

## INSPECTION REPORT

### **DEAN BARWICK PRIMARY SCHOOL**

Witherslack

LEA area: Cumbria

Unique reference number: 112343

Headteacher: Mr T Fletcher

Reporting inspector: Mr M J Mayhew  
22197

Dates of inspection: 25 – 27 September 2001

Inspection number: 195690

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

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## INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Infant and junior
School category:	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils:	4 to 11 years
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Witherslack Grange over Sands Cumbria
Postcode:	LA11 6RS
Telephone number:	015395 52298
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Appropriate authority:	The governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mrs E Walker
Date of previous inspection:	March 1997

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members			Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
22197	Mr M J Mayhew	<i>Registered inspector</i>	Children in the Foundation Stage; Mathematics; Science; Information and communication technology; Art and design; Design and technology; Equal opportunities.	How high are standards? The school's results and achievements; How well are pupils taught? How well is the school led and managed?
19807	Mr K Osborne	<i>Lay inspector</i>		How high are standards? Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development; How well does the school care for its pupils? How well does the school work with parents?
20846	Mr A Wilson	<i>Team inspector</i>	English; Geography; History; Music; Physical education; Religious education; Pupils with special educational needs.	How good are curricular and other learning opportunities?

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## **PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT**

### **INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL**

Dean Barwick Primary School is a voluntary aided school, established in 1671, is situated in the village of Witherslack, near Grange over Sands. Pupils come from the village, and from a wider area of about five miles radius. There are 39 girls and boys aged from 4 to 11 on the school roll, a few more than at the time of the previous inspection in 1997. Socio-economic factors are judged to be about average. There are eight pupils on the school's register for special educational needs. No pupils have Statements of Special Educational Need. There are three pupils from ethnic minority backgrounds who speak English fluently and have no need for additional support. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is below the national average. Children's attainment on entry to the school varies from year to year. The current year's intake of five children into the Foundation Stage is of above average attainment in comparison with what is normally expected. Most children on entry have a good level of personal development and ability to communicate with each other and adults.

### **HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS**

The school provides a sound education for its pupils. Based on the evidence available, the quality of education is set to improve. The quality of teaching is better than it was at the previous inspection, and is good overall. The quality of leadership and management provided by the relatively inexperienced headteacher and governing body is satisfactory, although much important ground has been covered in a short time. Pupils work hard and make overall satisfactory progress as they move through the school. However, for the last four years, standards in English by the time pupils leave the school at 11 have remained lower than nationally expected. The school gives satisfactory value for money.

### **WHAT THE SCHOOL DOES WELL**

- The overall quality of teaching is good; it is very good for pupils in the infant class.
- Pupils' relationships with each other, and with adults, their behaviour and attitudes to learning, are very good.
- There are good arrangements for teaching pupils with special educational needs.
- The staff have a clear picture of all pupils' levels of attainment, because there are good procedures for assessment.
- The curriculum is broad and interesting, and makes very good use of local facilities.
- Pupils' social and cultural development are very good.
- Pupils achieve well in information and communication technology (ICT).
- Parents make a very good contribution to pupils' learning.

### **WHAT COULD BE IMPROVED**

- The quality of writing in the juniors, in order to raise standards attained in English and other subjects by the time pupils are 11.
- The adult support in lessons for pupils in the juniors, to cater better for the wide range of ages and abilities in the class.
- The way in which available time is used in numeracy and literacy lessons to allow more time for teaching of other subjects.

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

## **HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION**

The school was last inspected in March 1997. There have been a number of improvements since that time. The management has dealt successfully with the issue relating to information and communication technology, and standards attained in this subject by pupils at ages seven and eleven are good. There is better provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Procedures for assessing pupils' attainment are also improved, as is the breadth and richness of the curriculum and the way it is planned to meet pupils' needs. There is now a higher proportion of good quality teaching, and very good teaching is now a feature of some lessons. Recently implemented strategies designed to raise pupils' levels of attainment in English and mathematics at 11, especially in writing, have not had enough time to effect higher standards. Nevertheless, the inspection finds that pupils currently in Year 6 achieve satisfactorily overall. Consequently, there has been a satisfactory level of improvement since the previous inspection.

## **STANDARDS**

The number of pupils eligible to take the standard assessment tests for pupils aged 11 has been consistently too small to make valid comparisons with national data. For example, there were only six pupils eligible to take the tests in 2000 and seven pupils in 2001. Nevertheless, based on their previous attainment in the statutory tests taken in English at age seven, too few pupils make enough progress in the juniors to attain the expected Level 4, or above, by the time they leave the school when they are 11. Inspection findings show that pupils make good progress in reading and in speaking and listening and attain above the expected level by the time they are 11. Progress in writing, however, is unsatisfactory. Standards in writing in Year 6 have been consistently too low since the last inspection. Inspection findings show that most of the current pupils in Year 2 achieve well and are likely to reach the expected Level 2 in reading, writing and mathematics before they move into the juniors. Similarly, most pupils in Year 6 make sound progress in mathematics, and are likely to attain the expected Level 4, or above, by the time they are 11.

At age seven and eleven, most pupils achieve expected standards in science because the school emphasises well the investigative aspect of the subject. Progress is good, and pupils achieve well in information and communication technology. They are familiar with computers and confidently use them as tools to aid their learning across other subjects of the curriculum. There is not enough evidence from the inspection to make secure judgements about pupils' progress in design and technology, art, physical education and religious education. Pupils at seven and eleven make sound progress and achieve satisfactorily in geography and history. Pupils aged seven make good progress and achieve satisfactorily in music.

Pupils with special educational needs make good progress towards meeting the targets set in their individual education plans.

## PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	A strength of the school. Pupils have very good attitudes to school and enjoy coming.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Behaviour is of a very high standard
Personal development and relationships	Very good: pupils relate very well to each other and to adults. They take responsibility for a good range of tasks, and show maturity in their decisions.
Attendance	Satisfactory. There are few unauthorised absences.

## TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils in:	Reception	Years 1 – 2	Years 3 – 6
Quality of teaching	Good	Very good	Satisfactory

*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.*

There is a significant number of factors that contribute to the overall judgements about teaching identified in the table above. For example, all teachers have a good range of subject expertise, with the result that they plan well for their lessons, and nearly always explain clearly to pupils what it is they want them to learn. Teachers and pupils relate very well to each other, and pupils throughout the school are confident to approach the teachers for help and guidance. There is good, calm management of pupils, with usually high expectations for pupils to achieve. Lessons are planned well to take account of individual needs. However, in the junior class, it is difficult for the one teacher to attend successfully to the needs of all pupils, because there is such a wide a range of pupils' age and level of attainment. One significant result is that not all pupils achieve a sufficiently fast rate of learning, particularly in English and mathematics. All teachers are competent to teach literacy and numeracy in accordance with the requirements of the national strategies, and much of the content of these lessons is effective in improving learning because expectations of pupils to achieve are often high. Nevertheless, there is a need to review the structure of literacy and numeracy lessons to make better use of the available time, and staff, and to ensure that all pupils, at whatever age or level of attainment, make better progress. Where classroom assistants are available, as in the infants' class, these are used very well in literacy and numeracy lessons, with the result that pupils in these lessons consistently make good progress.

## OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	The interesting curriculum meets statutory requirements, and presents pupils with a wide range of learning opportunities. There is good use made of skills learned in one subject to support learning in others, particularly in the infants' class. The local environment is a valuable resource that effectively enriches pupils' learning, particularly in art and science. The use of the environment and local skilled professionals is a rapidly improving aspect of the school's programme, resulting directly from an effective partnership between the school, the parents and the local community. There is a satisfactory range of out-of-school activities.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Good support is given to these pupils, both in lessons and at times when they are taught on an individual basis.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	This is a strength of the school. Provision is good for pupils' spiritual and moral development, and very good for their social and cultural development.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Good overall. Child protection and health and safety procedures are in place. There is a good system of assessing and tracking pupils' learning. However, there is scope to plan teaching arrangements better to meet pupils' needs in the juniors, so that all of them consistently have equal access to the full curriculum.
How well the school works in partnership with parents	Parents have positive views of the school. The school and parents work well together to promote pupils' learning.

## HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	The headteacher leads and manages the school satisfactorily. His staff support him effectively, and are eager to pursue their recently delegated responsibilities for the curriculum. Since his appointment one year ago, the headteacher has undertaken a detailed analysis of what the school needs to do to improve the quality of education and to ensure that pupils reach higher standards. He has established a clear vision for future school development. Nevertheless, much still needs to be done to secure better standards, particularly in the quality of pupils' writing, and the way in which staffing and time are managed in the junior class.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	The governing body, comprising several newly appointed, eager and enthusiastic members, is at an early stage of supporting effectively the work of the school. Its members are learning their roles quickly, and, as far as they are currently able, give the headteacher and staff valuable support through discussion and helpful criticism. The recently constructed school improvement plan is a strategic document that will guide the school towards improving its quality of education. However, it does not identify the low standards in writing in Year 6, of which the governors and staff are fully aware, or the means to quickly rectify the situation.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Pupils' performance in tests is analysed and used as a basis for future action. However, following the recent appointment of the headteacher and several members of the governing body, including the chair, the school has not reached the stage of measuring its performance.
The strategic use of resources	The governors use the school's financial resources appropriately to support the intentions identified in their improvement plan. However, they have not agreed how to use available finances to improve the level of staff support, and pupils' achievement, particularly in the junior class.
The adequacy of staffing, accommodation and learning resources	The staff are suitably qualified and experienced to teach the National Curriculum and religious education. However, there are not enough staff to successfully meet the needs of the pupils as the classes are currently arranged. The accommodation is compact, but is adequate to teach the number of pupils on roll. There are particularly good outside facilities to support and enhance pupils' learning. Resources for the teaching of most subjects are adequate.

## PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Their children enjoy coming to school, and are helped to become mature and responsible.</li> <li>• There is good quality teaching and their children make good progress.</li> <li>• They find the staff helpful and easy to approach.</li> <li>• The way in which they and their children are introduced and welcomed into the school in the reception class.</li> <li>• The information that the school gives them about their children's progress and the work their children are to do in the next term.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The range of activities for pupils to do out of school hours.</li> <li>• The quality of leadership and management.</li> <li>• More opportunities for pupils to undertake more wide-ranging learning activities, particularly in the arts.</li> </ul>

The inspectors agree with most of the parents' positive statements. However, pupils' progress in writing is not as good as it could be by the time they leave the school at 11. The range of out-of-school activities is about what might be expected of a school of this size and number of staff. There is satisfactory, and improving, leadership and management of the school. The joint partnership initiative between the school, parents and the local community is a positive step towards increasing pupils' experiences of the arts. The benefits of this initiative are already apparent.

## **PART B: COMMENTARY**

### **HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?**

#### **The school's results and pupils' achievements**

1. Children's attainment on entry to the school in the Foundation Stage (reception year) varies considerably from year to year. The inspectors judge the current year's intake of five children be above average attainment, especially in the areas of personal and social development, and in communication, language and literacy. From their starting point on entry, children make good progress and reach or exceed the early learning goals in all areas of learning. By the time they reach the end of the reception year, because of the good quality of education they receive, the children currently at the beginning reception year should all be working on elements of the Key Stage 1 National Curriculum in literacy and numeracy. They already have experiences of Key Stage 1 work in the foundation subjects because they work for some of their time alongside Years 1 and 2 pupils.

2. In the rest of the school, valid comparisons with national averages in statutory tests are not possible, at ages seven and eleven, because the school has only a few pupils eligible to take the tests each year. For the same reason, one cannot draw valid comparisons with the results of those schools nationally that take pupils from similar backgrounds. Nevertheless, it is possible to make judgements about the progress in learning that pupils make over their time in the school, and to compare with the expectations nationally for pupils at ages seven and eleven. The results of the statutory tasks and tests in English and mathematics over the last four years, for pupils aged seven, have varied from year to year. Inspection evidence shows that these pupils make good progress overall in English and achieve well. They achieve well in speaking and listening, and in reading, and satisfactorily in writing. They make good progress in the infants' class. The pupils currently in Year 2 are likely to attain at least the nationally expected Level 2 in reading and writing by the time they are seven. They make sound progress overall in mathematics, and good progress in developing their knowledge and understanding of number. Similarly, the current Year 2 pupils are likely to achieve at least the expected Level 2 in mathematics in 2002.

3. Pupils in the juniors continue to make good progress in speaking and listening, and in reading. By the time they are in Year 6, pupils speak confidently to their friends and adults, and with a good level of maturity. They express their opinions clearly and give extended answers when questioned. Most pupils of this age read with good expression, interest and accuracy. Their rate of progress in writing is unsatisfactory, with the result that the overall attainment of 11 year olds in the statutory tests over the past four years has been below the national expectation. Higher attaining pupils in Year 6 achieve satisfactorily. All pupils could achieve higher standards if more attention was given in the junior class to developing pupils' ability to write more imaginatively and at length. For example, there is insufficient attention given to the writing of poetry or fiction, in which pupils need to practise the use of their descriptive vocabulary. Additionally, there needs to be more emphasis given to pupils producing consistently high quality work, with due attention given across subjects to better spelling and handwriting.

4. The results of statutory tests for 11 year olds in mathematics over the past four years have varied from year to year, but meet the national expectation on average. Inspection findings show that current Year 6 pupils make sound progress overall, and most achieve the standards expected of their age. Pupils in the juniors have many opportunities to practise their numeracy skills through applying them to real life situations. This is an effective strategy, which is helpful in raising standards. However, sometimes the work

given to pupils in numeracy lessons is not well matched to their capabilities. For example, sometimes it is

too easy or too hard. In addition, despite the teachers working hard in lessons, it is not always possible to give each pupil the attention he or she requires because of the wide ranges of age and levels of attainment in the class. The result is that some pupils' time is wasted and they do not achieve as well as they might.

5. In science, on the basis of teacher assessment in 2000, all pupils aged seven achieved the nationally expected Level 2. Assessments in 2001 show that most pupils achieved the same level. At age 11, most pupils achieved, in both years, the nationally expected Level 4 in the statutory tests. Inspection findings show that the current Year 6 pupils are likely to achieve similar results in 2002. Pupils at both ages reach good standards in the investigative aspect of science because the school gives strong emphasis to this part of the subject. By the time that they are 11, pupils have a clear understanding of experimental procedures, and carry out their investigations sensibly, record their findings clearly, and draw appropriate conclusions. They have a good knowledge of a wide range of scientific facts.

6. In ICT, pupils at seven and eleven make good progress and achieve standards in most aspects of the subject that are above those expected for their ages. This marks a notable improvement since the previous inspection, when standards were judged to be below what is expected.

7. In history and geography, pupils across the school achieve satisfactory standards by the ages of seven and eleven. Similarly, pupils aged seven make sound progress, and achieve satisfactorily in music. There is not enough evidence from the inspection to make secure judgements about pupils' progress and achievements in art and design, design and technology, physical education, music for the 11 year olds, or religious education across the school.

8. Pupils with special educational needs achieve well in meeting the targets identified in their individual education plans. This is because teachers identify the potential requirement for extra support, and provide it effectively.

### **Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development**

9. Pupils' attitudes to learning and their behaviour are very good, and are strengths of the school. Pupils state that they enjoy coming to school, a point noted by nearly all parents at the pre-inspection meeting. These valuable attributes were noted at the previous inspection, and have been sustained. They result directly from the expectations by staff for pupils to play a full and active part in their learning and in the life of the school, of which most pupils are proud. In casual conversation, one boy in Year 6 said that he would not have wanted to go to any other primary school because this one is always happy and interesting. Most pupils concentrate on their work for long periods, for example when pupils in the infant class made very good progress in a music lesson as they tried to identify high and low sounds. However, there are occasions when some pupils lose interest in their work because they find it too difficult, as in some mathematics lessons in the junior class. Most pupils readily ask questions, or join in confidently in discussions. For instance, older pupils contribute their ideas about what mental strategies to use to help them work out how to add and subtract large numbers. Throughout the school, pupils work independently, especially when they come into school in the mornings and take out books to read quietly without being asked.

10. Pupils have good relationships with each other and with adults. They are polite and courteous, and also confident in their interactions with adults, even asking inspectors 'How are you today?' There was no evidence of any bullying, and there have been no

exclusions. There is very little challenging behaviour, and any that does arise is dealt with efficiently and effectively. Pupils show a growing sense of maturity in their relationships. It is laudable the way that the older pupils support and help the younger ones, another point noted strongly by parents. A number of examples were seen to support this judgement. For example, older pupils offered help to a younger girl when she hurt herself in the playground, and inspectors saw an older boy wiping mud off a younger boy's clothes when he fell over in the garden. Pupils share equipment and take a keen interest in the work of others. They work efficiently and sensibly in small groups when asked. The school council, fully supported by the staff, is a good forum for raising pupils' self esteem and sense of worth. All pupils take pride in its function, and enjoy seeing the fruits of its work. For example, the council made the decision to spend £50 on games equipment for use by all pupils at playtimes.

11. Pupils express interest in all areas of the curriculum, and enjoy the increasing opportunities to take part in class lessons and in other activities arranged in the school or in partnership with the local community. For example, all available places for violin instruction are taken up, and pupils talk with relish about recent work undertaken in school with a local artist, and a visit they made in the summer term to Coniston Water. Pupils waste little time in settling down to their lessons, and they move quickly and quietly to their different activities. Pupils with special educational needs also have very good attitudes to learning. They want to make progress and generally work hard to do so. They respond well, as do other pupils, to the good opportunities for raising their self-esteem and confidence.

12. The level of attendance is satisfactory, but is slightly below the national average. Levels of attendance are better in the juniors than in the infants, where many pupils succumbed to an epidemic during the spring term. Levels of unauthorised absence are about the same as the national average. Pupils are punctual at school in the mornings, with the result that lessons begin on time.

## **HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?**

13. The teaching of children in the foundation stage of their learning is good. The two part-time teachers, who work on a 'job share' basis, have a clear understanding of the needs of young children. They are knowledgeable about the requirements of the Foundation Stage curriculum, of which they take special note when they plan lessons for the whole class. The children belong to the same class as older pupils in Years 1 and 2, although activities are specifically arranged for them. A well-trained classroom assistant, employed on a part-time basis, often works with the group of five reception children. Teachers plan some challenging and enjoyable activities to include all the pupils in the infant class. The careful planning ensures that the Foundation Stage children are given some activities that are similar to those given to the older pupils in the class, but adapted to their particular needs. For example, in literacy lessons, they take part in the first part of the lesson to listen to the teacher and the older pupils, and to enter into discussion themselves. Then they move to other work, overseen by the classroom assistant when she is available, before joining the whole class for the final part of the lesson. It is mainly because the work and activities are so well planned and managed that the children quickly learn to read and write. Children do not make the expected good progress in some lessons as they might. This is usually because the teacher has no other adult in the room to oversee their work whilst she is engaged with the older pupils. Some children are not sufficiently capable of working for long periods on their own; they become distracted.

14. Teaching is very good in the infants, and is satisfactory overall in the juniors, although many lessons are of good quality. This means that pupils make better progress overall in the infants than they do in the juniors. There were no unsatisfactory lessons

seen in the inspection. These judgements represent an improvement on those made at the previous inspection, when there was no very good teaching. Nearly all parents who responded in the questionnaire agreed that teaching is of good quality, and a similar proportion felt that the teachers expect their children to work hard. Some parents feel that the younger and less able pupils in the junior class do not always receive as much attention from the teacher as they should. The inspectors agree that this is sometimes the case, especially in some literacy and numeracy lessons.

15. In nearly all lessons, teachers expect, and get, a good level of interest from the pupils, especially in the introductions to lessons. For example, at the beginning of a numeracy lesson for juniors the teacher gathered all the pupils briefly around a large computer screen. He skilfully used a computer program to initiate discussion about adding and subtracting 100s and 1000s. This captured pupils' interest, after which they tackled their next task with enthusiasm.

16. The teaching has many strengths, not least of which are the very good relationships that teachers have with their pupils, who respond well to the work that teachers ask them to do. Plans for lessons include a wide range of relevant tasks for the pupils, who represent an extensive ability spread in each class, particularly so in the juniors. The lesson plans do take account of the ability spread, and define tasks and resources appropriate to the needs of each pupil. Teachers are able to do this because they know each pupil's level of attainment from the results of the good assessment procedures.

17. In the infant class, the lesson plans are always translated into successful actions, whereby pupils generally make good progress in their learning. A notable quality of these lessons is the way that skills learned in one part of the curriculum are used and developed in other subjects. For example, in a religious education lesson planned to consider the significance of the annual harvest, the teacher embodied previous work the pupils had done in a series of science lessons about our senses. There was good opportunity for all pupils to develop speaking and listening skills as they constructed a class poem, with such lines as 'I like to smell garlic and other herbs' and 'I like to smell grapefruit'. This strategy is beginning in the juniors, but more needs to be done. For example, when the teacher asked pupils to write in a science lesson, they were told of the need to convey information about the facts they had learned in the lesson, but failed to remind them about the need to use the writing skills they learned in their literacy lessons. Consequently, although pupils made progress in their knowledge and understanding of science, few pupils produced their best quality written work.

18. Expectations of pupils to achieve are generally high. Teachers use questioning well to stimulate pupils' thinking and to extend their understanding. They balance questions well during whole-class sessions, targeting individuals and ensuring that girls and boys are challenged to respond. Teachers match their questioning well to pupils at both ends of the ability spectrum, for example by breaking down the questions into simple sequences for the lower attaining and younger pupils, and by seeking more challenging and extensive responses from the more able. Higher attaining Year 6 pupils were asked in an English lesson to write accounts of personal experiences, and to draft and redraft their work. All pupils understood what they had to do, and applied themselves quietly to the task.

19. Most teachers have good subject knowledge in literacy and numeracy, which has a significant positive effect on these lessons. However, where these lessons are not so effective, the teacher spends too much time on one part of the lesson, using concepts that do not match all pupils' prior levels of attainment. As a result, some pupils become restless because the work is either too easy or too hard for them. This happened in a numeracy lesson for the junior class. The initial 'mental' session was aimed, in terms of level of difficulty, at the average level of pupil ability in the class. This part of the lesson took 20

minutes, during which time both the more and the less able pupils learned very little about ordering numbers up to 1000.

20. In most lessons across the school, the teachers manage the pupils well. They give clear guidance of their expectations and provide a good range of opportunities for pupils to work together and co-operate. They expect pupils to work harmoniously together. For example, in an infant class science lesson, pupils from reception to Year 2 worked well in mixed-age groups to identify the smell of 'hidden' objects. Pupils respond well to these expectations and the lessons move at a pace that keeps the pupils interested in what they are doing. This is almost always the case in the infant class. In the junior class, however, and despite the hard work of the teacher to attend to all pupils' needs, the pace of the lesson slows, and some pupils move off task because they have no adult to help them. Much of the teaching of literacy and numeracy in the juniors' class is appropriate, and promotes successfully pupils' learning in these subjects. However, sometimes there is too much time wasted, because firstly the lesson is too long and secondly, some pupils have to wait for too long to receive help with their work.

21. Whilst there is some adult classroom support in the infant class for half of each week, there is no such arrangement in the junior class, where there is a wider spread of pupil ability and age range. The teachers' time and resourcefulness are fully stretched by having to meet simultaneously the needs of pupils from Years 3 to 6. There is a need for the school to review urgently its current arrangements in this respect, in order that pupils' rate of progress can benefit from a more equitable organisation of adult assistance.

22. The teaching of pupils with special educational needs is good. There is close and effective co-operation between the special educational needs co-ordinator and colleagues when they draw up good individual education plans. Teachers work hard to ensure that these pupils are fully included and achieve well in all lessons. Pupils' progress is good overall when they are provided with support in small groups, or on the few occasions when they have one-to-one teaching.

23. Teachers regularly set homework, usually as an extension to class activities. The work is checked, and most pupils enjoy the opportunities to add to their experiences. Most parents agree that the homework is beneficial to their children's education, and that the school sets just about the right amount of homework.

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

24. There is very good planning of the curriculum for children in the reception year. They benefit from learning for some of their time alongside pupils in Years 1 and 2. Activities arranged for them, both in these situations and when they work individually and as a group, matches very well the needs of children in the Foundation Stage. They have good opportunities to choose their activities from a range of play equipment designed to improve their numeracy, literacy and creative skills, in a secure and comfortable learning environment.

25. There has been a notable improvement in the curriculum since the last inspection, and there are strengths in a number of areas. This is because teachers' planning is good. It ensures a rich variety of activities by creating imaginative links between subjects. This practice is well developed in the infant class, and is being used with increasing success in the juniors. For example, in a book of prayers about springtime, produced as part of the religious education curriculum, pupils drew upon their learning in a number of subjects. The prayers were imaginatively written, using as a basis pupils' knowledge of flowers and

the human senses. Pupils used computers to edit and publish their work, and illustrated their prayers with attractive watercolour paintings. In this way, as well as through the national strategy, the school promotes literacy through learning in other subjects, although there is room for improvement in the quality of writing across the curriculum. The curriculum provides well for the development of numeracy, both through the National Numeracy Strategy and in other lessons, for example through the use of co-ordinates in geography. On occasions, however, literacy and numeracy lessons are too long, using up time that could be devoted to other subjects. This is an area for future review. There has been marked improvement in information and communication technology since the last inspection and in science, particularly in the development of investigative work. Teachers in both classes set homework regularly and this makes a good contribution to learning.

26. There are good arrangements for promoting personal, social, and health education. Issues such as healthy eating are explored thoroughly through science and, from an early age, there is gradual and sensitive raising of drug awareness. Teachers enable pupils to explore other moral and social issues, such as family responsibilities, improving the environment and citizenship. They learn about the human life cycle in science lessons, and this is soon to be supported by talks on sex education provided for older pupils by the school nurse. The headteacher is mindful of the need for all pupils to have equal access to the curriculum, but current staffing arrangements and grouping of pupils do not ensure that this always happens. There are good arrangements for teaching pupils with special educational needs.

27. There is a satisfactory range of extra-curricular activities, considering the size of the school and the number of teachers available to provide them. Members of staff give their time generously to provide sports activities, such as netball and cricket. They organise guitar and Internet clubs, and enable pupils to take part in a citizenship quiz. They also arrange visits to places of educational interest to enrich and extend pupils' learning, for example to Holker Hall transport museum and Coniston Water.

28. The local environment and community make a good contribution to the curriculum. Teachers take full advantage of the rich natural resources surrounding the school by taking pupils on walks to support their work in science and geography. Local artists have worked with pupils to produce ceramics and prints of high quality, and a number of members of the working community have helped them to publish 'Y6 Best Times.' There are also good links with other local agencies. For instance, there is a strong liaison with Dallam School, with whom the headteacher has established 'bridging units' for Year 6 pupils. The school also welcomes students on work experience and post-graduate teacher training.

29. The school provides very well for pupils' personal development through spiritual, moral, social and cultural education. This aspect is a strength of the school that most parents value highly, and shows improvement since the previous inspection. In lessons and school assemblies, pupils reflect on religious concepts and ideas, and how we should look after each other, for example in a theme about 'Harvest' that emphasised the need to share what we have for the good of all. In an assembly led by members of a visiting adult Christian group, pupils consider their place in the world, and come to realise how important they are to others. Pupils think about developing and building on good principles for themselves. They consider the meaning of bible stories, such as the 'Feeding of the Five Thousand', and come to know that all individuals are equally important. There are good opportunities at such times to listen to the thoughts of others in discussion.

30. There is strong provision for pupils' moral development. The school teaches the difference between right and wrong, and has clear expectations about good behaviour. There are no rules as such, since the whole school works in an ethos of understanding of individual differences, clearly expressed in the school aims. On the very few occasions

when pupils divert from the expected level of conduct, a short word from an adult, or reminder from other pupils are all that is necessary. The school has a good system of rewards and sanctions, to which the pupils respond very well. For example, all pupils take delight in assemblies when the 'Star of the Week' is identified.

31. Provision for pupils' social development is of a high order. Staff expect pupils to take a responsible attitude to their work and daily life, with considerable success. All pupils respond well to encouragement to work in groups, sometimes comprising pupils of different ages and/or abilities, and to help one another. Older pupils helpfully move furniture for assemblies as a matter of course, and lay out cutlery at lunchtimes. Assemblies are always a whole school 'family' time, when all pupils listen to staff and to each other with interest, and take delight in their own and others' achievements. There are good opportunities for pupils to meet and work with adults in the community, for example when they work with parents, artists and musicians. The school has good relationships with other small schools in the locality. Pupils from each of these schools meet with each other for sporting and other social activities.

32. There is also very good provision for cultural development, recently enhanced by the school's involvement in the 'Creativity and Education' initiative. This enables the school to make use of a wide range of artists and craft specialists. Pupils work with enthusiasm on traditional crafts, such as pottery, paper-making, water colouring, and rug making. The internal walls in parts of the building display samples of this attractive work. Special days, such as 'World Book Day' and 'Poetry Day', are used to emphasise the importance and variety of literature. A storyteller recently visited the school to enchant pupils with stories from around the world. The school plays a full part in the cultural life of the village, such as taking part in the 'Millenium Pageant'. Developing pupils' knowledge and understanding of the variety and beliefs of peoples in other places and within our own multicultural society is an area that the school has identified for improvement. Currently, this is approached through learning about other religions, such as Buddhism and Judaism, through relevant topics in geography lessons, and listening to and discussing music from our own and other countries.

## **HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?**

33. The school makes satisfactory provision for child protection and good provision for ensuring pupils' welfare, health and safety, as found at the previous inspection. Most parents express satisfaction with this provision.

34. The headteacher has had training in child protection procedures, and has briefed the other members of staff. There is good provision for those times when pupils require first aid, and the school notifies parents as necessary should their child require further treatment. There is a health and safety policy specific to the school, now in need of review by the newly formed buildings committee of the governing body. The local education authority provided expert help and advice on school safety matters, and has undertaken a risk assessment and safety inspection. As a result, collision guards have been bought to protect pupils from the pillars supporting the roof of the outside physical education area. There is currently no governor with a watching brief for health and safety, but there are plans in place for this to happen shortly. Pupils are well aware of the need for personal safety, including not giving their name or address in email messages they send.

35. Monitoring procedures for pupils' personal development and behaviour are good, and form part of the overall assessment and recording strategy used by each teacher. All members of staff contribute effectively to the support and guidance given to pupils,

facilitated well by the relatively low adult to pupil ratio in the school, and the commitment of all adults to the pupils' welfare and learning.

36. Since his appointment, the headteacher has put in place good procedures for assessing pupils' attainment and progress. This reflects a notable improvement since the last inspection. He makes effective use of his expertise with computers to analyse the results of the numerous statutory and optional tests taken, particularly those for English and mathematics. He has begun to track the each pupil's progress in English, and to set targets for improvement, which he shares with pupils. These systems are in the early stages of development and have not, at this point, had a significant impact on pupils' attainment. There is room for improvement in the accuracy with which the school moderates the quality of work, particularly in writing, against nationally agreed standards. The headteacher recognises a need to introduce similar arrangements for setting targets for pupils to achieve in mathematics and science. He has clear plans to introduce procedures for evaluating pupils' progress in the remaining subjects.

37. The day-to-day assessment of pupils' work is thorough, conscientious and constructive. Nevertheless, it is difficult for teachers in the junior class to find time to monitor and improve the quality of written work during lessons. This is because the organisation of groups dictates that teachers often have to leave half of the class to get on unsupervised whilst they teach the remainder. Pupils' work is regularly marked. Marking is thorough and generally spells out what pupils need to do to improve their work. However, teachers do not always ensure that pupils follow up the written comments when they tackle future work.

38. There are 10 pupils currently on the register of special educational needs and none of these are beyond Stage 2 of the Code of Practice. Nevertheless, the school rigorously follows appropriate procedures. Pupils with special educational needs are identified at an early stage and they are provided with individual education plans. These are reviewed regularly and the progress of individuals is accurately assessed. Targets for improvement are regularly set, which are clearly focused, achievable and specific.

39. Procedures for monitoring and promoting attendance are good. Attendance, registration and related procedures comply with statutory requirements. Registers are kept well and pupils' absences are monitored and analysed carefully by the headteacher. There are appropriate procedures to deal with any unauthorised absence.

## **HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?**

40. Parents have positive views of the school. As at the time of the previous inspection, parents are generally well disposed to the school and what it has to offer their children. They say that their children enjoy coming to school, and that it helps them to become mature and responsible young people by the time they move on to secondary education. Nearly all those who attended the parents' meeting, and those who responded in the questionnaire, agreed that the school strongly values the partnership between parents and school in helping to promote pupils' learning. All parents find the school welcoming and easily approachable. Parents of pupils new to the school go out of their way to say how pleased they are with the care taken by staff to introduce their children, and families, into the life of the school.

41. The impact of parents on the work of the school is very good. This is apparent through the work of the 'Friends' organisation, which raises funds for equipment, and through initiatives, in partnership with the school, to improve learning in the arts through 'Creativity in Learning'. The school has been successful in obtaining a grant to this end.

Recent work has included the assistance of an artist in residence, and the production by pupils in Year 6 of an attractive and high quality magazine, professionally printed, which celebrates various aspects of the school's work. Further activities are in the pipeline, one example being more experiences of and participation in musical activities. Some parents work voluntarily in the school, and there is potential to increase this aspect of parental support. Most parents and carers support school activities, for example by attending open

meetings on curriculum initiatives, such as literacy. They are committed to the home/school agreement, which is currently under review. Most parents are in favour of their children doing work at home. They work well in partnership with the school to see that their children complete the regular homework set.

42. There is good quality information given by the school to parents, including that about their children's learning. Annual written reports are of good quality. They inform parents clearly about the progress their children have made in the preceding year, as well as sometimes setting targets for them to achieve in the future. Parents know that they can speak to teachers formally at any time by arrangement, and parents of pupils in the juniors greatly appreciate and take advantage of the weekly 'drop in' sessions to discuss their children's work. The good level of rapport between teachers and parents is noticeable particularly at the end of the school day. There is good information given to parents about school activities in regular half-termly newsletters. The school helpfully ensures that parents receive information about topics to be covered in any succeeding term, thus promoting further parental involvement in their children's learning. The school makes good use of homework diaries, which also act as an additional means of communication between teachers and parents. Parents of pupils with special educational needs are properly involved in their children's education plans and the school provides them with the opportunity to participate in reviews where appropriate.

43. The inspection team agrees with most of the positive views expressed by parents in the returned questionnaires, at the pre-inspection meeting for parents, and during the inspection. However, whilst most parents feel that their children make good progress, the team judges, and the school agrees, that pupils could achieve higher standards in writing by the time they leave the school at 11. A significant proportion of parents also feel that the quality of leadership and management is unsatisfactory, as is the provision for out-of-school activities. The inspectors judge that the former is satisfactory, and is improving as the headteacher and governors gain more experience. The latter is about what is normally expected of a school of this size and number of staff.

## **HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?**

44. The recently appointed headteacher provides a satisfactory standard of leadership and management, matching the judgement made at the previous inspection. He takes a very active role in the day-to-day life of the school, and leads with a hands-on approach, since he teaches on an almost full time basis. The staff support him well, and together they show commitment and concern at all levels of school life. Together they are very successful in meeting the school's aims of promoting pupils' social and emotional development. The school is happy and welcoming, as noted by parents.

45. Since his appointment to the post one year ago, the headteacher, with the help of his staff and the full support of the governing body, has conducted a thorough analysis of the school's educational provision for its pupils. He has formulated a clear strategy about what the school needs to do to improve its quality of education and, thereby, the academic standards that pupils achieve. Towards meeting these aims, he has put in place a range of initiatives designed to raise standards by the time pupils leave the school at 11. For example, the monitoring of the results of regular tests taken by pupils in the juniors shows teachers where they need to apply specific action to improve the rate of pupils' learning. This precise information gives the staff and governors a firm basis on which to build the higher standards to which they are sincerely committed. However, it is too early to judge the effectiveness of these initiatives. Certainly, some pupils in the juniors do not make as much progress as they should. For instance, standards attained in English by pupils aged 11 have remained low, on average, since the time of the last inspection.

46. The governing body makes a sound contribution to the management of the school, which is a similar judgement to that made in 1997. It is diligent in fulfilling its statutory duties. Like the headteacher, most of the members of the governing body, including the chair of governors, are new to their responsibilities. A new structure of sub-committees, whose duties and future action are well described in the good school improvement plan, has only recently formed. Nevertheless, all members of the body are eager and fully supportive of the school, and the headteacher's intentions for it. They are learning quickly how best to monitor and support school development, and take advantage of training opportunities to make their work more effective. They take an increasing responsibility for their role through discussion with, and constructive criticism of, the management of the school. There has been good improvement in the main area of concern noted in the last inspection. The school has been successful in raising standards in ICT. Two recent initiatives are the creation of more space for small group work outside one of the classrooms, and the furnishing of an outside covered area, so that pupils can undertake some physical education activities even when the weather is inclement. Both initiatives are beneficial to pupils' learning.

47. In contrast to these improvements, the school has been less successful in meeting its academic aims. Over the last four years, the proportion of its 11-year-old pupils reaching the nationally expected Level 4 in English has remained too low, even taking into account the variation of pupil's levels of ability in each of the year groups. Although there has been considerable variation from year to year, the average results over the past four years of statutory tests in reading, writing and mathematics for pupils aged seven have matched or exceeded what is normally expected nationally. Improvements in pupils' attainment from seven to eleven show, at best, satisfactory progress in mathematics and science, and, on occasions, unsatisfactory progress in English. The headteacher's analysis of test results for 11 year olds show that the standard of writing in the juniors is not as good as it could be, despite good attainment in reading and in speaking and listening. Whilst some strategies have recently been put in place to remedy this situation, there is insufficient focus on what urgent necessary day to day action should to be taken. Recent allocation to teachers, including the headteacher, of responsibilities for core subject co-ordination is a good move designed to focus staff attention on achieving higher standards across the school. However, there is not enough thought given to facilitating how the co-ordinators will effectively carry out their duties.

48. The last report supported the content of the school development plan. The new school improvement plan is a strategic document. It sets out appropriate priorities for the main areas of the school's work for the coming three years, and helpfully identifies shorter timescales and persons responsible to meet individual targets. It covers a wide range of perceived priorities to improve the quality of education, for example the building, day-to-day resources, and schemes of work. There is due attention given in the plan to improving the curriculum and professional expertise of staff through training and consultation. However, insufficient attention is given in the plan to exactly how higher standards will be achieved, particularly in writing in the juniors.

49. The governing body has recently begun a very useful initiative to develop the role of the community, including parents, in raising the profile of arts teaching. The benefits of this project are already apparent from the examples of work done and the enthusiasm of the pupils and adults involved.

50. The governing body has recently set targets for the headteacher, and other members of staff are formally monitored by the headteacher. The National Strategies for Literacy and Numeracy have been implemented, and these are successful, particularly in the infant class. However, there is some lack of direction in managing the impact of these

innovations and, as a result, the management of time given to English and mathematics in the junior class lacks cohesion. For instance, there is too much time given to teaching the skills of literacy at the expense of more opportunities for pupils to practise their skills by writing imaginatively and at length. Despite good lesson planning, there is inequality of opportunity for some pupils in this class, which has pupils from across four year groups. This is because they do not receive the amount of attention in lessons that they need, particularly in numeracy lessons. There is no such problem in the infant class because there are fewer pupils, from three age groups, and there is part-time adult support.

51. The ratio of teachers to pupils is satisfactory, and there is a good balance of experienced and less experienced teachers, all of whom are committed to providing good quality lessons for their pupils. The classroom assistants ably support the part-time teachers in the infant class, who work successfully on a 'job share' basis. Some parents and governors visit and work in the school regularly, and this is a facility that could be further encouraged to the benefit of the pupils' learning.

52. The headteacher and governors recognise the crucial importance of staff development. Consequently, there is a detailed programme of training for both staff and governors. The headteacher is at the beginning of his first headship, a situation that necessarily requires his occasional absence from the school for training sessions during the working day. There are difficulties in employing a regular source of supply staff, a point noted by some parents, who would like to see better arrangements for managing those times when permanent teachers are necessarily absent from the school.

53. The accommodation is compact, but adequate to teach the National Curriculum. Children in the Foundation Stage have good facilities for learning, including the necessary range of resources. Teachers make good use of the outside area for children to undertake play activities using large play equipment. Both classrooms are of adequate size for the number of pupils, and other space around the school is used appropriately, for example to accommodate computers. The school grounds provide excellent facilities for environmental and sports activities, including the recently adapted covered area for some physical education and play activities. However, there is no school hall, although the staff are inventive when they arrange assemblies, indoor physical education lessons, and lunchtime facilities. Resources for learning are in good supply, and improving in accordance with the plans laid out in the school improvement plan. The small library arranged in one classroom lacks books of sufficient quantity and quality. There are sound facilities for pupils with special educational needs, who make good progress towards meeting the targets set in their individual education plans. The co-ordinator for special educational needs works closely with colleagues to ensure that the pupils on the register for special educational needs are fully included in all aspects of school life.

54. There is efficient use of the financial resources available to the school. The school makes good use of a bursar scheme to ensure that its finances are well managed and deployed. The school secretary and the headteacher conduct day-to-day accounting and checks efficiently. There are secure systems for raising orders, checking receipt of goods, and authorising payment. The school improvement plan is clear about allocation of monies to specific priorities for development, and specific grants are used effectively. However, because of their inexperience and shortness of time in post, the governors are not in a position to evaluate the effectiveness of their spending, nor to fully apply the principles of best value. For example, they have not reviewed the efficiency of their spending on staffing, specifically to make better use of available staff across the two classes.

## WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

55. The headteacher, staff and governors together should:

- Improve the quality of writing in the juniors by:  
(Paragraphs: 2, 3, 17, 25, 36, 43, 47, 48, 50, 69, 74, 75, 77, 79, 96, 98, 99, 107)
  - \* providing more opportunities for pupils to write creatively and at length in English and in other subjects;
  - \* promoting the development of clear and accurate writing skills;
  - \* rigorously encouraging pupils to apply consistently in their work the writing skills they have learned in their literacy lessons, with the result that they always produce finished work that is of the highest quality;
- Raise standards of achievement across the school by:  
(Paragraphs: 4, 14, 20, 21, 22, 50, 52, 54, 72, 83)
  - \* reviewing the deployment and availability of staff to meet the needs of all pupils, and taking effective action;
  - \* reconsider the effectiveness of the current allocation of pupils to class groups;
- Reorganise the time allotted to literacy and numeracy lessons in order to create more opportunities for learning in other subjects.  
(Paragraphs: 19, 20, 21, 25, 77, 79, 83)

Minor Issues:

- The governors should also include in their action plan the need to:  
(Paragraphs: 53, 87)
  - \* invoke arrangements for the co-ordinators of the core subjects to have a better overview, across the school, of the subjects they monitor and the progress that pupils make in them.
  - \* improve the library facilities.

## PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

### Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	18
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	17

### Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
<b>Number</b>	0	5	8	4	0	0	0
<b>Percentage</b>	0	29	47	24	0	0	0

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 four percentage points.

### Information about the school's pupils

<b>Pupils on the school's roll</b>	<b>YR–Y6</b>
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	43
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	2

FTE means full-time equivalent.

<b>Special educational needs</b>	<b>YR–Y6</b>
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	1
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	10

<b>English as an additional language</b>	<b>No of pupils</b>
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	0

<b>Pupil mobility in the last school year</b>	<b>No of pupils</b>
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	3
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	0

### Attendance

<b>Authorised absence</b>	<b>%</b>
School data	5.9
National comparative data	5.2

<b>Unauthorised absence</b>	<b>%</b>
School data	0.0
National comparative data	0.5

Both tables give the percentage of half days (sessions) missed through absence for the latest complete 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	40
Any other minority ethnic group	0

*This table refers to pupils of compulsory school age only.*

**Teachers and classes****Qualified teachers and classes:****YR–Y6**

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	2.4
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	17.9
Average class size	21.5

**Education support staff:****YR–Y6**

Total number of education support staff	3
Total aggregate hours worked per week	28

**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	0	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	2000/2001
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	£
Total income	123,838.00
Total expenditure	116,830.00
Expenditure per pupil	2,717.00
Balance brought forward from previous year	2,778.00
Balance carried forward to next year	9,786.00

**Recruitment of teachers**

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

*FTE means full-time equivalent.*

## Results of the survey of parents and carers

### Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	39
Number of questionnaires returned	22

### Percentage of responses in each category

	<b>Strongly agree</b>	<b>Tend to agree</b>	<b>Tend to disagree</b>	<b>Strongly disagree</b>	<b>Don't know</b>
My child likes school.	55	41	5	0	0
My child is making good progress in school.	55	36	19	0	0
Behaviour in the school is good.	55	32	5	0	9
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	32	45	14	5	5
The teaching is good.	41	45	9	0	5
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	55	32	14	0	0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	59	36	0	5	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	45	45	0	0	9
The school works closely with parents.	50	36	14	0	0
The school is well led and managed.	23	41	14	14	9
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	32	55	0	0	14
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	27	18	23	23	9

### Other issues raised by parents

A few parents feel that work given to those pupils in Years 3 and 4 is not always appropriate to their levels of attainment.

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

### **AREAS OF LEARNING FOR CHILDREN IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE**

56. Children join the school at the beginning of the academic year in which they reach the age of five. Before starting school, most children have experienced some form of pre-school education. Through careful planning and organisation of the class, the two part-time teachers, who work on a job-share basis, cater very well for the children. Records of assessment made soon after children enter the school show that their attainment varies from year to year. Initial assessments of the children currently in their first term of schooling shows that their attainment across all areas of learning is at least what one would expect of children of this age. Most children have above expected attainment in their personal and social development, and in aspects of language and communication.

57. There were five children in their Foundation Stage of learning at the time of the inspection. They share a classroom with pupils in Years 1 and 2, but spend most of their time doing work that is specially arranged to meet their needs. Supervised by the class teachers, a competent, part-time classroom assistant works very well with the children. The good teaching they experience has a positive effect on the children's learning, with the result that they will attain the standards expected for each area of learning by the time they start Year 1.

58. Children are taught for some of their time with older pupils each day, organised in such a way to help them learn at the level appropriate to their stage of development. Good arrangements ensure that they undertake further work as a group, when they choose from a variety of suitable activities, often experimenting with different resources. The teachers carefully prepare these learning situations, as shown in the detailed plans for the whole class, and the children make good progress.

#### **Personal, social and emotional development**

59. By the time they complete the Reception Year, the children have developed very good skills in this area. Most exceed the early learning goals. They are keen to learn, have good relationships with each other and with adults, and have a good understanding of what is right and wrong. Even at this early stage in their schooling, the five children observed in the inspection already display most of the features expected of children at the end of the reception year. For example, they listen carefully to their teachers and the classroom assistant, and carry out instructions. They usually behave very well, whether listening to staff or working and playing together. All are confident to offer ideas, even when arranged in groups with older pupils to undertake a simple science investigation about smells. They gain much from being in the same well-organised class as older pupils because they learn from them how to take turns and to share amicably. Children find and use resources independently, look after equipment, and are beginning to put things away after using them, although there should be more insistence from the adults that this is done on every occasion.

#### **Communication, language and literacy**

60. Staff give good opportunities in a variety of settings for children to listen to adults and to each other. Children learn to listen quietly with the rest of the pupils in whole school

assemblies. They enjoy taking part in discussion, and confidently offer their own suggestions. For example, children discuss colour and shape when they make paintings of

their favourite animals following a story told to them by the classroom assistant. By the time they begin Year 1, most children have made good progress in their reading and writing. They form most letters accurately, and their writing of simple sentences is generally legible. They begin to spell simple words correctly.

61. It has been found to be effective to include the children in the first part, and sometimes the final part, of whole-class literacy lessons. For example, the teacher used a glove puppet called 'Alice' as a resource to support children's learning of phonics, and the way in which words can rhyme. This approach successfully interested the children. Children's learning about the letter 'a' was reinforced by follow-up work as a group separate from the rest of the pupils in the class. Children understand that written words carry meaning because they discuss the content of the book, and associate pictures with the words on the pages. More able children in the reception year are already capable of reading independently and fully understanding simple books.

### **Mathematical development**

62. The children currently in the reception year have overall expected levels of mathematical knowledge and understanding. They are already making good progress in mathematical development. They recognise numbers from 1 to 5, as shown when they select numbered jars to use in an investigation. They take part enthusiastically in well-prepared numeracy activities and games, responding usually correctly to questions such 'How many does one more make?' and 'How many all together?' For example, they use a stamp and ink block to add one more to a set of animals, and recognise the appropriate numerals. They cut out and arrange sets of dolphin shapes. Good teaching reinforces what children have learned when the classroom assistant plays with them '1,2,3,4,5, once I caught a fish alive' on a large numbered square in the playground. Most can count accurately on their own to ten, although they still have some difficulty in matching precisely objects to numbers. Children use a wide range of equipment to help them develop mathematical skills and understanding. For example, they measure out quantities of ingredients when they role-play 'kitchen' activities, or develop their understanding of capacity when they fill and empty containers of water. Children develop simple subtraction skills when they chant 'Five currant buns in the baker's shop.' They gain a sense of proportion when they take it in turns to draw around each other and compare body sizes.

### **Knowledge and understanding of the world**

63. The staff provide an interesting range of practical experiences for children to develop understanding of the world around them. By the end of the reception year, children achieve the level of understanding expected for their age. They make good progress in their use of computers, and control a mouse and keyboard well. These skills are at an early stage of development in the children currently in the Foundation Stage because they have only recently begun school.

64. The current reception year children take part in science lessons alongside pupils in Years 1 and 2, but the work is planned for them at an appropriate level of difficulty. For example, when investigating smell as part of a topic on human senses, the reception children work both in groups arranged to include older pupils, and together when they go outside to collect samples of plants representing different scents. They gather information about the variety of plants in the school grounds, and they learn to work together and to share their ideas. From this and similar other work, they know that we have different ways

of sensing the world around us. There are good opportunities for children to work with a variety of materials. For example, they select tools to roll and shape dough into buns and pancakes, and then discuss and evaluate their finished work. They are able to talk about shape and texture, and are eager to share their experiences with others.

### **Physical development**

65. The children make good progress in this area of learning. Their generally confident, well co-ordinated movements show that they should achieve the early learning goals by the end of the Foundation Stage. In classroom activities, the children develop fine movement skills through a variety of drawing, model-making activities, and those activities where they manipulate everyday tools and equipment, such as in the class 'kitchen'. At playtimes, the children run and jump, and control playground toys with expected levels of skill. They learn much from watching the way the older pupils do these things. The children respond very well to the amount of space available to them in and around the school. They ride and control well a range of pedalled tricycles and scooters, and are aware of the need for safety when they are moving around other people on these machines. Some current reception children are already adept at controlling pencils and crayons when they make drawings of each other, write simple words, or glue pieces of paper to make a collage.

### **Creative development**

66. The children make good progress towards meeting, and exceeding, the early learning goals by the time they reach Year 1. They have many opportunities to develop their creative skills. Children choose from a suitable range of tools and materials to make colourful and attractive pictures to express their ideas. They mix different coloured paints on paper, and see the effects, for example when making paintings of animals after hearing a story told to them by the classroom assistant. Some paintings have no particular form, but are attractive and interesting features in themselves, about which the children are beginning to make sensible interpretations such as 'That colour is just right for its fur', and 'I just wanted to make a nice shape with different colours'.

67. Much of the Foundation Stage curriculum includes opportunities for children to make music. They respond to these opportunities very well, whether through chanting rhymes to reinforce learning in other areas of learning, or in specific music lessons as part of a whole class lesson. In the latter, children learn much from their older classmates, and from the enjoyment of music that is evident in all those taking part.

### **Teaching**

68. There is a very good relationship between the teachers and the classroom assistant, who all work together well in their consistently high expectations of behaviour from the children, and in the range of interesting activities provided. They ensure that the environment is welcoming and happy for children new to the reception year, a point greatly appreciated by parents. Consequently, children settle into school life quickly and comfortably. The staff are knowledgeable of the curriculum for children in the foundation stage of their learning. They skilfully arrange work for the whole class around topics such as 'Myself' and 'bicycles', which give plenty of opportunities for children to make progress in all the required areas of learning. For example, including reception children in science lesson work groups not only helped them to increase their knowledge of the senses, but also enhanced their communication and social skills. The management of the literacy and numeracy lessons, and of the way in which children in the Foundation Stage work with

older pupils, is particularly good. These qualities of management and relationships make a positive contribution to the good teaching and its effectiveness. As a result, children are usually well motivated and make good progress in their learning. Just occasionally, particularly when a teacher is the only adult in the room, some children do not make the expected good progress they might. This is because they do not have sufficient capacity to concentrate for long periods without more consistent oversight.

## ENGLISH

69. The numbers of pupils in Years 2 and Year 6 are very small. Results of national tests therefore vary greatly from year to year and cannot accurately be compared with national averages. On the basis of inspection evidence, pupils achieve well by the end of Year 2. They achieve well in speaking and listening and reading, and satisfactorily in writing. Pupils achieve satisfactorily overall by the end of Year 6. They achieve well in speaking and listening and reading, but unsatisfactorily in writing.

70. Pupils achieve well in speaking and listening in the infant class because they work collaboratively with others, discuss their ideas and listen carefully to their friends. Teachers question them skilfully to help them to give more information in their answers. Pupils speak clearly and confidently, often explaining their ideas in extended sentences. For example, a Year 2 pupil talking about his reading book explained, "A wreck is a ship that has crashed and sunk to the bottom of the sea-bed." Pupils listen attentively to teachers and ask questions, with the result that they understand what they have to do.

71. Pupils continue to make good progress in speaking and listening as they move through the juniors, so that standards attained at age 11 remain above those seen nationally. All pupils, including those with special educational needs, talk confidently and clearly, expressing their points of view and explaining their ideas in extended answers. They listen attentively to their friends and teachers, asking relevant questions to clarify their understanding. Pupils respond to the ideas of others and will change their opinions when necessary. They talk informatively and at length about personal experiences. One Year 6 pupil, when discussing her job on a stall at the recent 'torchlight procession', suggested, "We thought it was important to promote American products because of what has happened there recently." By age 11, all pupils speak confidently in front of the whole school and regularly make contributions in assembly.

72. Throughout the infants, pupils enjoy reading and are doing well by the time they are seven, reading clearly and confidently and correcting their mistakes without help. Only a small minority need help from adults when they come across new words. They enjoy reading and being read to, and all talk about stories they have enjoyed, although most cannot name favourite authors. Most pupils retell stories in detail, and suggest what might happen next. A few pupils suggest alternative endings, for example, "They won't have to go hunting because they have tamed wild animals." Pupils understand how books work, and handle them with care. They recognise information on the cover of books and know the meaning of 'author' and 'title'.

73. All pupils make good progress in reading throughout the junior age range and, in Year 6, all pupils read clearly and confidently. Pupils with special educational needs continue to read easier texts. Most pupils read with good expression and without making mistakes. They understand what they have read, and can outline main points of the story, say what main characters are like and explain reasons for main events. The higher attaining pupils read accurately with lively expression, and recognise the different styles that authors bring to their writing. One pupil compared J K Rowling with Jacqueline Wilson, by suggesting, "Jacqueline Wilson writes about real life. The Harry Potter stories happen in

a fantasy world.” Many pupils are beginning to see hidden meanings in what they have read, and make sensible predictions of what might happen next. All pupils understand the organisational features of books, such as the title, author, contents page and index, but only a few talk about the way a library works. This is because there is little available space in the school to accommodate a useful library. Consequently, independent research skills are not as good as they should be and there is nowhere for pupils to sit and read quietly. By age 11, however, many pupils work on research topics at home, using reference books or computers for information.

74. Pupils in the infant class make good progress in writing. By the time they are seven, most reach standards similar to those attained nationally. They write for a range of purposes, which include their own stories and poems, descriptions, letters, reports, and retelling of stories. They re-write familiar stories, putting events in the correct sequence. All pupils develop skills well, with the result that, by Year 2, most write confidently in sentences that are usually punctuated correctly with full stops. Most pupils join sentences with words like ‘and’ and ‘but’, and some use different words like ‘because’ and ‘if’. Pupils who reach the higher standards write in a lively style, and can open sentences in interesting ways, for example ‘The queen gasped for help and that was the end of her and Prince Nightingale.’ Many pupils develop neat handwriting by age seven, but do not often use a confident cursive style in their daily work. Although spelling is not always accurate, all pupils use phonic skills to try to write unknown words. Most use a range of word-building strategies to attempt harder words.

75. Progress in writing is slower in the juniors than in the infants and, by age 11, achievement is unsatisfactory overall. Most pupils put interesting ideas or details into their work. They write for a number of reasons, including letters, newspaper articles and diary reports. They complete exercises in the use of speech marks and commas in lists. They write in note form or use bullet points to record in brief, for example the information they have gathered from reference books. By age 11, most pupils write in extended sentences and try to use interesting vocabulary. Lower attaining pupils do not allow their spelling levels to deter them from writing expressively when given the opportunity. Higher attaining pupils write language sensitively and persuasively, for example, “I thought the idea of a reserve was to preserve life.” However, many pupils in the juniors do not use neat, joined handwriting confidently enough in their daily work. The content and grammar in their writing are as good as expected for their age, but the quality of punctuation and spelling is variable and below expectations. Additionally, achievement in extended and creative writing is not as good as it should be because teaching does not devote sufficient time to the development of these skills.

76. Teaching seen in the inspection was good in the infants, and was satisfactory overall in the juniors. Teachers’ planning is good, although in the junior class, where teaching is shared, the planning of the lessons for the week is not always followed rigorously when one teacher takes over from the other. In the infant class, lessons progress briskly, and teachers move smoothly from one teaching activity to another. This leads to pupils staying interested and often excited by what they are being taught. In the junior class, teaching is often good, initially, but becomes less effective because the teacher has to divide attention between two parts of the class and four year groups of varying ability. This leads to a slowing down of the pace of the lesson and also means that some pupils, particularly younger ones in Years 3 and 4, lose concentration. It also means that the class teacher spends less time in marking and improving the quality of handwriting while pupils are at work. Otherwise, the quality of marking is good throughout the school. Teachers mark very conscientiously and provide encouragement and guidance. However, in the junior class there is little opportunity to ensure that pupils act on the advice they have been given.

77. There is a whole-school commitment to improving standards, and the headteacher has put good procedures in place for assessment. He also has plans for improving the quality of extended writing in both key stages. He uses the school's thorough analysis of test results to track pupils' progress, give additional support where necessary and if possible, and provide pupils with individual targets for improvement. There are also clear plans to enable teachers to moderate the quality of written work against nationally agreed standards. Teachers have made appropriate use of the National Literacy Strategy since its introduction to raise levels of attainment. However, literacy lessons often go on for too long and this uses up time which could be devoted to teaching other skills and knowledge, for example in writing. Teachers make good use of homework to promote better reading and writing.

## **MATHEMATICS**

78. It is not possible to make reliable comparisons with national data about pupils' attainment in mathematics at ages seven and eleven. This is because there is only a small number of pupils of relevant ages in the school. For example, in 2000, there were six pupils in Year 2 and six in Year 6, the points when pupils in all schools take statutory tests in mathematics. Of these, all six pupils in Year 2 scored at least the nationally expected Level 2, but only four of the six pupils in Year 6 scored at least the nationally expected Level 4. In the 2001 results, a lower proportion of pupils in both the infants and the juniors scored the expected levels. The variation in the results predominantly reflects the differences in pupils' mathematical abilities year on year. For example, most pupils currently in Years 2 and 6 are likely to achieve at least the nationally expected levels for their ages when they take the tests in 2002. Pupils with special educational needs make sound progress. Nevertheless, there needs to be better organisation of pupil grouping by prior attainment if high standards are to be consistently achieved when pupils leave the school at 11.

79. Currently, the arrangement whereby all pupils from Year 3 to Year 6 are in one class, working with one teacher, detracts from the progress that pupils might otherwise make. This is because some pupils do not have equal access to the curriculum; the teacher is not able to give them enough help with their work. For example, whilst the work given to the pupils in this class is generally appropriate, and matched well to pupils' needs, the youngest and least able pupils often waste time and become distracted because they do not have enough guidance in their work.

80. By the age of seven, the average and more able pupils have a sound knowledge of place value to 100, and easily add in their heads sums of the kind  $54 + 8$ . The least able can add and subtract numbers up to ten to give answers up to 20. Most pupils solve problems, such as 'A has 10 compact discs (CDs), B has 6 CDs. How many more has A than B?' All pupils record their answers, and explain what they are doing and why. Current Year 2 pupils count on in 10s from random numbers, using a number line, for example 17, 27, 37. The most able have no need of a number line to help them, and capably subtract sums of the kind  $17 - 9 = ?$  in their heads. Notably, one high attaining pupil answers correctly the question "How many do I take from 145 to leave 100?"

81. By the age of 11, pupils often work with large numbers to add, subtract, multiply and divide. They do this with a range of success because some lower attaining pupils are not secure in their knowledge of computational methods, despite their good understanding of place value to 1000 and beyond. Nevertheless, current teaching techniques with the Year 5 and Year 6 pupils are having a positive impact on their ability to apply mathematical thinking to real life situations. For example, they 'round up' or 'round down' large numbers to the nearest 10 when they have to add or subtract them to solve a problem. However,

few pupils know how to check their answers for accuracy, such as by 'adding back'. By this age, most pupils understand the relationships between decimals, fractions and percentages, and the most able transfer accurately between them, such as from  $\frac{8}{25}$  to 0.32 to 32%.

82. There is good attention given throughout the school to setting work involving real-life situations, and this is a feature of most lessons. Additionally, pupils use computers regularly as an aid to their work, either to practise number operations, or as a means for collecting and analysing data, as in a science investigation about the body.

83. While the quality of teaching and learning is good overall, it is consistently better in the infants and for pupils at the top end of the school. It is no better than satisfactory for pupils in Years 3 and 4, where the pace of learning is often too slow. This is because pupils do not have enough attention from the teachers in order to support their learning. Planning for lessons throughout the school, including numeracy lessons, is of good quality. The teachers are secure in the elements of the National Numeracy Strategy, and make effective use of it in planning the content of lessons to ensure that all pupils have equal access to the curriculum. Lessons usually begin well, with a brisk session of mental mathematics, which is followed by the main lesson activity. This structure works well in the infant class, where numbers of pupils are small, and the presence of well-trained classroom assistance provides very good support in overseeing the few pupils in the Foundation Stage. There is no such support in the junior class, where mathematics lessons are taught by one teacher for a larger number of pupils, covering four year groups and a wide range of ability. In these lessons, the older and more capable pupils are given appropriately challenging work for the main lesson activity. However, the mental activity session is sometimes too easy for them, and too difficult for the youngest and less able pupils, with the result that both groups learn little at these times. There has been insufficient thought given to how lessons could be organised better in order to meet all pupils' needs and to make best use of the available time. For example, for some pupils, particularly the youngest, numeracy lessons are too long and they lose interest, because they have to wait too long to get the teacher's attention.

84. In a good lesson in the junior class, the teacher had high expectations of pupils to achieve well. The teacher explained clearly the aims of the lesson, making sure that all pupils across the age range clearly understood what they had to do. The mental activity at the beginning of the lesson was brisk and searching, and involvement of all pupils was successfully achieved through the use of questioning pitched at appropriate levels of difficulty. The work set for the main task was matched well to each pupil's level of attainment. It was only towards the end of the lesson that the pace of learning flagged, when some pupils, particularly those in Year 3, lost interest because of lack of adult attention.

85. Most teachers are enthusiastic about teaching the subject, and this enthusiasm is transferred to the pupils. There is good repetition of mathematical vocabulary in lessons, which results in pupils explaining their work correctly. Good pupil behaviour is inherent in all lessons, and this factor contributes well to the times when pupils are enthusiastic and working well in small groups delineated by ability. Most pupils use their sense of responsibility well to move from one activity to another, for example when using computers to support or extend their learning.

86. The school has good procedures for assessing pupils' levels of attainment, and to identify strengths and weaknesses in their attainment. The results of assessments are used to group pupils by ability and to plan the content of lessons. However, there is insufficient thought given in the junior class about how to best organise the teachers' time and different parts of lessons, in order to give equal opportunities for all pupils to achieve well.

87. The subject co-ordinator is relatively new to the post. With the help of the other members of staff, she has conducted a full audit of the subject in the school. She has a clear idea of what needs to be done to raise standards, particularly for pupils in the juniors.

She now needs to lead discussion about how the time available to teach the subject is best used, how to ensure that each pupil makes consistently good progress through the school, and to consider a more equitable distribution across the school of trained adult support

## **SCIENCE**

88. Too few pupils took the statutory assessments and tests in 2000, for pupils aged seven and eleven, to enable valid comparisons to be made with national averages. However, in the teacher assessments for seven year olds, all six pupils reached at least the expected Level 2. In 2001, results were nearly as high. The results of the 2000 tests for 11 year olds showed that most pupils reached the expected Level 4. The results of the 2001 tests matched those of 2000.

89. Three lessons were observed during the inspection. On the evidence of these lessons, and from talking to pupils and looking at samples of their work, it is judged that pupils at seven and eleven achieve standards that meet the expectations nationally for pupils of these ages. This judgement matches that of the previous inspection.

90. All pupils, including those with special educational needs, make good progress in gaining knowledge about, and understanding, scientific relationships and causes and effects. This is because teachers emphasise the investigative part of the science curriculum.

91. By the time they are seven, most pupils know what plants need to help them to grow, and how they get their nutrients. They know the functions of the roots, stem and leaves, and that flowers eventually die and make seeds, as in the sunflower. The school grounds, in which pupils throughout the school take a special interest, support very well their learning about life and living processes. For example, they plant sunflower seeds and observe their development over the whole growing period. Much work on science in the infant class is associated with work in other subjects. This is effective, especially as the teachers have high expectations of the pupils to learn and make good progress across the curriculum. Pupils learn about how materials change and the characteristics of natural substances, for example when they experiment with dyes. They use beetroot, tea and onions to dye cloth and discuss the artistic effects. Additionally, when studying the way plants change as they grow, pupils carefully mix and choose paints to create interesting paintings.

92. Much of the science work in both the infant and the junior classes is comprised of scientific investigations and observations. For example, infants twist, stretch and bend malleable materials such as plasticine, clay and dough, to see whether they return to their original shape. They carefully record their findings, and deduce later that an elastic band and a sponge have special qualities, namely that they do return to their original size and shape after being stretched or squeezed.

93. The work in the infant class is supported well by clear, teacher-prepared worksheets where appropriate, which pupils have to complete. However, discussion and observation in lessons characterises most of the work. For example, in a lesson about the senses, pupils talked as a whole class about the sense of smell. They contributed a range of opinions about what affects the sense, such as a cold, or about a dog's strong sense of smell in contrast to that of humans. The subsequent investigation, to try to identify a range of materials by the smell they make, greatly encouraged pupils to question, to listen to others, and to make suggestions. Little recording of answers took place, although the benefits of the lesson were apparent in the way that pupils took interest in the topic, and were able to talk about differences and qualities of the smells.

94. By the time they reach the age of 11, most pupils have added satisfactorily to knowledge they acquired lower down the school. For example, they explain clearly the structural and protective functions of bones, and some of the functions of important organs of the body. At the beginning of Year 6, some pupils can explain the grouping of animals into fish, reptiles, amphibians, birds and mammals. The more able pupils know that blood circulates from the heart to the lungs, to exchange carbon dioxide for oxygen, before passing back to the heart for pumping around the body. Year 6 pupils have a basic understanding of the earth in relation to space. They translate the effects of the earth revolving on its axis, and moving around the sun, into what causes day and night and the seasons.

95. As in the infant class, there are occasions in the teaching of science in the juniors when knowledge gained in one subject is used and reinforced in another. This is beneficial to pupils' learning, as when pupils make models of houses out of card, and then make electrical circuits with switches to light bulbs in each of the rooms. Similarly, pupils use numeracy skills when they collect data about lengths of limbs, enter the data on a computer, and then use the resultant analysis and the facilities of the computer to construct graphs. The most able pupils are able to interpret the results of such work, and to discuss possible scientific reasons about why there are individual differences.

96. Most pupils record their work accurately, and to a standard of content normally expected of their ages. However, whilst they have a good understanding of report writing, sometimes the work is incomplete. This is despite good marking from the teacher that suggests ways to improve and extend work. Written work is often misspelt, and pupils do not sufficiently use in science the writing skills that they have learned in literacy lessons. Both of these examples of unsatisfactory work come about because there is not enough emphasis placed by the teachers on the pupils producing high quality work.

97. Of the three lessons seen, one was very good and the other two were good. In the very good lesson, given to pupils in Years 1 and 2, the teacher prompted eager discussion about the senses, initiated by the use of a poem called 'the Nose'. The teacher had high expectations of the pupils to respond well. She ensured that those who wanted to contribute were listened to, thus raising their self-esteem. She made such comments as 'That's just right' and 'That's a good idea' when pupils offered their ideas individually about substances that they were asked to smell. She made good use of pupils' good speaking and listening skills to move the lesson on. Her very good planning ensured that the lesson moved along at the correct pace, and that each part of the lesson was completed before moving to the next. For example, the investigation in the classroom preceded an outside activity where pupils gathered a range of examples of different smelling leaves. Notably, four of the reception year children compiled a display of the leaves collected.

98. The two good lessons given to pupils in the juniors were well prepared, and comprised a wide range of facts about the purposes of different kinds of teeth. The use of a selection of baby foods, visual aids in the form of charts, and close observation of several animal skulls, ensured that the pupils were constantly involved and interested throughout the lessons. However, guidance for the writing activity was too brief, particularly for the youngest and least able, many of whom did not have the capability to express clearly in writing what was asked - 'What do different teeth do?'. Indeed, few pupils wrote anything worthwhile, despite their learning about teeth being of a good standard. There needs to be more thought given to how the work for the least able can be better matched to their levels of attainment.

99. Pupils across the school are enthusiastic and show enjoyment in science lessons, largely because of the enthusiasm of the teachers, who are knowledgeable of the subject, and of the opportunities they give for pupils to do investigations. National guidelines are

used as a basis for planning the science curriculum and, in the light of the school needing to raise standards in writing, science is not seen as a priority for development in the school. Nevertheless, there should be some consideration given to how the teaching of science can help pupils to develop their writing skills.

## **ART AND DESIGN AND DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY**

100. There were no lessons seen in design and technology, and only one lesson seen in art and design, in the infant class. There is not enough evidence to be able to make secure judgements about pupils' learning and achievement in these subjects. In the one art and design lesson observed, standards achieved by pupils in Year 2 were above what is normally expected. This judgement represents an improvement on that of the previous inspection.

101. Evidence in folios of pupils' previous work, and in photographs and teachers' planning shows that pupils meet a wide range of experiences designed to develop their knowledge and skills in these subjects. Work in sketchbooks owned by pupils in the juniors contain a sound record of work that they have completed over a long period of time. This work shows that most pupils achieve a good rate of learning to observe closely and to interpret what they see. For example, they produce good representative pencil drawings of everyday school articles, such as a staple gun. They take care to draw accurately the articles in proportion, with often good use of shading to give an impression of depth. Some high quality work on reflective symmetry enhances work undertaken in mathematics lessons. Pupils in Years 5 and 6 talk knowledgeably about the work of Vincent Van Gogh and Pablo Picasso, and discuss their preferences between the impressionists and the modern artists. They use computers to help them with their art and design work, for example, when they download from the Internet information about famous artists.

102. There was little evidence seen of pupils' work in design and technology. However, photographs of previous work show how juniors planned and built models of houses from card, painted them, and then used their skills learned in science to fit the houses with working lights. This work was completed to a good standard, especially as the wiring of the electrical circuits involved some careful planning for the bulbs to light 'in parallel'.

103. In the one art and design lesson seen, the quality of teaching and learning was very good. The teacher planned the lesson to enhance learning in art and in other subjects, around a whole class topic entitled 'Myself'. For example, elements of science and information and communication technology were apparent. Some pupils used a painting program on computers to produce interesting and colourful designs, whilst others designed book illustrations for work in literacy. Pupils were excited to use the resources, and concentrated for long periods on each task before moving on to another. A notable feature of the lesson was the way pupils evaluated and improved their work as they went along. This happened because the teacher had high expectations of the pupils to do their best. She used constant praise and encouragement, which prompted pupils to try out new ideas. This led, for example, to pupils working on the computers to refine their finished pieces several times before being satisfied with the result. A six-year-old pupil became completely wrapped up in her own thoughts about her work as she gradually built her picture on the computer screen.

104. There is a good range of equipment and materials for art and design technology. Recent initiatives by a group of parents, in partnership with the school, have done much to raise the profile of art and design technology in the school. Visits by local artists to work with pupils, alongside staff, have greatly added to pupils' interest and enjoyment in the subjects. For example, recent work by the infants in clay modelling and the making of rag

rugs by the juniors has resulted in fine examples of finished articles. Other work has included experience of traditional crafts in paper-making prior to the production and painting of some fine leaf prints. This combination of work in school and initiatives involving parents and the local community means that the school is in a good position to achieve high standards in the subjects. The school's provision for work in art and design supports very well pupils' cultural development.

## **GEOGRAPHY AND HISTORY**

105. There is insufficient evidence from direct observation of lessons to make a judgement about teaching in these subjects. However, from the evidence of teachers' records, a range of finished work, and talking to pupils, it is judged that pupils in Years 1 to 6 achieve satisfactorily for their ages in geography and history.

106. The one geography lesson observed in the infant class confirmed that, by the end of Year 2, pupils know about the relative positions of some countries in the world. It was a good lesson, in which pupils examined the countries of origin on the labels of supermarket products. They then used a large globe to locate the whereabouts of countries such as Australia and France in relation to England and their own village. In Years 3 and 4, pupils begin to develop simple mapping skills, for example by using the co-ordinates on a treasure map. By the end of Year 6, they know the points of a compass and in which direction they would need to travel from Witherslack to get to other parts of the United Kingdom. They find their way around their local area using a compass and Ordnance Survey maps. Teachers make good use of local walks and facilities to develop these skills. Pupils' develop awareness of the power of communication technology by using electronic mail to find out about climates in other countries.

107. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 develop a good sense of chronology when they talk about events in the past. Teachers have enabled them to achieve this by inviting to school grandparents of members of the class to talk about life 'in the olden days' and how, for instance, toys and seaside holidays have changed over the years. Pupils also gain insight into how the world has changed since the Victorian era by studying the lives of famous people, such as Florence Nightingale. Pupils in Years 3 and 4 use a time line to explore historical events from the Second World War onwards. Their increased awareness and use of important dates makes a positive contribution to the development of numeracy skills. Teachers enrich the curriculum and encourage investigative study through the use of primary and secondary sources of investigation. They achieve this, for example, by arranging for pupils to question the school secretary about how Dean Barwick School has changed since she went there as a child, and by organising trips to places of interest, such as the transport museum at Holker Hall. By the end of Year 6, the majority of pupils have satisfactorily developed investigative and recording skills. Teachers in both classes encourage the use of extended writing in describing events from the past, although the quality of this work could be improved. Through the rolling programme of study for mixed age classes, pupils have opportunities to study periods and principal occasions in history, such as the Ancient Egyptians and Tudor explorations.

108. Teachers' approach to geography and history is a positive one. Pupils are encouraged to learn by direct experience, asking questions and recording what they have learned, thus placing the school in a strong position to raise standards further.

## **INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY (ICT)**

109. Pupils' attainment by the ages of seven and eleven are above what is normally expected in most aspects of the subject. This represents a good level of improvement

since the previous inspection, when attainment was judged to be below what is expected by pupils at these ages. The school has worked hard and successfully to keep its curriculum up to date. For example, there are many occasions when the subject is used to enhance learning in other subjects. There is a good range of computers and software, and other relevant hardware. However, some aspects of the subject are not taught because the school does not have the necessary hardware available for pupils to undertake such work, for example in data logging. Each classroom has at least one computer, and there are other up-to-date computers available in a shared area. Two of them are connected to the Internet, a facility that is well used, for example for juniors to find information to support lessons in other subjects, such as history and art and design. There are also two large format computer screens, which act as very good visual aids when teachers use them during whole class or group teaching.

110. Pupils enjoy their lessons in information and communication technology, and take every opportunity to use computers as tools to help them develop their skills, both in the subject and in other subjects, such as English and mathematics. By the time they are in Year 6, most pupils use computers as a matter of course. The school very successfully encourages an ethos of learning through computers, often giving homework tasks to build further pupils' confidence in the subject, and to provide situations where parents can support their children's learning.

111. From an early age in the infant class, pupils learn to use a mouse and keyboard to engage in simple writing and drawing programs. They input instructions into a programmable floor robot and watch it move through a series of manoeuvres. By the time they are in Year 2, most pupils are familiar with a range of programs. They use them to write simple sentences or short pieces of prose, drafting and revising their pieces in order to relate considered ideas. The more able pupils can save and retrieve their work, and print it. They create images through using a 'paint' program, and then add text of their choice.

112. By age 11, pupils use spreadsheets to enter and retrieve information. For example, they collect information about the lengths of different pupils' bones (upper and lower arm, and upper and lower leg), enter all the information, and then 'ask' the computer to work out averages. Some pupils work out the averages for themselves, and then make comparisons with the computer's answers. Pupils in the juniors often word-process their work, adjusting and improving, as they did in the infant class, but covering much more work. Pupils throughout the juniors use programs designed to improve their numeracy skills. One less able pupil in Year 3 was seen practising addition of money, using images of coins to make totals required to purchase certain objects. He did this as part of his numeracy lesson, as an extension to the tasks set for him to do on paper. This approach was effective, particularly as he found some of his written tasks too challenging.

113. The teaching of basic skills in the subject is good overall, and teachers check that pupils can carry out the procedures asked of them. Consequently, pupils make good strides in their learning as they move through the school. No specific lessons in the subject were seen in the inspection, although the acquisition and practice of information and communication technology skills is clearly planned for in the curriculum. On those many occasions when computers were used, the teachers had high expectations of pupils to behave and to do their best. Analysis of pupils' work in individual folders and books shows that teachers teach nearly all relevant strands of the curriculum. However, the aspect of sensing is underdeveloped. The school is aware of this. The development of the subject is not a priority for the school, since a recent thorough audit of the school's curriculum shows that other subjects require more attention.

## **MUSIC AND PHYSICAL EDUCATION**

114. There was only one music lesson observed during the inspection, and no lessons in physical education. On the evidence of the music lesson seen in the infant class, Year 1 and 2 pupils make good progress in singing and the development of other musical skills. It was not possible to judge the standards achieved in Years 3 to 6 in music, or throughout the school in physical education.

115. In the music lesson seen, the majority of pupils knew and sang enthusiastically and in tune a number of songs. Year 2 pupils showed a good understanding of pitch and demonstrated this by using their voices and appropriate actions to represent low, medium and high notes. They had very good attitudes and achieved very well in the lesson because the teaching was lively, energetic and imaginative, reflecting very good subject knowledge and expertise. Pupils in the infant class go on to produce their own compositions for percussion using pictures to represent musical notation. In the junior class, teachers plan opportunities for pupils to learn the pentatonic scale, compose music on tuned and untuned instruments and perform as part of an ensemble. Pupils throughout the school sing regularly and enthusiastically in assemblies. Pupils throughout the juniors have opportunities to learn to play guitar or violin.

116. There is an appropriate scheme in place to enable teachers to plan a range of activities in physical education. As they move through the school, pupils have opportunities to learn the skills and rules of invasive games and athletics. They build an increasingly complex sequence of movement on the floor and apparatus in gymnastics and respond to music through dance. All pupils are taught how to swim when they are in the junior class. There are opportunities to develop skills outside the school day through activities such as netball, cricket and outdoor pursuits. There is no school hall and this puts the school at a distinct disadvantage in its efforts to teach dance and gymnastics. However, parents and friends of the school have worked very successfully to provide a safe covered area and an adventure playground in the school grounds. These facilities compensate to a great extent for the unsatisfactory indoor facilities.

## **RELIGIOUS EDUCATION**

117. There was only one lesson seen in religious education, in the infants. There is not enough evidence to make a secure judgement about standards in this subject.

118. Pupils throughout the school learn about significant events, traditions, stories and beliefs in the Christian religion. Teachers enrich learning about Christianity through the school's strong links with the local church. In this way, they promote pupils' awareness of the special places, furniture and people inside a church and about what churches are used for. In lessons, they listen to and learn many of the popular stories from the Bible, such as 'Blind Bartimeus' and 'Zacchaeus'. School assemblies make a good contribution to the teaching of moral issues, and pupils are regularly asked to consider notions such as right and wrong, and friendship. This was clearly demonstrated when 'The Breakthrough Team' were invited to an assembly to enact the story of 'The Good Samaritan,' and to explore with the pupils its implications. In lessons, older pupils in Years 5 and 6 have opportunities to discuss more abstract issues, such as the nature of creation and commitment to a faith. In accordance with the Locally Agreed syllabus, teachers also plan work on comparative religions, such as Judaism and Islam. Wherever possible, they stress the positive similarities between the various faiths, such as the use of holy books, the importance of pilgrimage and the underlying rules common to many religions. Teaching, particularly in the infant class, makes a good contribution to the promotion of literacy skills and there are good links with other subjects. Units of work are often presented in book form and draw on pupils' creative writing and computer skills, as well as their knowledge in subjects such as science.