

INSPECTION REPORT

APPLEBY PRIMARY SCHOOL

Appleby-in-Westmorland

LEA area: Cumbria

Unique reference number: 112408

Headteacher: Mr Stuart Hetherington

Reporting inspector: L A Furness
8245

Dates of inspection: 10th-11th June 2002

Inspection number: 195920

Short 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:	Foundation
Age range of pupils:	3-11
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Station Road Appleby-in-Westmorland Cumbria
Postcode:	CA16 6TX
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Appropriate authority:	The Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr Eric Wooff
Date of previous inspection:	7 th July 1997

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Appleby Primary School is bigger than other primary schools and caters for boys and girls between the ages of 3 to 11. There are 294 full-time pupils in the school and a further 31 part-time children in the nursery. The majority of pupils are from the local catchment area, which covers a wide range of socio-economic circumstances. There is a very small number of pupils having English as an additional language and there are no pupils at an early stage of English language acquisition. The percentage of pupils having special educational needs (29%) is above the national average and the percentage of pupils with a statement of special educational need (4.5%) is also above the national average. The percentage of pupils known to be eligible for school meals free of charge (7.5%) is below the national average. There are 12 classes including the nursery. The majority of classes consist of pupils of a single age range but there are three classes consisting of two age ranges of pupils. The full range of attainment is represented in the school. However, the results of a nationally approved assessment scheme shows that, on entry to the reception classes, the attainment of the majority of children in communication language and literacy, mathematical knowledge and personal, social and emotional development matches that expected for their age.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

This is an effective school with many strengths. Standards in literacy are well above the national average by the age of 11 and the pupils achieve well. Although numeracy standards in 2001 were not as good, this year (2002) the majority of pupils are achieving at least the level expected for their age with a significant minority achieving above the expected level. The good teaching combined with pupils' enthusiasm leads to a good quality of learning. The headteacher and three assistant headteachers form a very effective team with a shared vision and commitment to maintaining high standards as well as ensuring that pupils enjoy school. When considering the attainment of the children on entry to the school, the progress they make and the academic standards they attain, as in the previous inspection the school provides good value for money.

What the school does well

- The leadership and management of the school are very good and this ensures that all staff work together very effectively as a team to maintain good quality education.
- Pupils with special educational needs are given a very good level of support and make very good progress.
- Children are provided with a good start to their education in the Foundation Stage of Learning (nursery and reception).
- A broad and balanced curriculum is offered to the pupils.
- Pupils find learning a pleasure and the good relationships throughout the school encourage the pupils to try hard and to do their best.

What could be improved

- Standards in reading and writing by the age of 7 are too low.
- Develop existing assessment systems to enable the school to track that pupils' progress is sufficient and, to ensure that pupils themselves know what they need to do to improve the quality of their work.
- Continue to develop information and communication technology (ICT) provision and extend its use in all National Curriculum subjects.

The first and third bullet points are identified on the School Improvement Plan as areas for development.

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 July 1997 and since then the school has effectively remedied the key issues identified. The proportion of pupils attaining the higher levels in reading, writing and science has improved by the age of 11. Although the percentage of pupils attaining the higher levels has increased at the age of 7 there is still a need for further work in both reading and writing. A more challenging mathematics curriculum has been adopted which makes more rigorous demands on the higher attaining pupils. The governing body is much more involved in the work of the school and good programmes of work are in place for all National Curriculum subjects to ensure that learning is continuous throughout the school. A very good senior management team has been established and the school has also implemented the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies successfully. Performance management is securely in place and a nationally approved initial assessment scheme has been introduced for children at the start of their reception year. The school has made good improvement since the previous inspection.

STANDARDS

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

Performance in:	compared with			
	all schools			similar schools
	1999	2000	2001	2001
English	B	B	A	A
mathematics	C	B	D	D
science	B	C	B	B

Key	
well above average	A
above average	B
average	C
below average	D
well below average	E

The school's performance in the National Curriculum tests in 2001 was well above the national average in English, above the national average in science and below the national average in mathematics. In comparison with similar schools, the school's performance was well above average in English, above average in science and below average in mathematics. This disappointing performance in mathematics was partly due to the fact that too few pupils attained the higher level and the girls did not perform as well as the boys. The school has taken effective measures to remedy these issues and it is evident that a good number of pupils currently working in Year 6 are achieving at the higher level in mathematics and there are no notable differences between the work of the boys and girls. The standards seen in the work of pupils currently in Year 6 matches the national expectations for their age in English, mathematics and science and the pupils achieve well. Although the target set for 2001 was achieved in English it was not achieved in mathematics. The targets set for 2002 are appropriately challenging and the school is on course to achieve them in both subjects.

The children in the Foundation Stage achieve well and the majority of children are well on their way to achieving the early learning goals in all six areas of learning by the time they reach the end of their reception year. In Year 2, pupils' performance in the National Curriculum tests in 2001 was well below the national average in reading, below the national average in writing and matched the national average in mathematics. In comparison with similar schools, pupils' performance was well below average in reading, below average in writing and matched the average in mathematics. However it must be recognised that in this class there was a high percentage of pupils with special educational needs and pupils who have summer birthdays. Performance has improved this year in reading, writing and mathematics. The school has been successful in raising the percentage of pupils attaining the higher levels particularly in reading and writing as indicated by the 2002 National Curriculum test results. It is now implementing useful strategies to improve the attainment of the less able pupils in these areas. The achievement of Year 2 pupils' is overall satisfactory.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Very good. Pupils of all ages enjoy school and are keen to learn.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Good. Pupils are polite, communicative and well mannered. They are fully aware of the standard of behaviour the school and their parents expect and they respond accordingly.
Personal development and relationships	Good. Pupils work well together, readily take on responsibilities and use their initiative where appropriate.
Attendance	Satisfactory. Levels of attendance match the national average and there is no unauthorised absence.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

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

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

All of the teaching observed was satisfactory or better. Because of the consistently good teaching that occurs in the Foundation Stage (nursery and reception classes), all of the children make good gains in learning. Good classroom routines are quickly established and good learning habits are formed because of the well-structured work prepared for the children. The teaching of English and mathematics is good for Years 3 to 6 pupils and is satisfactory for Years 1 and 2 pupils. In the good lessons the teachers' good knowledge of their pupils means that they successfully adapt questions, targeting them toward individuals, to give all pupils the security and confidence to express their ideas and further develop their knowledge, skills and understanding. Good relationships with the pupils creates a warm and productive learning atmosphere where pupils are not afraid to be wrong, and are successfully encouraged to help each other. Through effective demonstrations, clear explanations and secure subject knowledge teachers inject a sense of fun into learning that successfully motivates the pupils to work hard and results in good learning. In the satisfactory lessons, time is not always used productively and the teachers do not have high enough expectations of pupils' work rate. They do not consistently insist on use of correct grammar, punctuation and good presentation in all of the pupils' written work. Written marking is satisfactory throughout the school but the pupils do not know clearly what it is they need to do to improve further. Such information would enable them to take an increasing responsibility for their own learning. The younger pupils' handwriting is unsatisfactory with many pupils joining letters incorrectly. Very good detailed planning documentation ensures that the needs of those pupils with special educational needs and those for whom English is not their first language are very successfully met. These pupils acquire, step-by-step, the knowledge and understanding they need to achieve well because their teachers are particularly good at assessing their learning and planning work that builds on what they know, understand and can do.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the	Good. All statutory requirements of the National Curriculum are met

curriculum	and the curriculum is extended very well through visits, visitors and well attended extra-curricular activities. Although information and communication technology provision is satisfactory it is an area that the school wishes to improve.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Very good. Pupils are provided with very effective support that enables them successfully to participate in all aspects of school life.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	Very good. The school checks the development of the very small number of pupils who speak English as an additional language carefully to ensure that the education it is providing is appropriate to their needs.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Good. The school caters effectively for all aspects of pupils' personal development. Pupils are encouraged to take on responsibilities and moral and social issues are raised and discussed in sensitive and constructive ways. Careful provision is made for pupils' cultural development.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Good. This is a school that openly and effectively puts the well being of pupils first. Arrangements for ensuring the welfare and protection of pupils are fully in place.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Very Good. The headteacher provides the school with a strong sense of direction and purpose. The senior staff support the headteacher very well and together they form a very effective management team.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Very Good. The school has a hard-working body of governors who are actively involved in the life of the school. They have a clear understanding of the school's strengths and work well with staff to promote its further development.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Good. The quality of teaching and learning is evaluated regularly and good support is provided for all staff. Satisfactory systems for the checking and evaluation of pupils' progress are in place which the school is in the process of developing further.
The strategic use of resources	Very Good. The funding made available to the school is spent carefully and efficiently to promote pupils' learning.

The school applies the principles of best value well: senior staff and governors make concerted efforts to consult all those with a vested interest in the pupils' education and to obtain good value for the money the school spends. They regularly compare how well the school is doing with the national picture and have a good programme of continuing development.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Children like school. ▪ Children are making good progress. ▪ The school expects children to work hard and achieve their best. ▪ The teaching is good. ▪ The school is well led and managed. 	There were no significant areas that the parents would like to see improved.

The parents are right in what they appreciate about the school and the inspection team agrees with all of the positive views of the parents.

PART B: COMMENTARY

WHAT THE SCHOOL DOES WELL

The leadership and management of the school are very good and this ensures that all staff work together very effectively as a team to maintain good quality education.

1. When the school was previously inspected the report indicated that the leadership of the headteacher was purposeful and effective. He had a collaborative management style aiming at involving all teachers in decision making and ensuring that all views were well represented. This picture remains the same with the headteacher and senior management team working closely together to share ideas and to prioritise areas that require further development. For example, as a result of a variety of effective evaluation activities the priorities of raising standards of attainment in reading and writing by the end of Year 2 and continuing to improve information and communication technology provision were identified. Good action plans were produced by the subject co-ordinators and both of these plans are being implemented well and are beginning to have an impact on school improvement. Following the disappointing mathematics results of Year 6 pupils in 2001, useful strategies were put into place particularly focusing on raising the attainment of more able pupils. This has resulted in the school effectively improving the number of pupils working at the higher level in mathematics.

2. The senior management team consists of the headteacher and three assistant headteachers representing the special educational needs pupils in the school, the pupils in the Foundation Stage and Years 1 and 2 and the pupils in Years 3 to 6. The three assistant headteachers are a group of forward thinking professionals who meet weekly with the headteacher to input information from issues arising throughout the school and to provide feedback to all staff who work in the year groups for which they are responsible. In this way the needs of all pupils within the school are considered at meetings and the headteacher is provided with regular information about all aspects of the school. This approach to management is effective in ensuring that all views are well-represented. The teaching staff and the teaching assistants find this approach very useful and consequently do not feel alienated from the leadership and management decision-making process. All staff know that they are valued members of a team where all ideas and suggestions are considered equally and fairly.

3. All schools have had to implement numerous initiatives over the past few years for example, the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies, Curriculum 2000, Performance Management and staff development training in information and communication technology. All of these have been successfully introduced through the skilful leadership and management of the headteacher and senior management team. It was recognised by them that it was very important to enable the staff to feel in control of the changes and also to keep a balanced response to these initiatives recognising that staff already work extremely hard. Ways in which the leadership of the school managed this was to negotiate with the governors a deferment of the implementation of the National Numeracy Strategy for one term until the National Literacy Strategy was thoroughly bedded in. To reduce the number of staff meetings whilst staff were undergoing information and communication technology training and providing staff with approximately four days a term non contact time. Strategies such as these have kept the staff positive to change and consequently new initiatives this year, such as the 'Early Literacy Strategy' and 'Springboard mathematics' have been accepted enthusiastically. Staff think that the leadership of the school is 'personable and challenging but fair and positive.'

4. The leadership and management of the Governing Body are also a strength of the school. In the last inspection it was said that the governors provided strong and effective support. However, a key issue of the previous inspection was to develop their monitoring and evaluation role. Since then governors have developed their role considerably. A number of governors have a link to a subject area

where they meet with subject co-ordinators and discuss curriculum developments. They visit classrooms regularly and review curriculum policies. The governors are very aware of the standards that the pupils attain and know that the Year 2 results in reading and writing need to be improved.

Pupils with special educational needs are given a very good level of support and make very good progress.

5. As in the previous inspection provision for pupils with special educational needs is a significant strength of the school. This aspect of the school's work is led and managed very ably by the special educational needs co-ordinator (SENCO) whose considerable expertise, enthusiasm and commitment ensures that the pupils with special educational needs are very well provided for and make very good progress. All staff who work with the SENCO are experienced and competent in their work and whether the pupils are working within class or withdrawn for specific activities, they are very well supported. As in the previous inspection record-keeping procedures and individual programmes of work for pupils with special educational needs are exemplary. Very clear targets are identified and how pupils might achieve the targets are set out with very good strategies and ideas for teachers and teaching support assistants to use when working with the pupils. The special educational needs policy and handbook are both very useful documents providing very clear guidance for all staff. Current documentation in place fully complies with statutory requirements. Parents are actively involved in the schools' work and have regular meetings with the SENCO to support their child's progress. Parents' are rightly very complementary about the school's provision for their children and how well they are included in the school's activities.

6. The teaching of pupils with special needs is also very good. Very good relationships exist between the pupils and the staff with which they work. Pupils are respected and valued resulting in them wanting to do well and trying very hard to succeed in their work. In a very good lesson for Year 5 pupils, a small group of pupils were trying hard to write limericks of their own. The teacher skilfully reinforced their understanding of rhyme and rhythm in poetry through the effective use of percussion instruments. The teacher identified many short-term targets for the pupils so they were able to identify effectively their own progress within the lesson. This had the very positive effect of motivating and encouraging the pupils to continue with their work and they began to use technical vocabulary, for example syllables, rhyme and rhyming patten, accurately and confidently. In another very good year 1 literacy lesson, pupils with hearing difficulties were very effectively supported by the teaching assistant so they were able to access the whole class activity focusing on letter sounds. In both these lessons, pupils made very good progress and their achievement was very good. A key feature of the school's success with pupils with special educational needs is the way the withdrawal groups link so closely to work that is going on in the classroom. These lessons effectively reinforce previous work and great care is taken to ensure that the lesson prepares the pupils well for future work when they are working within the classroom environment.

Children are provided with a good start to their education in the Foundation Stage of Learning (nursery and reception).

7. The good quality provision identified in the previous inspection for children in the Foundation Stage (nursery and reception) has been maintained. When children start in the nursery well-documented assessments are made and work is carefully planned to meet their needs in all the six areas of learning recommended for children of this age. Their progress is regularly reviewed and if necessary, activities are modified to address their individual needs. Children with special educational needs are identified early and very good support is given to them. An achievement folder is started for each child and their progress is evaluated carefully against the early learning goals. This good use of assessment information is continued well in the reception class, resulting in children making good progress during

their time in the Foundation Stage and achieving well. By the end of their reception year the majority of children are at least attaining the 'early learning goals expected for their age in all six areas of learning.

8. Before children actually start at the school the school works hard with the parents to make their children's first days in school successful. There are good links with 'Pippins' the local playgroup resulting in children being familiar with the school and the staff before they actually attend. Home visits are made in the two weeks prior to the induction day. Parents say they are made to feel welcome and are encouraged whenever possible to help in the classroom and be involved in any outside trips. A wide range of trips is offered to the children including visits to the fire station, local park, police station and local garden centre to effectively enhance the curriculum. Children particularly enjoy these visits and many remember their exciting visit to the Christmas pantomime.

9. All six areas of learning are addressed well and the quality of teaching and learning is good. Written planning is detailed and the learning of the activities are clearly shared with the children so they know what is expected of them. The staff are well organised and provide a lively, stimulating environment where children are eager to learn. Very good emphasis is given to the children's personal, social and emotional development and it is evident that they are happy and confident learners who want to do their best. In a good numeracy lesson, the children listened well to the teacher and enjoyed the counting activity. They eagerly made drum beats appropriate to the number whispered to them by the teacher and confidently and accurately 'performed' their number in front of their friends. When working independently they showed good concentration and well chosen activities ensured that children worked together collaboratively sharing ideas and resources willingly. Good emphasis is given to writing and children have a 'best book' into which they put their 'best work'. They are very proud of these books and are enthusiastic to talk about their writing.

10. Good quality resources are available for use including a good outside play area and all resources including adults are used effectively. Good teamwork is a strength of the Foundation Stage with the teachers, nursery nurses, teaching assistants and other helpers working effectively together as a team to create a caring and secure environment. They form good relationships with the children and have high expectations of their behaviour to which the children respond well. All adults are obviously briefed well and through the use of good questioning techniques make a valuable contribution to the children's learning. The Foundation Stage has deservedly earned a school 'kitemark' award from the Local Education Authority recognising it as model of good practice for other schools who are considering organising nursery and reception aged children in such a way- as an Early Years Unit.

A broad and balanced curriculum is offered to the pupils.

11. The school is determined to ensure that pupils are provided with a broad and balanced curriculum whilst providing an appropriate emphasis to literacy and numeracy. The results of a parental questionnaire sent in spring 2001 confirmed that 98% of the parents thought that the curriculum offered to their children was broad, varied and catered for a range of needs. The school is confident that, twelve months on, the situation has not changed and has good plans in place to develop this even further. For example, a weeklong dance residency is planned for the autumn term and a member of staff is currently exploring issues of how to develop further creativity within the primary curriculum. A new management post has been created to promote art and design and design technology through the use of art residencies.

12. Good programmes of work based on national guidance are in place for all National Curriculum subjects. These ensure that learning is continuous throughout the school and that the statutory requirements of the National Curriculum are fully met. The school does however adapt and modify the

national guidance to make it appropriate for the needs of their pupils. In order to make the curriculum 'come alive' subject co-ordinators encourage visitors to come into the school and visits to be made within the local environment. For example, in the context of a history topic, pupils visited Vindolanda and Roman Art Museum to examine Roman artefacts and to learn more effectively about life as a Roman soldier. To support their work in geography, two teachers from Alabama visited the school and spoke to the pupils about similarities and differences between life in Appleby and Alabama.

13. An artist in residence has supported pupils' art and design work very well. The royal portrait gallery in Year 2 demonstrates the effectiveness of the work of this artist in school. Very good portraits of senior members of the royal family using a variety of media including pastels, pencils, paint and water-colours are available to see. There are some good attempts to capture the character of the people with a particularly good portrait of the late Queen Mother with walking sticks. Pupils have a good understanding of how to produce portraits as a result of this work.

14. Pupils have also visited local churches and a local priest has visited the school to talk to the pupils about communion. This allowed the pupils to ask their own questions about any areas they did not clearly understand. Artefacts are used whenever possible, for example toys with winding mechanisms in design technology and Islamic artefacts to support pupils' understanding of the Islamic religion. The use of the environment is recognised as a valuable resource and is used whenever possible. The science co-ordinator for example, involves the pupils in many local initiatives such as the 'national garden birdwatch survey and anti-litter activities. The pupils were involved in the planting of the willow tunnel in the school grounds, an activity many particularly enjoyed.

15. Good emphasis is given to pupils' personal development including citizenship. Older pupils took part in the Cumbria's young citizens' quiz, whilst all pupils are involved in activities such as 'Operation Christmas Child' and collecting for 'Edwards Trust', 'Children in Need' and 'Childline biscuit making'. These are a few of the ways that the school successfully encourages pupils to think about others and become responsible citizens of the future. A wide variety of extra-curricular activities including sport, dance, gymnastics, music and French also effectively help to promote pupils social and moral development and further enhance curriculum provision.

16. Display throughout the school reflects the importance given to all National Curriculum subjects. These good quality displays provide a bright welcoming environment, which effectively celebrate pupils' best efforts. Work is carefully mounted showing pupils that their work is valued and all classes and all National Curriculum subjects are represented. All the staff recognise the importance of keeping themselves up to date and proficient in the National Curriculum and since autumn 2001 all subjects areas apart from geography have been the focus of development training involving a significant number of staff.

Pupils find learning a pleasure and the good relationships throughout the school encourage the pupils to try hard and to do their best.

17. The pupils' very positive attitudes to learning and good behaviour make a significant impact on their attainment and progress. All pupils including those with special educational needs and with English as an additional language enjoy learning. Their enthusiasm is seen in several subjects. For example, in a Year 6 literacy lesson, pupils discussed enthusiastically the similarities and differences between two pieces of writing that had been written by the same author. The pupils read the texts with interest and responded to the teacher's questions very well. They were willing to share their ideas and explained their ideas clearly. One pupil perceptively recognised the message behind one of the pieces of writing realising that 'because you may not be good at one thing doesn't mean that you can't do anything!' Throughout the lesson there was a calm purposeful atmosphere, with the teacher using

praise most effectively to motivate and encourage pupils. In an another gymnastic lesson for Year 3 pupils, pupils worked together well improving their performance through the effective evaluations of the teacher's and the pupils' demonstrations. Good extra challenges were added by the teacher which encouraged the pupils to strive for more and by the end of the lesson there was good achievement by all.

18. As soon as children start school they are helped to understand what is expected of them. In both the nursery and reception classes children know that when they are asked to do something they are expected to respond quickly. They rapidly learn routines and the part they have to play in keeping resources tidy. Children are attentive listeners and are eager to join in activities. This was seen in one reception class when children were asked to sing simple songs from memory. They were eager to join in the actions of the song.

19. The quality of relationships at all levels is good. The majority of teachers have high expectations of the quality and quantity of work in an environment where all pupils are striving to do their best. In a Year 1 literacy lesson, for example the pupils were very clear about what was expected of them as the teacher clearly shared the learning of the lesson with them. The teaching assistant was used very well to enable pupils with special educational needs to participate in all the activities and pupils responded very well to the game activity which allowed the teacher to effectively assess their understanding of 'vowel' sounds. Pupils responded with thoughtful answers to questions and other pupils listened carefully to their friends' replies particularly when working in pairs. Individual pupils know they are able to challenge each other's thinking without fear of hurting feelings or of undermining what other pupils have said.

20. Both in the questionnaire and at the parents' meeting, parents report that their children enjoy school and behaviour is good. These opinions are well founded. In lessons and in and around the school, pupils behave well and in the playground the pupils play well together. At lunchtime pupils sit sensibly and chat at an acceptable level and show good manners. They enjoy these times and are courteous to lunchtime supervisors. Pupils, when asked, say 'this is a happy school,' and the school operates a 'buddy' system to look out for pupils who are alone or have a problem. When adults move around the school, pupils spontaneously open doors or stand to one side to allow adults to pass. The pupils' politeness and good manners are a credit to them, the school and their parents. The good behaviour of pupils makes a positive contribution to their learning because there is so very little time lost to unnecessary distraction or disruption in lessons. When pupils come into class after playtime or lunchtime, they are ready to get on with their work and teachers do not have to sort out difficulties that have occurred during the break.

WHAT COULD BE IMPROVED

Standards in reading and writing by the age of 7 are too low.

21. The school's performance in the National Curriculum tests in 2001 in both reading and writing was disappointing. However, it must be recognised that there were a high percentage of pupils with special educational needs in this group of pupils and an unusually high number of pupils with summer birthdays. The school immediately responded to the urgent need to improve pupil performance in both reading and writing by the age of 7 and a number of useful strategies were put into place. The Early Literacy Strategy was introduced with Year 1 pupils and good use is made of the National Literacy Strategy guidance to help the development of reading skills in reception and Years 1 and 2 (Progression in Phonics- PIPs).

22. These two initiatives already are beginning to impact positively on the reading and writing achievement of the pupils in Year 1 and the majority of Year 1 pupils are working at the expected level in both these areas. In a very good Year 1 lesson, a lively interesting game activity immediately engaged the interest of the pupils and enabled them to practise effectively their knowledge of letter sounds and use of vowels. The independent activity allowed pupils to practise their writing skills and a significant majority wrote simple sentences using punctuation correctly. The teacher encouraged the pupils to discuss their ideas before starting their writing and this very effectively allowed them to rehearse their ideas before having to commit their ideas to paper. A very useful strategy which encouraged the pupils to want to write. Very good pace to the lesson maintained the pupils' interest and the teacher's high expectations of behaviour and of work ensured that all pupils' made very good progress in both their reading and writing development.

23. A good literacy action plan is being implemented that focuses clearly on raising standards in both reading and writing. As the literacy co-ordinator has mainly experience of teaching Years 3 to 6 pupils, to assist her in her work in improving standards in Years 1 and 2 she is very ably supported by a support co-ordinator who works with the Year 1 pupils. The Local Education Authority literacy consultant has been asked for advice also and has suggested good and manageable ways of raising standards.

24. As a result of these discussions the Years 1 and 2 teachers' written planning has improved with the learning of the lesson precisely identified and all elements of a 'literacy hour' clearly in place. The teaching of key words is incorporated now into the teachers' planning. These words are sent home so that parents can become involved more in their child's progress. . Suggested strategies for improving the reading skills of the Year 2 pupils include teachers modelling how to develop pupils' skills of reading for meaning and for pupils to have more opportunity to develop their own inference and deduction skills. This has been relatively successful and more pupils have attained the higher levels in the National Curriculum tests in 2002 than in the previous year.

25. Other useful ideas suggested by the literacy consultant were to develop a writing profile and to use written marking to identify why work was good and to suggest ways in which the pupils might improve their work. These ideas have been adopted enthusiastically but are at an early stage of development and are not yet impacting significantly on pupils' attainment. The teaching of handwriting is also recognised as an area for improvement as the younger pupils' handwriting is often untidy and the majority of Year 2 pupils do not join letters correctly. The co-ordinators are aware of the need to have clear guidance of how to teach handwriting and are investigating ways of ensuring that there is continuity in the teaching of handwriting throughout the school.

26. The Years 1 and 2 staff want to improve their own knowledge and expertise in the teaching of literacy and further training in both the teaching of reading and writing has been arranged in order to help them improve the progress that the pupils make. The teachers have visited other schools in order to gain ideas about what they are doing to help raise attainment in reading and writing. Although the quality of teaching is satisfactory with very good teaching occurring in one of the Year 1 classes, the teachers expectations of what pupils are able to do are occasionally not high enough. For example, in one lesson pupils spent far too long identifying speech marks – an activity that they could do easily and did not move them forward sufficiently with their thinking. Consequently there was very little time left for pupils to work at independent writing activities. Also teachers do not consistently insist on the use of correct grammar, punctuation and good presentation in pupils' written work in English and in other subjects.

27. Although some useful strategies are being implemented as yet they have not had the desired effect of raising attainment sufficiently in reading and writing by the age of 7 and the school knows it must continue to focus its attention on improving these aspects of its work.

Develop existing assessment systems to enable the school to track that pupils' progress is sufficient and to ensure that pupils themselves know what they need to do to improve the quality of their work.

28. Simple record-keeping systems in English, mathematics and science are used which allows the school to keep a record of pupils' test results and other assessments made by the teachers during the year. The school wants to refine these systems further in order to be able to effectively evaluate that pupils' progress year-by-year is good enough. A good system is already in place in the Foundation Stage which the school will find useful to build upon and develop for use throughout the school.

29. Setting pupils targets for improving their work is also a recognised development area. In some classes pupils are given targets for learning and this information is used effectively to help them improve their work. This was seen in Year 6 in supporting pupils' progress and achievement in writing. However this practice is not consistent throughout the school and there was limited evidence that this happened in subjects other than writing, for example in mathematics or science. Written comments in books are mainly evaluative comments, such as, *'good' and 'well done'*. Consequently pupils are not clearly aware of why their work is good and what they need to do to next to improve the quality of their work. In mathematics, encouraging comments are made but there are few comments related to developing mathematical thinking and there was limited evidence of questions posed to take the pupils' learning forward.

30. The school is aware of the need to update their marking policy and to review the way that marking is used. The perception that written marking is an assessment of how well the pupil has worked at an activity is unhelpful. The school is now realising that marking both oral and written is a valuable assessment tool to inform pupils of the good features of their work and of aspects of their work that they need to work upon to raise standards.

Continue to develop information and communication technology (ICT) provision and extend its use in all National Curriculum subjects.

31. The previous inspection judged that the school was in a sound position to further develop information and communication technology (ICT). The school has done this well with significant improvements in ICT provision evident. Through money from the National Grid for Learning and from the Cumbria credits scheme the school has been able to develop a very good computer suite and each class, apart from the Foundation Stage are allocated one period a week in the suite. Computers in the classrooms are much improved and the school is steadily increasing the number of laptops available for use. An after-school club managed by a teaching assistant is available for Year 6 pupils and this is proving popular. Standards throughout the school mainly match national expectations and these are improving through the regular opportunities provided for pupils to use ICT. Also the use of national guidance effectively ensures that learning is continuous throughout the school and that teachers' expectations remain high about what pupils are capable of doing.

32. All staff have completed the training funded by the 'New Opportunities Funding' and as a result of this good training all staff have improved and developed their expertise in this subject. The majority of staff are confident to use the suite to improve pupils' ICT skills. Many staff now plan and seek resources through the Internet and all pupils' profiles are produced electronically. As the staff are becoming more confident they are asking for specific resources including more training to help them to

use ICT more effectively. The competent subject co-ordinator works very closely with the teachers and supports them well.

33. Careful strategic planning has taken place and a sound action plan clearly identifies how provision is to continue to improve. Actions include further development of hardware and other resources and to allow full Internet access to all classrooms and the library. Wisely the school has secured the services of two outside companies to look after the hardware and software technicalities on a weekly basis so that teachers are confident that equipment will work correctly. The co-ordinator is very aware of areas for development and knows that it is necessary to continue to increase staff confidence and competence. Although ICT is used in many subjects of the National Curriculum the co-ordinator knows there is still greater potential for it to be used to support pupils' learning. For example subject co-ordinators have yet to identify the opportunities within the programmes of work for their subject. Further software has to be purchased with which the staff will need to become familiar.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

In order to improve further, the governors, headteacher and staff should:

1. Raise standards in reading and writing by the age of 7 by:

- continuing to implement the useful strategies identified in the literacy action plan;
- providing teachers' with any necessary training to enable them to improve the achievement of pupils in reading and writing;
- raising teachers' expectations of what pupils should be able to do;
- ensuring that pupils are taught how to join letters correctly.

(paragraphs: 21, 22, 23, 24, 25, 26 & 27)

2. Develop existing assessment systems to enable the school to track that pupils' progress is sufficient and to ensure that pupils themselves know what they need to do to improve the quality of their work by.

- producing a whole-school tracking form, which will allow the school to measure that pupils have made sufficient progress in relation to their prior attainment;
- using written marking as a tool for improving the quality of pupils' work;
- developing pupils' self assessment skills by providing pupils with learning targets which indicate clearly what pupils must do improve;
- regularly checking and evaluating pupils' progress and how written marking is used to raise standards.

(paragraphs: 28, 29 & 30)

3. Continue to develop information and communication technology (ICT) provision and extend its use in all National Curriculum subjects by:

- improving teachers' subject knowledge;
- improving information and communication technology resources;
- the ICT co-ordinator working closely with other subject co-ordinators to ensure that ICT is used effectively in each subject;
- checking and evaluating the impact of ICT on learning in each National Curriculum subject.

(paragraphs: 31, 32 & 33)

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	15
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	26

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Number	0	2	7	6	0	0	0
Percentage	0	13	47	40	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 approximately seven percentage points.

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll	Nursery	YR– Y6
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	16	294
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	N/a	21

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	0	11
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	1	89

English as an additional language	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	1

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	12
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	10

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	5.9

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.0

National comparative data	5.6
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National comparative data	0.5
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Both tables give the percentage of half days (sessions) missed through absence for the latest complete reporting year.

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 1 (Year 2)

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2001	27	16	43

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	20	21	25
	Girls	15	15	14
	Total	35	36	39
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	81 (78)	84 (89)	91 (89)
	National	84 (83)	86 (84)	91 (90)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	22	26	25
	Girls	15	15	15
	Total	37	41	40
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	86 (89)	95 (85)	93 (78)
	National	85 (84)	89 (88)	89 (88)

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

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

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2001	13	28	41

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	10	10	12
	Girls	26	21	28
	Total	36	31	40
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	88(83)	76 (80)	98 (89)
	National	75 (75)	71 (72)	87 (85)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	10	11	12
	Girls	27	21	28
	Total	37	32	40
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	90 (58)	78 (51)	98 (69)
	National	72 (70)	74 (72)	82 (79)

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

Ethnic background of pupils

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	0
Black – African heritage	0
Black – other	0
Indian	0
Pakistani	0
Bangladeshi	0
Chinese	1
White	253
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)	14.6
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	20.4
Average class size	26.7

Education support staff: YR – Y6

Total number of education support staff	12
Total aggregate hours worked per week	182.75

Qualified teachers and support staff: nursery

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	0
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	n/a
Total number of education support staff	2
Total aggregate hours worked per week	57.5
Number of pupils per FTE adult	15.5

FTE means full-time equivalent.

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	3.4
Total number of vacant teaching posts (FTE)	0
Number of vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of a term or more (FTE)	2
Number of unfilled vacancies or vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of less than one term (FTE)	0

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	2001-2002
	£
Total income	787229
Total expenditure	762414
Expenditure per pupil	2443
Balance brought forward from previous year	52553
Balance carried forward to next year	77368

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate: 53.5%

Number of questionnaires sent out	310
Number of questionnaires returned	166

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	58	36	5	0	1
My child is making good progress in school.	45	49	3	1	2
Behaviour in the school is good.	37	55	4	1	3
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	34	48	11	2	5
The teaching is good.	52	42	1	1	4
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	37	46	14	1	2
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	61	31	4	1	3
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	54	43	1	0	2
The school works closely with parents.	35	52	8	2	3
The school is well led and managed.	56	39	3	1	1
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	46	45	4	0	5
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	42	47	5	1	8