minutes to revise learning, to check what had been learned in order to build on it in later lessons and to give pupils a sense of achievement in how far they had progressed.
- 70 The improvements made to standards and provision owe a good deal to skilful and vigorous leadership of the subject. The National Literacy Strategy has been very successfully implemented. Activities such as demonstration lessons and monitoring of standards and of teaching and learning have successfully encouraged teachers to consolidate good practice and improve on areas of relative weakness.
- 71 Pupils' literacy skills are well promoted in other subjects. There are good opportunities for factual writing and writing in role in history, for example, and for speaking and listening in religious education. Pupils prepared written arguments and debated whether a nearby road should be closed to traffic. They are given practice in using different sources for research in history topics. The links with ICT are strong and provide good support for the subject. The extra curricular programme contributes well to pupils' English achievement through activities such as the story club or theatre visits, designed to extend pupils experience and enrich their language.

MATHEMATICS

- 72 The school's National Curriculum test results have risen steadily over the last four years, at a faster rate than nationally. In the 2001 tests, results were well below national averages but were in line with the average of schools with a similar proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals. These improvements are continuing and the work of the current Year 6 is in line with what is expected nationally of eleven-year-olds. Pupils start school with below average skills in mathematics and achieve well. The number of pupils reaching higher standards is increasing and higher attaining pupils are achieving well. There is a high proportion of pupils with special educational needs and they achieve very well. They receive very good quality teaching of carefully structured work when they are withdrawn in small groups for additional help. Older pupils are grouped by their level of attainment for some of the mathematics lessons, which creates smaller classes and enables work to be set that is well matched to their needs. Younger pupils have work adapted to their needs within the lessons and receive good quality help from learning support assistants. These strategies enable lower attaining pupils and pupils with special educational needs to make very good progress, some achieving the expected national standard by eleven. There is a lunch time mathematics club and a weekly lesson for higher attaining Year 6 pupils in which they develop more advanced mathematical skills at a good rate; these make strong contributions to the growing number of pupils who reach high standards in national tests.
- 73 Standards are improving because the National Numeracy Strategy has been very effectively implemented, the teaching is good and the subject is well managed. The mathematics co-ordinator has analysed test results to identify weaknesses and has done something about them. For example algebra, probability and problem solving were found to be weaker areas and an emphasis was put on teaching these. This is proving effective in improving standards. What is provided is very well thought out to meet needs that have been carefully identified. For example a small number of pupils in Year 6 have been experiencing problems in remembering some of the work. Having

established that this was not because of a special educational need or because they were not listening in class, an extra project group has been set up to preview the next week's work and teach any new vocabulary. This is improving the confidence of the group and is starting to improve standards. Assessment is used well to place pupils in appropriate groups and to track their progress.

- 74 Throughout the school, pupils of all abilities make good progress both in numeracy skills and in behaviour and personal development. They learn how to use number quickly and accurately, to use correct mathematical vocabulary, to construct and interpret various kinds of graphs and to measure accurately. They are encouraged to explain how they worked out their answers and to discuss their work using mathematical language. In Year 3 they do this simply, explaining how they work out half of a number and show they know that odd numbers cannot be divided equally into two whole numbers. However they are restless, find it difficult to sustain concentration and soon give up if they encounter difficulties, needing a lot of adult help to complete work. By Year 6, pupils have developed their own strategies for problem solving, they arrive at and provide reasoning for their answers. For example, they use previous knowledge of how numbers behave to solve a variety of number problems, some involving 'cracking the code' where numbers are replaced by letters. They are able to explain confidently how they worked out their answers. Although the work is challenging they are keen to start and able to sustain concentration throughout. They work very well both independently and collaboratively, in mixed ability and gender pairs.
- 75 The quality of teaching and learning is good. Some is very good – for example in Year 6 and in the withdrawal groups for pupils with special educational needs. This is an improvement from the last inspection that has come about because of the effective monitoring of the teaching by the co-ordinator who has provided training, help and advice to all staff. Teachers thus have good knowledge of how to teach mathematics and are enthusiastic about it, motivating the pupils. Pupils respond well, they enjoy the lessons, work hard, take a pride in their work and present it carefully. Teachers manage the pupils' behaviour very well resulting in high standards of behaviour and a pleasant working atmosphere. Relevant ideas are explained well with the result that all pupils understand what they are learning. Daily plans are evaluated after each lesson and teachers are able to adapt their work according to how well pupils have learnt, to build on this and extend it. They skilfully question pupils and adapt their questions for pupils of different abilities so they can all take part in the lessons. They use a variety of strategies and methods well to help pupils learn; for example pupils use white boards to write their working out and answers on. This keeps all pupils involved and concentrating on the lesson and enables the teacher to see who does not understand. Homework is set each week to extend the learning in the lessons and to involve parents. Pupils with special educational needs have homework set that is adapted to their needs. This contributes to the very good progress made.
- 76 Information technology is used well to support mathematics and numeracy is used well in many other subjects. For example, in science pupils draw charts and graphs to present their results.
- 77 The very determined commitment of all concerned to continue to improve puts the school in a good position to do so.

SCIENCE

- 78 In the 2001 national tests at the end of Year 6, pupils' standards were well below the average for all schools but in line with the average for similar schools. The inspection

judgement is that standards have improved but, although closer to the national average, they are still below. The improvement since the previous inspection has been brought about by the school's determined and successful efforts to improve the quality of teaching and learning. Observations of lessons have identified the methods which are most effective in helping pupils to learn and these have been adopted by teachers, so that pupils' standards have risen consistently. The school is also making good use of national advice to construct a science curriculum that provides pupils with experiences that build systematically on what they already know and can do. Much of the credit for this improvement is due to the co-ordinator who has taken a questioning approach to the provision for science and ensured that the subject is a significant aspect of pupils' experiences.

- 79 There are some satisfactory lessons but the overall quality of teaching and the consequent learning is good. This was exemplified by lessons in Year 6, which focused on the forces at work when objects float or sink. Pupils worked in groups, testing the weight of different objects in air and then in water, they recorded their results on graphs or, in some cases, on a computer spreadsheet format. Despite the complexity of the activity - using a range of objects, force meters and water tanks - pupils co-operated well, sharing tasks sensibly and were very keen to learn which is a typical attitude to the subject through the school. Pupils at different levels of understanding worked together and this helped to ensure that the activity went well with some element of pupils learning from one another. In some lessons, all pupils are given the same work and there are too few activities designed to meet the needs of pupils at different levels of understanding or skill. This inhibits the progress they make.
- 80 Pupils' behaviour is consistently good and sometimes very good, largely because of the positive, caring, yet firm relationships which teachers establish with the pupils and which help to create a good climate for learning. The positive ethos is evident from the beginning of school. For example, its calm and purposeful atmosphere marked a lesson for Year 3 pupils looking at the characteristics of magnets, with teacher and pupils productively sharing ideas and experiences. The teacher's use of key words helped pupils to develop their knowledge of scientific terms. Pupils also developed their skills in prediction, by considering which materials would be attracted by the magnets. Teachers have good knowledge of the subject and are aware of the importance of developing scientific skills as well as knowledge.
- 81 Teachers are very skilled in using questions to prompt pupils' thinking and to assess their level of understanding. Tests and the marking of pupils' work are also used appropriately to help teachers appreciate how effective lessons have been. This information is often used in the planning of future work and helps to ensure that lessons provide a good sequence of experiences. There is less emphasis on encouraging pupils to raise questions. A lesson on the human body made very effective use of an animated computer program to help pupils learn about the movement of muscles but provided little opportunity for pupils to express their ideas or explain their difficulties. In these situations teachers remain unaware of the misconceptions that individual pupils may be experiencing and a fundamental skill remains underdeveloped.
- 82 Teachers plan interesting lessons, based on relevant learning objectives and with a significant element of practical activity. Consequently, pupils are motivated to learn and, without exception, say that they enjoy their work. The lessons are based upon a generally well-structured curriculum plan and, as a result, usually build effectively upon one another so that pupils' knowledge and skill are gradually developed. There are, however, occasions when lessons for the younger pupils cover material better suited to those in later classes. This results in unnecessary repetition of work and in some

aspects, such as work on rocks and soils, being taken too far, using time that could be given to more significant and appropriate topics. As a result, some aspects of pupils' knowledge is still insecure when they reach the end of Year 6. For example, many pupils have a sound basic understanding of forces, materials, electrical circuits and the relative movements of the earth, moon and sun, but their understanding of living things is weak and their appreciation of aspects in the higher levels of the curriculum is at an early stage of development. Nevertheless, pupils came from a well below average starting point when they entered the school and their written work shows that the rate of achievement is good as they develop both knowledge and skills and learn to apply language, number and computer skills in scientific contexts. Pupils with special educational needs and those learning English as an additional language are very well supported and, as a result, achieve at a good rate.

- 83 The highly motivated staff are developing a consistently good standard in their teaching, with a consequent positive impact on pupils' standards. This along with the continued evolution of the curriculum indicates that the school is well placed to continue to make progress in this subject.

ART AND DESIGN

- 84 Pupils at the end of Year 6 are achieving very well and reaching standards in art higher than those expected of pupils this age. All pupils achieve well in a good range of different art styles. They are helped in this by a well-planned range of experiences and the artistic knowledge and flair of the subject co-ordinator.
- 85 Pupils in Year 3, for example, learn to observe carefully, looking at human faces, building up a portrait after pencil-sketching individual features. Pupils take this on further by sketching, developing, evaluating and finally making papier maché sculptures of the human form. The work of Year 4 pupils after studying Paul Klee accurately emulates the style of the original.
- 86 In Year 5, pupils move into larger scale projects. For example, they tell a story through a textile collage. They use sketch books well to collect and develop ideas and build up the necessary skills so that, working collaboratively, they can retell a Greek legend with dramatic force. They begin to use external stimuli well as the study of the immediate locality and the record of the many-layered experience in Langdale Cavern testify.
- 87 The pupils' undated portfolios contain work in other styles using pencil, paint and collage. Pupils work in three dimensions, for example, when using natural materials in a local forest. The work of the upper and middle ability pupils show their skills with brush, pastel and pencil gradually building up and becoming more assured. The lower attaining pupils, however, have fewer ideas, and their skills are less well developed. The extensive use of digital cameras provides pupils with another medium that they use with enthusiasm, taking well-composed pictures of different activities. Well-chosen computer programs provide another effective medium for pupils to develop a good range of skills.
- 88 Because not enough art lessons were seen, it is not possible to judge the quality of teaching generally or the pupils' attitudes to art. However, the energy and enthusiasm that shine through much of the pupils' work, for instance the Year 6 studies in black and white under the heading of 'Industrial Cumbria', is a strong indication that pupils' attitudes to art are very positive.
- 89 Of the small number of lessons seen, one was characterised by the teacher's enthusiasm for Paul Klee and the opportunity she gave for pupils to evaluate their own

and each others' work, which they did sensitively and generously. In another, the pupils were able to explain the principles underlying their work, prompted by the teacher's well-judged questions. In these lessons, the attitudes and behaviour of the pupils were very good

- 90 The subject has maintained its position and improved the standards reported by the last inspection and it is in a satisfactory position to continue to improve.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

- 91 Standards reached by pupils by the age of eleven are typical of pupils of this age, an improvement since the last inspection. All pupils, including those with special educational needs, higher attainers and those for whom English is an additional language, make good progress. The school's enthusiasm for the subject and its careful analyses of strengths and weaknesses put it in a good position to continue to improve. Higher attaining pupils complete the same work as others but more is expected of them in their designs and finished products. Teaching and learning have improved since the last inspection and are now good throughout the school. The co-ordinator has monitored the teaching and as a result has improved standards, resources and the curriculum. A good quality scheme of work has been developed, based on national recommendations, but adapted to meet the needs of the school and stressing the importance of exploring ideas and designing as well as making. This enables teachers to know what to teach over the year, provides a breadth of study, including food technology, and helps pupils to build up their skills as they move through school. Detailed and very helpful half-termly plans have been written that help teachers who are not specialists to teach the subject well.
- 92 When pupils first start school they have a short course to improve basic skills such as cutting and sticking, and this also helps to give them confidence when they start making things. Throughout the school, pupils make good progress. For example, in Year 3 they design a healthy sandwich. They investigate different sandwiches and record their appearance, taste, smell and texture. They fill in a simple designing sheet, choosing the bread, the filling and the shape, and write an order of making. They evaluate the different fillings and breads and record their favourites on a spreadsheet. As pupils move through school they learn to generate ideas by collecting and using a variety of information, they design and make their own product, working with reasonable accuracy, and evaluate the finished work. Pupils in Year 6 examine and evaluate different fabrics for durability and use. They consider the different constraints on sports clothing and design their own. They plan and make a neckerchief using various sewing skills and decorating the neckerchiefs with fabric dyes, ribbons, beads and sequins. Pupils enjoy designing and making their neckerchiefs and, as they work, they adapt their designs when they consider the use to which they will be put. They are proud of their achievements, confident when talking about how they made them, and appreciate other pupils' work.
- 93 The quality of teaching and the consequent learning are good. There is a suitable emphasis on exploring ideas, planning and evaluating work as well as making things. Activities are chosen that interest pupils, so they are motivated and work hard. Class management is good, resulting in good behaviour and a quiet, purposeful atmosphere. In the Year 6 classes pupils are, in the main, self-disciplined and work very hard and concentrate throughout. Teachers value the pupils' work and praise them appropriately which helps to develop confidence. Lessons are evaluated at the end of each half-termly unit and successes or areas for development are identified. This information is used well to plan future work. Information technology is used well to support design and technology and digital cameras are used to keep a record of the work produced.

GEOGRAPHY

- 94 Pupils' standards are in line with those found in most schools. This is a similar situation to that found at the last inspection. Considering the limited geographical understanding, for example the sense of place and locality, with which pupils enter the school, it is clear that they achieve well, because of the good quality of teaching and learning. The subject is also well managed by an enthusiastic co-ordinator who has led the development of a curricular plan to ensure that pupils' experiences build well on what they already know. The school is placed well to consolidate good work and to make further improvements
- 95 A notable feature is the emphasis placed upon the development of pupils' appreciation of the nature of real-life geographical issues. Throughout the school, pupils are encouraged to reflect on local and distant events, to consider how they affect people's lives and how opinions can vary but, nevertheless, be valid. Consequently, by the time they are in Year 6, pupils regularly collect information and news items from newspapers, television and the internet, using it to study the impact of environmental and social change. Much of this activity is outside regular geography lessons and allows pupils to apply their knowledge and skills in independent study. In Year 5, pupils have a similar opportunity when, individually, they choose a European country to study and are responsible for collecting their own information and recording it in the form of a book. These valuable activities are very effectively supported by the school's library, which has a good range of books and an excellent computerised index, maintained by pupil librarians.
- 96 The good teaching and learning are exemplified by the quality of discussion between teachers and pupils. Questions are used skilfully to prompt learning, extend ideas and assess how well pupils are doing. Debate is encouraged, as in a lesson for Year 5, which focused on the possible effects of closing a nearby street to traffic. Pupils prepared written arguments taking a variety of viewpoints and then read these before responding to questions from the class. A lively debate followed, during which pupils demonstrated respect for the views of others and a facility to raise pertinent questions. This type of activity not only develops geographical awareness but also gives pupils opportunities to improve and practise their literacy skills.
- 97 Pupils develop a wide range of geography skills because teachers, with their good knowledge of the subject, are aware of the importance of this aspect. For example, from Year 3 onwards, pupils study maps and gradually develop an understanding of signs, symbols and grid references work, and become increasingly aware of the use of maps as sources of information. This work provides pupils with opportunities to apply their numeracy skills and is effectively linked to history through the study of environmental changes illustrated by contrasting old and new maps of the same area. A map of the local area from 1060 helped pupils appreciate the significance of changes since that time.
- 98 Contrasts are also drawn with other countries; a Year 4 lesson on India focused on differences and similarities to people's lives in this country. The teacher skilfully assessed pupils' existing ideas and then used a video about modern India to help improve and develop their knowledge. The lesson reinforced the school's constant theme of respect for other people, as well as self-respect. This consistent approach helps pupils develop appropriate attitudes to other countries and people and also contributes to the quality of relationships in the school. Consequently, pupils respect one another and the staff, behave well and recognise the importance of their work; they are keen to learn and to show what they know. A lesson with younger pupils was

marked by the seriousness with which pupils considered newspaper articles about current environmental issues. They were not daunted by a very challenging activity and the pupils with special educational needs were, typically, well supported by the teacher so that they played a full part in the lesson. However, some pupils in the class did not gain fully from the activity because the ideas involved were beyond their scope.

- 99 In several contexts, teachers make good use of computer animated presentations to introduce and reinforce pupils' learning. Pupils are interested in these and they are used well to emphasise key words and geographical terms, as well as providing opportunities for teachers to assess pupils' knowledge. The marking of pupils' work is also used to evaluate the success of teaching and to help pupils' appreciate how well they are doing. There is no day-to-day record of pupils' progress, however, and this limits teachers' awareness of how individuals are doing.
- 100 Pupils' research skills develop consistently because teachers make them aware of the nature and range of sources of evidence. There is a particular emphasis on first hand experience; visits to local and distant places are used effectively to bring learning to life. These experiences allied to the gathering of information from books, newspapers, CD ROM, internet, video, maps and other people, help pupils to acquire both knowledge and skills at a good rate.

HISTORY

- 101 Pupils' standards by eleven are above those expected for pupils of that age; this is a very good improvement since the last inspection, when standards were below average. Pupils attain well in spite of the limited literacy skills of a significant proportion of them because of the very effective focus on the development of history skills and the imaginative ways teachers use to enable pupils to record their learning. Pupils, including those with special educational needs, those for whom English is an additional language, boys, girls and higher attainers, achieve very well because of the very good teaching, the emphasis on the local community and the very rich curriculum, strongly enhanced by stimulating visits and visitors and excellent links with the local community. Pupils develop their history skills systematically, often alongside skills in other subjects, such as geography and art. They learn, from Year 3 onwards, that events can be seen from more than one point of view and that what a person says about something depends very much on his or her viewpoint. They learn to identify evidence from diaries and first-hand accounts, for example, when they learnt a great deal about the court of Henry VIII from an account by a visiting ambassador. Pupils learn to question people about their experiences of wartime, using their existing knowledge intelligently to ask for further knowledge and insights. When they visit places such as Cartmel Priory, they enjoy and learn from dressing and living like monks for a day. They learn to sequence events so as to understand how a community such as their own develops over time, recording their knowledge in annotated stepping stones that enable higher attainers to provide more detailed perceptions while lower attainers simply track the changes.
- 102 Because the teaching is very good, pupils have very positive attitudes to the subject. Teachers have very well developed subject knowledge so that they are confident in using adventurous approaches to learning and know how best to relate the topic to pupils' own experience. For example, after being asked to consider how they would feel if another class took over their room, pupils in Year 3 enjoyed the sight of their teacher with a blanket over his shoulder pretending to be a Celt. They asked pertinent questions so that they began to understand more realistically what it is like to be 'taken over' by an invading force: 'It's illegal,' said one boy, and 'I'd be very cross!' exclaimed another. Several had to be convinced that fighting a disciplined, well-armoured force was not the

best option! The pupils in Year 5 who talked to a group of visitors about their experiences of World War II were engrossed in listening to their experiences and questioned them avidly but with great respect. Teachers make very effective use of pupils' own experiences, sometimes using drama to provide immediacy and impact. Because of the pupils' very high levels of interest, teachers rarely have to do more to control the class than to channel enthusiasm; this they do very well. The school is full of displays that stimulate and support learning very effectively. Displays include posters, attractive pictures and artefacts as well as books and other written material for pupils to refer to. The recently appointed co-ordinator is very committed, enthusiastic and effective and is continuing her predecessors' practice in developing the subject very well.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY (ICT)

103 By the age of eleven pupils attain average standards for their age - an improvement since the last inspection, when provision and standards in the subject were weak. These recent improvements have created a real enthusiasm for the subject and the resultant momentum puts the school in a good position to continue to improve. Pupils achieve well because of the quality of the teaching, the very effective support provided in the computer suite and the very good resources. By the time they leave the school, pupils use the computer keyboard with fair confidence; pupils in Years 3 and 5, who are having touch typing lessons, are very confident. Pupils use the icons to open the relevant program and can use a good range of tools and commands. Most are confident in using a variety of programs to word-process, edit and present their text; to calculate using calculators and spreadsheets; to produce a slide presentation that includes sound and animation; to produce pleasing art and pattern work; and to connect to the Internet in order to find and download information. They can use a simple programming language to move a computerised robot or to produce complex patterns in a variety of colours on screen. They send e-mails to one another, though opportunities to use e-mail more extensively to contact pupils in other places have not yet been fully developed. Pupils in Year 6 act as librarians, using the library computer skilfully to issue books and to check them back in; they confidently ensure that the borrower's thumbprint matches correctly and can use the computer to identify exactly where on the shelves the required book is located.

104 Provision for the subject has greatly improved since the last inspection. The computer suite has been developed and the number and quality of computers in classrooms has improved. All are in regular use. Consequently, pupils are able to practise using a variety of programs regularly and the ICT supports learning in most other subjects. For pupils who do not have a computer at home, the school, with some external funding, provides a computer club after school. Other projects enable parents to learn to use the computers, either on their own or alongside their children. Teachers' knowledge and confidence and the use of ICT across the curriculum have also improved, largely due to effective training undertaken by all staff. Consequently, the quality of teaching is good and sometimes very good. Teachers plan carefully so that they can make it clear to pupils what it is that they are going to learn. They are secure in their knowledge of the subject and are assisted very effectively by a knowledgeable technician who also works with the pupils. Pupils have positive attitudes to the subject; they enjoy using the computers and feel a real sense of achievement when they succeed. However, some pupils find the computers distracting, so that at times teachers have to work hard to keep their attention. The subject is effectively led and managed. Externally funded projects such as the computer clubs make a strong contribution to pupils' standards and to their enjoyment of ICT.

MUSIC

- 105 Standards in Year 6 are on track to be average overall by the end of the year. This is an improvement on the last inspection that found attainment to be below what is usually expected of pupils of this age. The improvements are largely the result of the implementation of a carefully considered and detailed description of the work that is to be taught in each class. Also contributing to the good achievement of pupils are the use of specialist teaching in some classes, additional instrumental tuition for a substantial minority of pupils and the systematic use of expertise and resources from beyond the school in order that pupils meet and respond to excellence. However, the main reason that standards have risen is that teaching by class teachers is consistently good and pupils' response is invariably positive.
- 106 The majority of pupils sing enthusiastically and often expressively. A significant minority finds it difficult to hold a tune; singing in two parts is tentative but pupils work hard to improve. Little teaching was seen that would help pupils with their breathing, stance and accurate pitching of notes that would address the main weak aspects of singing. Almost one quarter of pupils join the school choir that is formed in the Autumn and Spring terms. Pupils speak with enjoyment of the experience and audience members speak of their pleasure at the quality of the singing. Over one pupil in five learns to play an instrument such as the violin, flute, brass or percussion. The positive effects of this can be seen in whole-class lessons when pupils explore and choose sounds and rhythms to illustrate, for example, rain and wind or to add depth to the singing of 'When the saints come marching in'. The good choice and use of resources and the clear explanations of the class teachers make substantial contributions to the progress made by most pupils.
- 107 Pupils make good progress in their learning. For example, Year 3 pupils identify and clap a prominent and relatively simple rhythmic pattern in a recorded piece of music. Year 4 pupils invent their own rhythm and hold to it with the help of the teacher's conducting; Year 6 pupils compose a suitable rhythm on tuned and untuned percussion to accompany a two-part song. Recorded music, well chosen by teachers, is much enjoyed by pupils during assemblies and in other subjects (physical education, for example) and many pupils can discuss sensibly music such as 'She'll be coming round the mountain' and Beethoven's 'Moonlight Sonata'. In dance lessons, the higher attaining pupils show an expert ear for the subtleties of rhythm, dynamics and tempo and the ability to respond to music at a sophisticated level for their age.
- 108 Good use is made of a wide range of learning resources, especially musical instruments. Some music teaching takes place on the specially adapted stage. The adaptations work well because teachers' and pupils' positive relationships prevent the rather cramped conditions having a negative effect on behaviour and levels of concentration - both of which are good. The planned evaluation of the relatively new scheme of work, the good leadership of the subject and the positive attitudes of staff towards improving music teaching place the school in a good position to consolidate good practice and make further improvements.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

- 109 Standards reached by the age of eleven are above those typical of pupils of this age. Pupils of all abilities are achieving very well. This is a big improvement since the last inspection when standards were below national expectations. The physical education co-ordinator is enthusiastic and knowledgeable and has monitored the teaching throughout the school, improved resources and written a scheme of work. This has had a positive impact on standards. The school is well placed to continue to improve. The teaching is good, an improvement since the last inspection, and pupils follow a very

good whole school scheme of work that builds on previously learnt skills as they move through school. There are detailed half-termly plans for all areas of the curriculum that help teachers who are not specialists to teach the subject well. The school has achieved a national award for the excellence of the curriculum which is varied, well balanced and very well supported by a wide range of out-of-school activities such as rugby, soccer, basketball, netball, rounders, cricket, tennis and swimming. These contribute to the good standards achieved.

- 110 The standards reached in swimming are well above national expectations. All pupils go swimming every week and very nearly all learn to swim. Many pupils learn to swim considerable distances using different strokes; high attainers obtain life-saving awards. Swimming is very efficiently organised so that each pupil has a half-hour swimming lesson with minimum time away from school. Pupils are in ability groups in the pool and tuition takes place accordingly. The teaching of swimming is very good and many teachers are qualified swimming coaches. Lessons are very well planned to help develop and improve swimming skills and improve strokes. All pupils enjoy swimming and work very hard. The most able swimmers receive tuition after school hours and are part of a very successful swimming team. Success in swimming for all pupils is a real boost to confidence and self-esteem.
- 111 Standards reached in games are typical of pupils of this age and all pupils achieve well. Higher achieving pupils are identified and encouraged; they receive extra coaching in rugby and football and play in successful teams, a few becoming county players. Throughout the school, teaching is good. Activities are well-planned, with clear aims, which develop skills at a good rate. Pupils practise and improve their skills of passing, receiving, and finding a space to receive, the ball. They start to understand the tactics involved in playing different games and co-operate well together as a team. They enjoy the lessons and work hard, maintaining a good level of physical activity throughout.
- 112 Standards in dance are above national expectations. Dance is taught throughout the school and the teaching is very good. In a Year 6 dance lesson pupils worked with a partner to compose a simple dance, focusing on dance crazes of the 1960's. They were well motivated by the music and worked industriously, the most able producing controlled, expressive dance that interpreted the music well. The class teacher modelled clearly what was expected and this helped lower attaining pupils to improve their performance. Pupils tried dance movements, discussed them in pairs, modified, synchronised and practised to improve their performance. They showed pride as they demonstrated their dances that were evaluated and appreciated by the teacher and other pupils.
- 113 At the end of each term, lessons are evaluated to identify successes or areas for development and pupils who have under-performed or excelled are identified. This information is used very well to plan future work and so contributes to pupils' progress.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

- 114 Standards in religious education at the end of Year 6 are in line with those expected of eleven-year-olds, and all pupils are achieving well, as a result of good teaching and a well-planned programme of lessons sensitively related to religious festivals. Both aspects of the subject - learning about religion and learning from religion - are suitably represented in the pupils' achievement. For example, Year 6 pupils, after studying the history of the Israelites, attained a good knowledge of the origin of the Passover, an appreciation of the Passover observation of present-day Jewish practice, with an understanding of the symbolism of the Seder meal. As part of a study of Moses they devised their own personal list of rules to live by, which in many cases showed much

thoughtful and reflective work. Earlier work, on world religions and in preparation for Christmas, is similarly perceptive.

- 115 Within the good overall quality of teaching there is some very good practice. When a lesson goes very well it is because the teacher takes care to prepare thoroughly and relate the subject of the lesson to pupils' own experiences. For instance, in a very good Year 4 lesson, which contributed well to pupils' spiritual and moral development, most pupils showed they were familiar with the events of Holy Week. They were able to explain the various levels of betrayal in the New Testament account. Furthermore, they were very aware also of the implications for betrayal in their own lives, and prepared a short piece of drama on their experience of it. The teacher's calm, open manner encouraged an atmosphere in which pupils could talk freely knowing that others would listen sympathetically, respecting each other's work. The teacher's expert questioning encouraged less confident pupils to speak and enabled others to show what they knew about the issues. A well managed final section to the lesson ensured it ended positively
- 116 The school has improved on the position described in the last inspection report. The subject has its own place in the curriculum, with a coherent scheme of work, and standards are now satisfactory. The quality of teaching is now good. A newly appointed co-ordinator brings a new perspective to the subject, that is well placed to continue to improve.