

# INSPECTION REPORT

## **ST PATRICK'S RC PRIMARY SCHOOL**

Cleator Moor

LEA area: Cumbria

Unique reference number: 132835

Head teacher: Mr G Close

Reporting inspector: E Jackson  
3108

Dates of inspection: 3<sup>rd</sup> – 6<sup>th</sup> February 2003

Inspection number: 249017

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 children:	4 – 11
Gender of children:	Mixed
School address:	Todholes Road Cleator Moor Cumbria
Postcode:	CA25 5DG
Telephone number:	01946 855011
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Appropriate authority:	The Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	Mrs C Grears
Date of previous inspection:	No previous inspection

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members			Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
3108	E Jackson	Registered inspector	Educational inclusion Science Geography Physical education	What sort of school is it? How high are the school's results and pupils' achievements? How well are children taught? How well is the school led and managed?
19335	S Dixon	Lay inspector		Children's attitudes, values and personal development How well does the school care for its children? How well does the school work in partnership with parents?
30651	M Entwistle	Team inspector	Foundation Stage English	
32283	D Goodchild	Team inspector	Mathematics Design and technology History	How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to children?
2615	R Eaton	Team inspector	Art and design Music	
4430	E Parry	Team inspector	Special educational needs Information and communication technology.	

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

### **INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL**

St Patrick's Roman Catholic Primary School opened as a new school in September 2001 from the amalgamation of the linked infant and junior schools, under the leadership of a newly appointed head teacher. It operated on two sites for two terms, until the building work for the combined schools on the junior site was completed. It serves the parish of St Mary's, Cleator, but draws its children from a wide area. It is larger than average for its type, and has 281 children on roll, almost equally boys and girls. However, there are significant imbalances in the number of boys and girls in the reception and Year 3 age groups. Almost all the children are white, and all speak English as a first language. The number of bilingual pupils is well below average nationally, though not for the borough. A slightly above average number of children are eligible for free school meals, and the local area is classed as an area of economic disadvantage and high unemployment. The number of children identified with special educational needs is about average, as is the number of children with statutory statements of their need. These needs range from moderate learning difficulties to severe emotional and behavioural difficulties. Attainment at entry to the reception classes is about average, although it covers a wide range.

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

St. Patrick's provides a sound education for its children. The head teacher and governors have led the amalgamation of the previous infant and junior schools into one school well. The staff and children have adapted successfully to the change, and have already put in place many effective systems and procedures for the organisation and management of the school. However, teaching and learning and behaviour management are not yet consistent across the school. Children make a good start in the reception classes because of the high quality of the teaching and general provision. Teaching and learning are satisfactory, but are generally good for children in reception, Year 2, and Year 6. Standards of attainment by age seven are in line with the national average, and in national tests in 2002 they were well above average compared to those in schools in similar circumstances. By age eleven, standards in mathematics are broadly average, a big improvement on the poor results in the 2002 national tests. Standards in English for the current Year 6 children are well below average, but improving well, and they are below average in science. Progress in children's learning is satisfactory overall, however, and good in some classes, so that standards are close to those expected for children in Years 3 to 5. Children do well in art and design, and use their information and communication technology (ICT) skills well in their learning in other subjects. Overall, the school gives satisfactory value for money.

#### **What the school does well**

- Children achieve well in the reception classes because they are well taught.
- In the majority of classes, the children respond with enthusiasm and positive attitudes to their learning.
- Provision and support are good for children with special educational needs.
- The staff enrich the children's learning by organising visits out of school, and inviting visitors to talk to them.
- The amalgamation of the infant and junior schools has been well managed, and there is a shared commitment amongst staff, governors and parents to improve the new school further.

#### **What could be improved**

- Standards in English by age eleven, particularly in writing skills.
- Teaching in a small number of classes where teaching is weak, and at times behaviour ineffectively managed.
- Children's self-discipline and personal initiative in their learning.
- Children's understanding of Britain as a culturally diverse society.

*The areas for improvement will form the basis of the governors' action plan. Most of them are already in the current School Improvement Plan.*

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

As this is a new school, this is its first inspection.



## STANDARDS

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

Performance in:	compared with			
	all schools			similar schools
	2000	2001	2002	2002
English	N/A	N/A	D	C
Mathematics	N/A	N/A	E	E
Science	N/A	N/A	E	D

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

The table shows that the school's first national test results for eleven year olds were well below average overall in 2002, and below average for schools with a similar level of free school meals. Girls attained higher levels than boys in English, but about the same in mathematics and science, in line with the national pattern. Standards towards the end of Year 6 currently are higher than last year in mathematics and science, although still below average in science, but are lower in English, particularly in writing. Progress in Years 3 to 5 is satisfactory, and sometimes good, and children in these year groups are on track to lift the school's results closer to the national average overall. Those children in Year 6 who need additional help to reach the nationally expected level in English are receiving extra support. This is already raising their levels of attainment. The school missed its targets last year, and this year's targets are very challenging. They should be reached in mathematics, but significant and rapid progress is needed in writing to achieve the English target. Children do well by age eleven in art and design, and use their ICT skills well across the curriculum. At the end of Year 2, children attained above average levels in the 2002 tests in reading, and average levels in writing, mathematics and science. These results were well above those in similar schools in reading and writing, and above them in mathematics. Girls attained higher levels than boys in reading and writing, and about the same in mathematics, about in line with the national pattern. The current Year 2 group is on track to achieve similar levels this year. They also do well in art and design, and in using their ICT skills well in other subjects. Children in Year 2 and Year 6 achieve broadly average levels in other subjects. By the time they are ready to enter Year 1, the current reception group will probably have just exceeded the levels expected of them, and be working in the early stages of the National Curriculum for Year 1. This represents good progress in their learning. Children throughout the school make satisfactory progress in their learning overall. In those classes where the teaching is good, many children make good progress.

## PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Good, and very good in the reception classes. Children are attentive and responsive when the teaching is good, but can be too passive when the teaching is dull.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Satisfactory. Parents report significant improvements in the junior classes. Behaviour management by the staff is caring, but inconsistent from class to class.
Personal development and relationships	Satisfactory. Children have some good opportunities to take responsibility in class, in assemblies, and for fund-raising. However, staff provide too few opportunities for pupils to show initiative or to work independently in lessons.
Attendance	Satisfactory. A number of children miss school for family holidays, which lowers the average.

## TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of children in:	Reception	Years 1 – 2	Years 3 – 6
Quality of teaching	Good	Satisfactory	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.*

Teaching and learning are satisfactory overall. Teaching is best in the reception classes, Year 2 and Year 6. The reception staff develop very good working relationships with the children, helping them to feel secure and comfortable. Learning activities here are varied and interesting so that these young children make good progress. Similarly, in those classes where teaching and learning are good or better, the teachers and support staff plan good lessons that move at pace, and provide engaging and challenging activities that the children enjoy working on. This is often the case in science, art and design, and design and technology. Occasionally, direct teaching is also successful, as in history lessons acted out in Victorian style by the three teachers taking the Years 5 and 6 classes. Where teaching is weak, lessons are often slow, and the children sit for a long time listening to the teacher. Here, children's tasks are monotonous or uninteresting, and the teachers do not control the resultant lack of concentration and unsatisfactory behaviour well. Literacy and numeracy are generally taught satisfactorily, and there has been good progress in the development of children's skills this year in Years 2 and 6, especially in reading and mathematics. However, teachers do not all make the best use of recent training and up-to-date guidance on the teaching of writing. Children make good progress in using their ICT skills in other subjects because the open ICT area is constantly in use. There is good provision for children with special needs, and they generally make good progress towards the targets in their learning plans. There is no formal policy to help staff meet the needs of gifted and talented children, but those recognised as having talent in music and games receive extra help to accelerate their skill development.

## OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Satisfactory, and good in the reception classes. The curriculum is generally broad and balanced, meets statutory requirements, and is enriched by a good range of visits out of school, and visitors to the school.
Provision for children with special educational needs	Good. Teachers plan to meet the needs of individual children and the provision for children with special educational needs is good. All children have full access to the curriculum regardless of needs, gender, background or ethnicity.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	There are no children learning English as an additional language.
Provision for children's personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural, development	Satisfactory. The provision for children's social development is good. Satisfactory provision is made for children's personal, social and health education. This is supported by a whole school programme including the 'Here I am' scheme in which appropriate relationships are addressed. Children have too few opportunities to learn about Britain as a culturally diverse society.
How well the school cares for its children	The school provides a safe and caring environment where all are equally valued. Children are well supported and well known by all staff. Staff are becoming more confident in using assessment to plan teaching and learning to meet children's group and individual needs.

## HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the head teacher and other key staff	Leadership is good; management is sound. The head teacher leads the school well, supported well by other key staff and the governors. Management has been effective in creating one school from two in a short time, so that everyone is committed to the same improvement agenda.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Satisfactory, with good features. The governors are well led by a knowledgeable chair, and they have a good understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses. They ensure that all statutory requirements are fulfilled. Governors have begun to compare the school's results with others in similar circumstances, and to challenge the staff to improve standards.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Satisfactory. The head teacher and staff have put in place a monitoring and evaluation plan that has already identified key areas for development.
The strategic use of resources	Satisfactory, with good features. Staff are generally deployed effectively, and funds are directed to their intended targets and priority areas. The ICT resources are used well, as are the learning resources in the reception classes.

There are sufficient teaching and support staff to meet the children's needs, and there are good levels of resources to support most subjects. The accommodation is bright, well-displayed and cared for, and classrooms are adequate for their purpose. The ICT area is good, and used well. However, the school hall is very small, there is no usable playing field, and there are hardly any spaces to develop other activities, such as in art and design, or design and technology.

## 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>• That their children like school, and are helped to become mature and responsible;</li> <li>• That the teaching is good, and children are expected to work hard and achieve their best;</li> <li>• That the school is well led and managed, and they feel comfortable in approaching the staff with questions or problems.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Behaviour;</li> <li>• The information they receive, how closely the school works with them, and the consistency of homework;</li> <li>• The range of activities outside lessons.</li> </ul>

In general, inspection findings confirm the parents' views. The inspection finds that the school is well led, and soundly managed, and that teaching is satisfactory, although it could improve in some classes. Behaviour is inconsistently managed by the staff, but is generally satisfactory, and there is little evidence of bullying. The information parents receive is satisfactory, although progress reports could be improved. There is a good range of activities to enrich children's learning, including after school, and through residential and other outside visits.

## **PART B: COMMENTARY**

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

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

1. As the school only opened from the amalgamation of the previous infant and junior schools in September 2001, there is only one set of results from national tests in 2002 available. This means that trends cannot be discerned, nor can comparative judgements be made about the adequacy of the standards achieved, as there is no history of the respective year groups' entry level attainment, and subsequent progress. Attainment at entry for the current reception group covers the normal range, but is broadly average. However, this cannot be taken as an indicator of the entry level attainment of the current Year 2 and Year 6 children, as no data is available.
2. By the time they are ready to enter Year 1, the current reception group will probably have just exceeded the levels expected of them in the Early Learning Goals, and be working in the early stages of the National Curriculum for Year 1. This represents good progress in their learning. Children throughout the school currently make satisfactory progress in their learning overall. In those classes where the teaching is good, many children make good progress. Standards towards the end of Year 6 are higher now than last year in mathematics and science, although still below average in science, but are lower in English, particularly in writing. Many of the Year 6 children respond well to the good teaching they receive, and are beginning to accelerate in their learning. Progress in Years 3 to 5 is satisfactory, and sometimes good, and children in these year groups are on track to lift the school's results closer to the national average overall.
3. At the end of Year 2, children attained above average levels in the 2002 tests in reading, and average levels in writing, mathematics and science. These results were well above those in similar schools in reading and writing, and above them in mathematics. Girls attained higher levels than boys in reading and writing, and about the same in mathematics, about in line with the national pattern. The current Year 2 group is on track to achieve similar levels this year. The school is optimistic about the numbers likely to achieve the higher level, and inspection evidence supports this view. This is because the high quality of teaching the children receive is helping them to make good progress.
4. The school's first national test results for eleven year olds were below average in English and well below average in mathematics and science in 2002, and below average compared to schools in similar circumstances, based on eligibility for free school meals. Girls attained higher levels than boys in English, but about the same in mathematics and science, in line with the national pattern. The school was disappointed with these results, particularly those in mathematics. As part of the school's action plan, intensive support from the local authority numeracy advisory staff has been used very effectively in mathematics to raise standards for the current Year 6 group. This is also improving the quality of teaching and learning, and raising standards throughout the junior classes. The local authority literacy advisory team has also been invited in, and many of the staff have used this training to improve their English teaching. However, standards in the juniors have been slower to rise in literacy, and this is in part because not all the staff have made full use of the up-to-date guidance available to plan their work.
5. The school missed its targets in English and mathematics at age eleven last year, and this year's targets are very challenging. They should be reached in mathematics, but significant and rapid progress is needed in writing to achieve the English target. Those children in Year 6 who need additional help to reach the nationally expected level in English are receiving extra support. Many of these children are responding well to the good teaching they receive, and their progress is accelerating, but there are significant gaps in their understanding of the requirements to achieve what is expected.

6. Children do well by ages seven and eleven in art and design, and use their ICT skills well across the curriculum. In all the other subjects, they achieve broadly average levels. There is a weakness in the full use of literacy in other subjects for older children, but this is better for children in the infants and younger juniors. Numeracy skills are used satisfactorily in such subjects as design and technology, ICT, history and geography. Good use is often made of data-handling skills in science to produce graphical displays of test results, and children across the school discuss their work in science well in pairs and groups. Often, children do not have sufficient opportunities to develop their speaking skills fully, as some teachers talk for too long in lessons.

### **Children's attitudes, values and personal development**

7. Children's attitudes, values and personal development are satisfactory. They contribute effectively to the generally pleasant and enthusiastic environment in which children learn.
8. Children in the reception year have consistently very good attitudes to learning and take great interest and delight in all that they do. Children across the school have good attitudes to their work. They enjoy coming to school and approach their lessons and activities with enthusiasm. For the most part they listen well to their teachers and each other and respond well. In some lessons where teachers talk for too long or children do not know what to do, they become restless and lose interest. However, most children work hard and maintain concentration throughout the day. When presented with challenging and stimulating questions they offer thoughtful replies. When given the opportunity, children have satisfactory independent learning skills. They can access information from the Internet with confidence and use books to aid research. In the school as a whole, children do not have sufficient opportunities to develop independence or take responsibility for their own learning. However, in science lessons there are good opportunities for children to use their initiative and discuss ideas. For example, in a Year 4 lesson children worked very well together in groups to investigate the properties of electrical circuits. Children are proud of their school and this is complemented with attractive displays of work in the classrooms. The sharing and celebration of good work vary from class to class, and the head teacher is trying to promote consistency by encouraging more effective use of praise and rewards for good work and behaviour.
9. Children's behaviour is satisfactory overall. The majority of children behave well in lessons and at lunchtimes. However, there are occasions when some children lack self-discipline. Children respond well to praise when it is offered, but misbehaviour slows the pace of some lessons and this in turn leads to inattention in others. Behaviour in general has recently improved significantly, according to the children and their parents. Children feel that although some fighting occurs occasionally, there are very few incidents of bullying. They feel that any conflict or unpleasantness is dealt with quickly and effectively. There have been two exclusions in the last academic year. These have been accompanied by appropriate procedures and children have been well supported on their return to school.
10. The relationships amongst all members of the school community are satisfactory. Children with special educational needs are given good personal support that helps them to become more confident about learning and to be more positive about themselves as people. Adults in school treat children with care and respect. Whilst most children return this level of respect to their teachers well, a small number do not and occasionally show disrespect and defiance towards adults. Most children work and play together amicably and older children adopt a caring approach to those younger than themselves. A small number of children do not take sufficient responsibility for their own actions and show a lack of regard for the feelings and safety of their fellows.
11. Children's personal development is also satisfactory. Children are provided with opportunities to take responsibility through class duties, in assembly and in supporting the work of charities. They take these responsibilities seriously and carry them out well. In the school community as a whole, and in many lessons, however, there are not enough opportunities for children to voice their opinions, share their feelings and develop as independent citizens. Children have expressed a wish for more time to be spent

on these areas of school life. However, they learn to consider the needs of others, and work together in the spirit of the school's Catholic mission. They learn to respect other beliefs, but this area is underdeveloped.

12. Attendance rates are in line with the national average and are satisfactory, although the rate of unauthorised absence is a little higher than average. Absences are often due to illness but a significant number of families take holidays in term time, sometimes for extended periods. According to the school from its own tracking procedures, this has a detrimental effect on the learning of these children. Children are eager to come to school and they usually arrive on time. Registration time is brief and efficient and leads promptly into the first lesson.

## **HOW WELL ARE CHILDREN TAUGHT?**

13. Teaching and learning are satisfactory overall, and good or very good in two out of five lessons seen. However, a small number of lessons were unsatisfactory or poor, mainly for junior children. Teaching and learning are best in the reception classes, and for children in Years 2 and 6. Where teaching and learning are good or better:

- teachers manage the pupils well, and have a fair and consistent working relationship with them;
- lessons move at a good pace, and teachers are confident in their subject knowledge;
- there is a good balance between teacher talk and children's activity, so that the children are active in their own learning, as in most ICT and science lessons;
- the staff expect the children to work hard and make progress, and the children generally respond well to their high expectations, as in most reception, Year 2 and Year 6 lessons;
- children with special needs are well supported, and planned activities are challenging at the right level for different groups of children.

14. However, where teaching and learning are less successful:

- teachers' behaviour management is weak or inconsistent, and children are allowed to misbehave without check;
- lessons are uninteresting, or move at such a slow pace that some children, particularly boys, become distracted;
- teachers talk to the children for too long, and children are passive, or switched off;
- teachers' subject knowledge is weak, or poorly used, as in some writing and physical education lessons.

15. The reception staff develop very good working relationships with the children, helping them to feel secure and comfortable. They build well on this to provide a range of good learning opportunities that help the children make good progress in all the recommended learning areas. The teachers plan together well, and have recently adapted their planning following advice from the local authority advisers. This ensures that, whilst plans are imaginatively centred on a theme, each area of learning in the recommended curriculum is covered. The staff have also recently agreed to keep the doors open between the classes during afternoon sessions, in order to share the experience of the teaching assistant. This is already helping to raise all teaching to a consistently good level. Good teaching of letters and sounds helps many children to hear and say correctly sounds such as 'sh' in different positions in the word. They use this tactic well in reading unfamiliar texts, and they like attempting new words independently.

16. Similarly, in those classes where teaching and learning are good or better, the teachers and support staff plan good lessons that move at pace, and provide interesting and challenging activities that the children enjoy working on. This is often the case in science, art and design, and design and technology. In a Year 4 science lesson, for example, the children listened carefully as the teacher quickly but clearly explained the lesson focus. This built well on previous work in electricity about insulators and conductors, using

recent national guidance. The children had good opportunities to work independently of the teacher in pairs and groups, and they collaborated very well in deciding their hypotheses, and how to approach the task. The lesson was successful because the teacher blended direct teaching, children's experimental and practical work, and good subject knowledge linked to her very good understanding of the children.

17. Occasionally, direct teaching is also successful, as in history lessons acted out in Victorian style by the three teachers taking the Years 5 and 6 classes. In another lesson, a teacher from the local high school (with Engineering College status) led a design session for Year 6 children using a computer-aided design program. They had previously worked out face designs using ICT for the electronic creature they were making, and these were traced and shaped in durable plastic by the teacher demonstrating the program. The children were very excited when their designs were realised, and strongly motivated to continue with the project in future sessions.
18. Where teaching is weak, lessons are often slow, and the children sit for a long time listening to the teacher, or the teacher fails to engage the children's attention sufficiently in the planned activities. Here, children's tasks are often monotonous or uninteresting, and the teachers do not control the resultant lack of concentration and unsatisfactory behaviour well. During a Year 3 ICT lesson, a number of children misbehaved unseen by the teacher, and the lesson was largely wasted for most children as they made little or no progress in their ICT development. Similarly, in a Year 1 physical education lesson, the teacher had not made her expectations of their behaviour and self-control clear. This led to inappropriate carrying of apparatus, too much noise, and unsatisfactory progress in the children's physical development.
19. Literacy and numeracy are generally taught satisfactorily, and there has been good progress in the development of children's skills this year in Years 2 and 6, especially in reading and mathematics. However, some teachers do not make the best use of recent training and up-to-date guidance on the teaching of writing. Children make good progress in using their ICT skills in other subjects because the open ICT area is constantly in use. Children also have good opportunities to develop their art and design skills, with the use of sketchbooks being particularly well developed.
20. Children with special educational needs receive good support when they work individually with classroom assistants. Calm and encouraging relationships create the ethos for children to talk about their personal concerns as well as to work on individual learning programmes. This concern helps children to talk about their problems so that they work better and make good progress. There is also much good support from classroom assistants in lessons. They work with individuals and groups effectively to help children to understand and concentrate on their work. Where teachers match work carefully to ability as in mathematics, or provide good learning opportunities for all children as in science, then children with special educational needs make good progress. There is no formal policy to help staff meet the needs of gifted and talented children, but those recognised as having talent in music and games receive extra help to accelerate their skill development.

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

21. There is a satisfactory, broad and balanced curriculum for children in Years 1 to 6 and a good range of learning experiences in line with national guidance for children in the reception classes. Subjects are enriched through a wide range of additional opportunities, many of which take place outside normal lesson time. Teachers and support staff have a shared commitment to improving children's learning, and ensure that all the school's opportunities are available to all the children equitably.
22. All subjects have a co-ordinator, and policies and schemes of work provide guidance on what should be taught. The staff recognise the need to monitor and evaluate teaching and learning and have a sense of where their subject requires development, expressed in separate subject action plans. The school has fully implemented the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies and sufficient time is allocated to them. The

style and presentation of teacher's lesson planning in literacy and numeracy vary across the school. This makes it difficult for subject leaders to monitor efficiently what has been taught. Overall, teachers plan to meet the needs of individual children satisfactorily, and the provision for children with special educational needs is good. All children have full access to the curriculum regardless of needs, gender, background or ethnicity. Good use is made of teaching assistants throughout the school to support children's learning. Parental support is also evident in, for example, the teaching of mathematics in Year 2 and design and technology in Year 1. The ICT suite is used well throughout the day, providing opportunity to further develop children's knowledge and skills across a range of subjects. Additional support is provided in literacy and numeracy through 'Springboard' and 'Booster' classes. Visiting music teachers teach children with musical talent to play the flute, violin or keyboard.

23. The school has a good range of activities which extend and enrich the curriculum. These also have a significant impact on children's learning, attitudes and personal development. Extra-curricular activities include: line dancing, drama, mathematics, story, art and craft, and rugby. Children are so interested in these activities that they are over-subscribed and it is necessary to rotate the programme to ensure that children have equal access. Some of these clubs have been set up in response to perceived needs. For example, the 'Maths club' in the ICT suite targets children who would benefit from further help. The mobile library also visits after school, and parents willingly queue with their young children to choose new books. Further enrichment is provided through visits and visitors. Years 1, 2, 5 and 6 visit a museum in Carlisle, as part of their study of the Victorians. Visits to the theatre, visiting storytellers and authors, book fairs and 'Shakespeare For Kids' enrich the children's literacy experiences. Residential visits to Fell Side and Hawes End further enrich the older children's learning and develop their social skills. Further funding is being sought through 'Action Mark' to improve resources in sports, and there is a good programme of sport linked to local clubs and the high school. There is no specific policy for the education of gifted and talented children, but the head teacher has issued guidance notes to the staff. Those children who show talent in music or sport are encouraged to take extra lessons, or offered support at local sports clubs.
24. Good links with the community have been established. Children visit the council hall where various workshops are set up developing their awareness of personal responsibility within the community. They visit British Nuclear Fuels and participate in engineering workshops. Good links have been established with the linked high school. Children participate in science, mathematics and design and technology projects when visiting the school or when delivered in this school by visiting teachers. Measures are taken to ensure a smooth transfer from primary to secondary school, particularly for vulnerable children and those with special educational needs.
25. Provision is satisfactory for children's personal, social and health education. This is supported by a whole school programme including the 'Here I am' scheme in which the importance of positive relationships is addressed. A priority is given to social development with the establishment of 'Buddy benches' in the playground, for example. The timetabling of circle time provides opportunity for children to develop their social skills and explore relationships. This time also fosters respect for others and helps build children's self-esteem. Older children have an opportunity to exercise some responsibility in the setting up of computers and play equipment at the start of the day, although such opportunities are few. The school nurse and a visiting health authority representative support drugs and health education. Appropriate emphasis is placed on establishing good relationships and caring for each other. Children exercise some personal responsibility through their involvement in the setting up of school and class rules. The curriculum co-ordinator is seeking to further develop personal responsibility by the establishment of a school council.
26. Children who have statements of educational need have well-written individual plans that ensure that particular learning programmes are planned to respond to the requirements of the statements. These are followed carefully so that children are making good progress in relation to their special needs. There is a sound balance between learning that delivers the individual plans and work and support within class lessons.



27. The provision for children's spiritual, moral, and cultural development is satisfactory. The provision for children's social development is good.
28. Spiritual development is satisfactory and is promoted through assemblies, religious education and lessons across the curriculum. Statutory requirements regarding acts of collective worship are met in full. In assemblies children are offered opportunities to reflect and pray and to consider their own thoughts and feelings and those of others. In lessons and circle times children do experience wonder and delight and do have opportunities to explore their inner thoughts. For example, in a Year 6 ICT lesson, children were inspired and fascinated by the transformation of designs into mechanical processes.
29. The provision for children's moral development is satisfactory. There is a school code of conduct and children clearly know right from wrong. This area is supported through assemblies and circle times but the quality and effectiveness of these sessions are inconsistent. The inconsistent application of the school's current behaviour policy and system does not provide children with sufficiently clear messages or guidance. The school has yet to develop continuity and structure to the provision for personal and social education and citizenship.
30. The provision for children's social development is good and is well promoted in the school community and in many lessons. The good extra-curricular provision and involvement with other schools provide children with opportunities to socialise, to collaborate and to develop team skills. In lessons children are offered opportunities to work in groups and pairs. For example, in a Year 3/4 dance lesson children worked in groups well to develop a sequence of different methods of travel. The use of short discussions with a neighbour in lessons is often stimulating and promotes their social skills well. Social development is promoted well in many lessons but especially well in reception class activities.
31. The provision for children's cultural development is satisfactory overall, but has an important weakness in the provision for multicultural understanding. Children learn about their own local traditions and are encouraged to appreciate different aspects of culture from both the past and present. Visits to a wide variety of places enrich children's lives and widen horizons. Art lessons develop their appreciation of different styles and materials and promote a good awareness of European art. Music lessons and school activities also develop children's knowledge of different types of music. However, children do not learn enough about the music and art from different world cultures, and do not have sufficient opportunities to learn about the diverse society of Britain and Europe. This is reflected in the limited provision for children to learn about other faiths and cultures.

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

32. The school provides a safe and caring environment where all are equally valued. Children are well supported and well known by all. They are happy at school and feel that any problems they may have are quickly dealt with, including by the midday supervisors, who they feel offer them kindness and understanding.
33. The school has satisfactory arrangements for the care and protection of its children. There is a comprehensive health and safety policy. Daily practice is generally good but the current arrangements regarding children's footwear in school are unsatisfactory. This is because some children in the juniors do not bring indoor shoes to change into, and have to walk round school in their socks. The procedures for child protection are satisfactory. All adults in school are suitably trained and aware, and are provided with good written guidance.
34. The procedures for monitoring and supporting children's personal development and the provision for personal guidance are satisfactory. Whilst there are no formal recording systems in place the staff know all the children very well and are sensitive to their individual needs. However, whilst children are encouraged to do their best they are not yet sufficiently well involved in their own learning. They do not

have enough opportunities to evaluate their own work or be involved in the setting of their own academic and personal targets for improvement.

35. Until recently the school was not doing as much as it could to assess what its children had learned, or to check their progress across each year in the school. The picture is now much more satisfactory and is set to improve further as agreed systems are implemented.
36. There are a number of reasons for this rapid recent improvement in procedures and practice.
- The assessment leader has a firm grip on what is already in place and what needs to be done, and takes a firm whole-school perspective.
  - She is giving an excellent lead in ensuring that assessment practices are integral to the whole question of raising the standard of teaching and learning in the school; she is well informed and up to date on what is happening nationally.
  - The school has extended its range of assessments and tests and is beginning to look beneath the recorded results to seek explanation for any low results or slowing down of progress.
  - Computerised systems have been introduced that will collate and display assessment data in a digestible and uniform format.
37. The school now has in place an assessment timetable that includes annual testing in English and mathematics using nationally approved assessment tasks. It is already using the information to predict the National Curriculum level to be reached by each child in the national testing for eleven year olds. As yet, this has not been developed into a system for tracking and monitoring progress towards these levels, but active plans are in place to effect this. Teachers now recognise that it is the responsibility of all of them to push the children forward in order to improve overall standards by the end of Year 6. For example, they are already looking at the differences between chronological age and spelling ages as shown in test results and asking questions about any pockets of apparent underachievement.
38. The school is becoming more confident in using assessment to make a difference to the quality of the curriculum and to teaching and learning in the individual classrooms. The English and mathematics co-ordinators carefully analyse the tests results of Year 6 children to establish any areas of weakness. The resulting actions to improve writing are beginning to lift standards. The teachers together have also recently compared the marking of samples of writing and children's attainment from every class. This is helping to detect any underachievement and to gain a better picture of the required speed of learning across the school as a whole. A missing element to date is the use of this information to develop a series of curriculum targets for each year group, that if met should smooth out identified weaknesses. The assessment leader has immediate plans to work with the English leader to introduce a system of individual targets for each child, so that they too can see what they need to do to achieve more highly. She is keen that the teachers see the link between child self-evaluation through target setting, effective teacher feedback through marking, and raising child self-esteem. In science, weaknesses noted nationally have led to a greater focus for Years 3 and 4 children on specific knowledge and understanding in their work in electricity. This is a good example of staff responding effectively to evaluative information.
39. As yet, the daily, weekly, and monthly ongoing assessment that helps teachers to plan more precisely and teach better is variable in quality. There is a range of other tests used by teachers to check what the children know and can do in English, mathematics and science, and class records kept of attainment in other subjects. However, at present, the results are not being recorded formally in every class or in a similar format across the school so they are of limited use in planning the next work for the children.

40. Teachers in the reception classes quickly identify potential learning problems and the support that is given effectively separates children who may need long-term help from those who will respond quickly to a little support. Following amalgamation, the school has worked hard to ensure that one system for identifying children with special educational needs is in place. This is effective, as are the procedures for ongoing assessment and maintaining records for identified children.
41. The procedures for monitoring and promoting good behaviour are satisfactory. The school has recognised the need to develop a new behaviour policy and system. The present system is not applied consistently and does not offer sufficient support for teachers and children. The celebration of success is not given a consistently high profile in many lessons or in the school as a whole. Incidents of unacceptable behaviour are nonetheless monitored and recorded efficiently, and children giving cause for concern are well supported.
42. The procedures for monitoring and improving attendance are satisfactory. The school meets the statutory requirements with regard to the publishing of attendance figures and in the registration of children each day. Registers are generally completed correctly but some extended holidays are incorrectly authorised. The school brochure does not provide a sufficiently clear message to parents about the procedures surrounding taking holidays in term time or the effects of this on the achievements of their child.

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

43. The partnership with parents is satisfactory. Parents are supportive and appreciative of the many recent changes that have occurred. The parents view the school as satisfactory, but with some good features. They feel that the school is approachable and are pleased with the happiness of their children at school. They also feel that the school does much to encourage responsibility in their children. Some parents are concerned about the amount of homework provided and the information about how their child is getting on. Concern has also been raised about some aspects of behaviour and the way the school works with them. Some also feel that the range of activities provided outside lessons is insufficient. The inspection findings in general support the parents' positive views and agree with some of their concerns. The range of activities provided outside lessons is good, however. There are a good number and range of extra-curricular clubs and a wealth of visits and visitors to enrich children's lives. The provision for homework is satisfactory as are the range and quality of information provided for parents. There are some occasions when behaviour is less good and less well managed and this is recognised by the school.
44. The school's links with parents are satisfactory. Parents are welcomed into school and have some good opportunities to gain insight into their children's learning, for example, with class assemblies, and many join their children in early morning shared activities. Parents are invited to school events and performances but the size of the school hall offers some restrictions to this. The school is keen to develop its partnership with parents and recognises parents' wishes for a better understanding and involvement in their children's education. For example, there are active plans to develop curriculum workshops for parents. Parents of children who have special educational needs are encouraged to take part in discussions and reviews about their children. There are sound procedures for taking account of their views and concerns.
45. The impact of parents' involvement on the work of the school is good. A considerable number of parents are able to offer help in the classrooms with a wide variety of tasks and this has a positive effect on children's learning. Parents support early morning shared activities very well, indicating a strong interest in what their children are doing. The Parent Teacher Association provides strong support for the school. It holds a variety of fund-raising and social events for both children and parents. These are very well supported and funds raised provide the school with welcome additional resources.
46. The quality of the information provided for parents is satisfactory. The school brochure provides clear and useful information and both it and the governors' annual report meet statutory requirements. Regular

newsletters keep parents well informed about the daily life of the school and information is provided about coming topics. However, not enough information is provided about the work that children do in English, mathematics and science to allow parents to judge their child's progress for themselves or to offer the best support at home. Reporting on children's progress is made at consultation events and through a written report. The quality of these varies: some offer clear information about a child's successes and difficulties and give good guidance for improvement, but some do not. None provides parents with clear information about the level that a child is working at or how this relates to the National Curriculum levels or national expectations.

47. The contribution that parents make to their children's learning at home and at school is satisfactory. Most parents are supportive of homework but the provision is inconsistent across the school. Parents do not receive sufficient information about day-to-day requirements and are not involved in indicating their ongoing support and involvement in their children's independent studies.

## HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

48. Leadership is good. The head teacher leads the school well. He has brought the staffs and children from the previous schools together as one very effectively, so that it already operates as a co-operative unit. Many parents have welcomed the new school, and have responded strongly to the head teacher and staff's efforts to involve them fully in its work. A few still regret the amalgamation, but the head is determined to convince them of the effectiveness of the new school in offering them a continuous primary education for their children. He has also set out his vision for the school's growth and development. It is ambitious, and he has made a good start in guiding the school towards its realisation. He is already well respected by the whole school community for his dedication, experience, determination and good humour. The school improvement plan sets out the priorities for development to achieve this shared vision, and covers almost all the areas identified in the inspection. However, whilst there is an implicit message about the raising of standards of attainment, the plan does not spell out clearly enough as yet how the measures to be taken will achieve this. This is a crucial area in view of the low results in the first national tests for the school's Year 6 children in 2002, and should be a strongly stated element of future improvement plans.
49. The head has been supported well by other key staff in ensuring that the first terms of the school's existence have been profitable. The deputy and assistant heads respectively lead the junior and infant and reception teams, and oversee major areas of the school's work, including literacy and numeracy, and the development of the curriculum and assessment of pupils' achievements. The whole staff have co-operated well in a number of initiatives and policy-making meetings, led by the senior management team, which has brought them close together as a close-knit working group. This is an important feature for the further development of the school, and was evident during the inspection as staff supported one another and the children well. This was particularly the case on the first inspection day, when heavy snow caused the abandonment of the normal curriculum as many children left after 11.30am. By mid-afternoon, the staff had organised the remaining children into different groups to pursue a range of interesting activities until they were collected. This was a good test of the administrative arrangements for the school which was passed very well as parents were promptly informed, phones answered, children checked, and efficient records kept.
50. Management is sound, and has been effective in creating one school from two in a short time, so that everyone is committed to the same improvement agenda. The head teacher and staff have put in place a monitoring and evaluation plan that has already identified key areas for development. In their various roles as subject leaders, the staff have all drawn up initial policies for the new school and action plans that they are working through. This is all satisfactory, and in some cases good. However, the full implementation of the plans has depended on a delayed agreement of the school's budget with the local authority, following the closing of the previous schools' accounts. This has finally been resolved, and funds necessary for subject leaders to fulfil their roles are now available. So far, funds have been directed efficiently to their designated purposes, agreed by the governing body. However, the agreed budget is projected to achieve a zero balance, which leaves the school precariously placed to see through some of its desired developments.
51. The areas for improvement identified in the inspection almost all figure in the current school improvement plan. Some of the improvements planned in behaviour management and teaching and learning have been hampered by the lack of an agreed budget, which caused the governors to resist the head teacher's requests for funds to release key staff. The head teacher had also signalled in school documents that more needed to be done to develop children's understanding of the cultural diversity of British society. This augurs well for the continued improvement planning for the school, if standards and quality are clearly included as defining success criteria.
52. Since amalgamation, the school has made good progress in establishing its policy and procedures for identifying and supporting children with special educational needs. Good systems are in place. Individual

learning programmes of good quality are written for all children who need them. Sufficient time is given to the co-ordinator to undertake the necessary work but no additional time has been provided, for example, for her to monitor how effectively plans are working. Resources are satisfactory although the co-ordinator has identified the need to replace older or incomplete materials. At present, there is no governor with a responsibility to oversee special educational needs.

53. The governors are well led by a knowledgeable chair, and they have a good understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses. The chair has a good working relationship with the head teacher, and is as determined as he that the school should work towards excellence. Due to the efforts of a recently appointed governor, three vacancies on the governing body have recently been filled. The governors ensure that all statutory requirements are fulfilled. They have begun to compare the outcomes of the school's work with others in similar circumstances, and to challenge the staff to improve standards.
54. There are sufficient teaching and support staff to meet the children's needs, and there are good levels of resources to support most subjects. The accommodation is bright, well displayed and cared for, and classrooms are adequate for their purpose. The ICT area is good, and used well. However, the school hall is very small, and there are hardly any spaces to develop other activities, such as in art and design, or design and technology. There is a large area of land adjacent to the school with a football field marked but it is reportedly out of use for much of the year as it is poorly drained.
55. The school is now well placed, with a settled and unified staff, good leadership, an agreed budget and a full governing body, to drive forward the improvements needed to raise standards and continue to improve the overall quality of education.

## WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

56. In order to raise standards and improve the overall quality of education offered as set out in the school improvement plan, the head teacher, governors and staff should:

1. Concentrate teachers', support staff's and children's efforts on ensuring that all those who are so capable attain expected or above average levels in English and science by age eleven. In particular, staff should raise expectations of what can be achieved in writing by making clear to children and their parents:
  - a. what the National Curriculum attainment targets for English specify to attain Level 4 and Level 5;
  - b. how standards in writing will improve in every year group to achieve at least the national average by age eleven;
  - c. what the individual targets are for each child in detail and for each age group overall, year on year;
  - d. what the expected improvement is in particular lessons towards each child's target, and insist upon this being met.

Staff should review and monitor their planning for writing to ensure that it reflects their recent training and the most up-to-date local and national guidance on how to teach writing in English lessons. They should also continue to develop the work begun in improving writing in other subjects such as history and geography, in order to increase the range and complexity of children's written work, including the use of ICT. They should also compare what is achieved in this school with the quality of work in other local schools that have already attained at least the national average regularly.

(Paragraphs 2, 4, 5, 77, 78, 81, 83, 98)

2. In those classes where there has been unsatisfactory teaching and learning, teachers, support staff and managers should evaluate children's learning experiences by:
  - a. assessing the quality of the activities planned for them in lessons by teachers;
  - b. monitoring the children's direct involvement in these activities, and gaining some view as to the balance between active and passive learning;
  - c. monitoring and evaluating the children's progress in their work;

Staff should use the information gained to plan interesting, challenging learning based on the children's current knowledge and understanding so that they are helped to respond to the high expectations of them outlined in the school's mission statement.

(Paragraphs 14, 18, 38, 39, 72, 84, 93, 114, 115, 126)

3. Linked to the previous issue, provide whole staff training in how to encourage children to become increasingly self-disciplined. This should then be included in whole-school guidelines covering behaviour and attitudes to learning agreed by staff, governors, parents and the children themselves. Ensure that everyone in the school adheres to the agreed guidelines, and that these include increasing opportunities for children to become independent, with realistic, valuable opportunities for them to use their own initiative in deciding how they will approach some aspects of their work. Current work in science could provide some good ideas here.

(Paragraphs 8, 9, 29, 34, 41, 101, 115, 118, 122, 125, 126)

4. Improve the curriculum by weaving through it good opportunities for children to learn about Britain as a culturally diverse society, with appropriate staff training where necessary. These could include:
  - a. nominating a member of staff who is committed to developing this area of the school's work;
  - b. ensuring that all opportunities in the curriculum are fully utilised to develop children's understanding, particularly through religious education, personal, social and health education and citizenship, literacy, art and design, music, history, and geography;

- c. choosing the resources of the school, including the book stock, to support work in this area;
- d. highlighting positive multicultural images to reinforce children's understanding;
- e. fostering links with other schools that reflect this diversity, possibly with e-mail partners;
- f. choosing a contrasting locality in Britain to compare with the children's own that also reflects cultural diversity;
- g. arranging visits out of school and visitors to school that widen children's experiences of cultural diversity to aid their understanding, for example in combined school residential trips.

(Paragraphs 31, 104, 116, 123)



## PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

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

Number of lessons observed

60

Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and children

21

### Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Number	0	14	13	29	3	1	0
Percentage	0	23	22	48	5	2	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 percentage point.

### Information about the school's children

<b>Children on the school's roll</b>	YR – Y6
Number of children on the school's roll (FTE for part-time children)	281
Number of full-time children known to be eligible for free school meals	64
<b>Special educational needs</b>	YR – Y6
Number of children with statements of special educational needs	3
Number of children on the school's special educational needs register	53
<b>English as an additional language</b>	No of children
Number of children with English as an additional language	0
<b>Child mobility in the last school year</b>	No of children
Children who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	5
Children who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	4

### Attendance

#### Authorised absence

	%
School data	4.7
National comparative data	5.4

#### Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.7
National comparative data	0.5

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

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

Number of registered children in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2002	24	13	37

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of children at NC level 2 and above	Boys	20	23	23
	Girls	12	12	12
	Total	32	35	35
Percentage of children at NC level 2 or above	School	86 (N/A)	95 (N/A)	95 (N/A)
	National	84 (84)	86 (86)	90 (91)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of children at NC level 2 and above	Boys	22	23	23
	Girls	12	12	12
	Total	34	35	35
Percentage of children at NC level 2 or above	School	92 (N/A)	95 (N/A)	95 (N/A)
	National	85 (85)	89 (89)	89 (89)

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 children in final year of Key Stage 2 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2002	23	28	51

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of children at NC level 4 and above	Boys	14	12	17
	Girls	23	16	22
	Total	37	28	39
Percentage of children at NC level 4 or above	School	73 (N/A)	55 (N/A)	76 (N/A)
	National	75 (75)	73 (71)	86 (87)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of children at NC level 4 and above	Boys	14	17	18
	Girls	24	23	25
	Total	38	40	43
Percentage of children at NC level 4 or above	School	74 (N/A)	78 (N/A)	84 (N/A)
	National	73 (72)	74 (74)	82 (82)

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

***Ethnic background of children******Exclusions in the last school year***

Categories used in the Annual School Census	No of children on roll	Number of fixed period exclusions	Number of permanent exclusions
White – British	279	2	0
White – Irish	0	0	0
White – any other White background	0	0	0
Mixed – White and Black Caribbean	1	0	0
Mixed – White and Black African	0	0	0
Mixed – White and Asian	0	0	0
Mixed – any other mixed background	1	0	0
Asian or Asian British - Indian	0	0	0
Asian or Asian British - Pakistani	0	0	0
Asian or Asian British – Bangladeshi	0	0	0
Asian or Asian British – any other Asian background	0	0	0
Black or Black British – Caribbean	0	0	0
Black or Black British – African	0	0	0
Black or Black British – any other Black background	0	0	0
Chinese	0	0	0
Any other ethnic group	0	0	0
No ethnic group recorded	0	0	0

*The table refers to children of compulsory school age only. It gives the number of exclusions, which may be different from the number of children excluded.*

### ***Teachers and classes***

Qualified teachers and classes: YR – Y6

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	12.1
Number of children per qualified teacher	23.2
Average class size	25.5

Education support staff: YR – Y6

Total number of education support staff	9
Total aggregate hours worked per week	77

*FTE means full-time equivalent*

### ***Financial information***

Financial year	2002/3
	£
Total income	657008
Total expenditure	652000
Expenditure per child	2320
Balance brought forward from previous year	nil
Balance carried forward to next year	5008

### ***Recruitment of teachers***

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	0.5
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	0.5

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	281
Number of questionnaires returned	130

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	53	45	2	0	0
My child is making good progress in school.	43	45	8	2	2
Behaviour in the school is good.	34	46	11	3	6
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	25	49	19	5	2
The teaching is good.	45	47	4	0	4
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	38	42	16	2	2
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	54	42	2	0	2
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	50	42	4	2	2
The school works closely with parents.	34	50	12	2	2
The school is well led and managed.	42	50	5	0	4
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	44	48	2	2	4
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	25	24	25	4	12

## **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**

57. Children join one of the two parallel reception classes in September each year and have a full year there before transfer to Year 1. Most children have attended one of the local nurseries before entry. Their attainment on entry covers the normal range, but is broadly average. They make good progress towards the nationally recommended targets (termed Early Learning Goals) for children of this age. By the time they enter Year 1 the current group of children will have exceeded these targets, although their attainment covers a wide range.
58. The teachers and the classroom assistant work together well as a team. They have managed the move to the new building very well, making the most of the opportunity to strengthen links with the rest of the school. They have learned quickly to use space and resources in much smaller teaching areas than they were used to in the previous infant building in order to retain a suitable curriculum for these young children. They have ensured that there is room for non-seated activities such as play with water, sand and constructional apparatus, and have bought additional items for tabletop imaginative exploration. The outdoor play area has been attractively marked out and learning in the outdoors is a key part of the curriculum.
59. Teaching is good overall, and particularly effective in the class where there is more incisive questioning and very close monitoring of children's involvement and progress. The teachers plan together effectively, and have recently adapted their planning, basing it on up-to-date local education authority guidance. This ensures that, whilst plans are imaginatively centred on a theme, each area of learning in the recommended curriculum is covered. A recent move to keep the adjoining doors open during afternoon sessions, in order to share the experience of the teaching assistant, is helping to raise all teaching to a consistently good level.
60. The teachers know the children well, and make good use of the initial autumn assessment to plan their teaching of reading, writing and number according to the levels achieved. Children with special educational needs are also given additional support at an early stage, and make good progress, sometimes catching up with the majority of the group. Activities in the other areas of learning tend to be set up for all the children to experience, irrespective of their starting point. This means that in the class where the questioning and teacher-child talk are less purposeful, the teaching sometimes lacks challenge. As the system of recording progress against the recommended 'stepping stones' towards the Early Learning Goals is not sufficiently formalised, teachers do not have a secure enough base from which to plan and track progress across both classes.

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

61. The children make very good progress because the staff's expectations are high and the teaching is strong in both classes. The teachers create a calm, ordered and welcoming environment throughout the day. After a term, the children are very confident about coming in to school at the start of the morning and happily follow established routines. They choose what to do for themselves and, in no time at all, join a group and happily share and learn. They concentrate well. There is no flitting from one activity to the next. For example, two girls persisted in finding a way to push butterfly clips through paper, and one boy patiently repeated his attempts to return to the start of a computer program before seeking help from an adult. Children look after themselves exceptionally well. During a busy afternoon's activities, children collected outdoor coats when it was their chance to work outside, fastened these themselves and returned them tidily: this is good for their age. They notice when other children are at all unsure or disturbed and try to show them what to do.

62. Relationships in the two classes are very good, and the basis of the very high standards of behaviour. For example, children walked to the hall perfectly, even those some distance from an adult eye. They listen well and never attempt to call out answers out of turn. They understand that it is important to behave considerately in a shared, co-operative setting because the teachers constantly model this in their behaviour and expect the best of the children. Their understanding that other people have cultures and beliefs that are different from their own is limited and this is an area for the teachers to develop further.

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

63. The children start school with an average level of competence in speaking and listening. Because of the good teaching, they learn the beginnings of reading and writing well, and the majority are already achieving the Early Learning Goals in this area.
64. The children are good at talking to each other as they take part in the various activities and often explain to each other what to do. Two girls helped each other to spell the words for a greeting card and a group of children talked together, confidently explaining to an adult how to use a hole-punch and a paper fastener. They enjoy listening to stories and rhymes. Events such as preparation for an assembly for parents are used well by the teachers to develop speaking aloud to an audience.
65. By the mid-point of the reception year, most children already recognise a range of common words by sight and read a simple sentence. Many are beyond this level, and read a simple, unknown text accurately. They all recognised the repetition in the narrative *The Bear Hunt*, and spotted key words and phrases within this text. Accurate, regular teaching of letters and sounds within a simplified literacy hour leads to many children moving beyond hearing and naming initial and end sounds, to hearing and articulating correctly sounds such as 'sh' in different positions in the word. They use this strategy well in reading unfamiliar words and when they are writing, and they enjoy knowing that they have a way of attempting new words independently. They are encouraged to read by the attractive collection of storybooks and simple texts that they take home each evening. In one class, the teacher makes very productive use of the start to the day to check how well the children can recognise the key words they have taken home, and to hear them read. Reading diaries are a model of effective home-school involvement.
66. By the end of the year, many could have gone beyond the expected level in writing. Those of above average ability can already write a simple sentence unaided, such as, "Teddy is having his breakfast." Those of average ability are well on the way to achieving this. The teachers are very clear about the sequence to be followed in teaching writing, and introduce the children to the right steps at just the right time. Both teachers monitor what the children can do and plan for the next steps, and the teacher's comments and feedback are particularly strong in the children's books in the class where the fastest progress is made. The staff do not keep sufficient simple records of children's achievements, so that they are not always fully aware of when to extend children further in their learning.

### **Mathematical development**

67. The children start the reception year with average mathematical awareness. They make good progress, and are set to leave the reception classes above average in counting and calculating. They do so well because of regular focused teaching as a class that is carefully followed up by separating the children into three levels of ability for further work.
68. The teaching in mathematical development is sound, and good during the focused sessions and follow-up activities. The children are set practical tasks such as connecting together linking cubes, or playing number games, that help them to properly understand how to count and compute. Outside these set periods, the teachers do not always make the most of every opportunity to use number. Although each

classroom has a hanging number line, the rooms are not rich in interactive displays, posters and other uses of number to prompt the children's interest. However, the regular play with construction sets helps them to see different shapes, how they fit together and how to make patterns with them.



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

69. In this area of learning, the children consistently start school at above average levels and they make satisfactory progress. By the end of the reception year most have met the recommended goals. This is largely because themes are used effectively to provide linked experiences that interest the children and develop their knowledge. In particular, the teachers go to a lot of trouble to involve members of the community in the children's learning and present this as integral to the current theme, as when 'Teddy Patrick' visited with a surprise for all!
70. The children learn how to use the computer mouse and how to open programs. They can click on icons to move the program on, but are not sure how to close down. The tape-recorder was set up in both units for children to listen to stories, but none was seen to use it. The digital camera was in use, but held and directed mostly by the teacher.
71. The children learn about the wider world in and about school through making use of the school's site and travelling slightly further afield. The staff place high value on learning in the outdoors and plan opportunities for this to happen as a regular feature of each topic or theme. Through this the children are able to find out about the environment and talk about the features that they like and dislike.
72. Children are good at constructing things, especially with commercial kits, although the boys' skills are better than the girls because they tend to dominate the activities. Both boys and girls are adept at fastening materials together and in using some simple tools carefully with good control. For example, they fastened the arms and legs onto a 'teddy' mobile using paper fasteners and patiently folded, turned and folded again to create a concertina strip. However, because the teachers plan and direct the activity, the children do not have sufficient opportunities to design for themselves.

## **Physical development**

73. The children make better progress in using a range of tools and materials than in larger physical activities. For example, they use a variety of rollers and cutters to fit play dough into small bun tins, trim round the edges neatly and find how to ease the dough up without breaking the pattern.
74. Teaching in the outdoor area is satisfactory, and improving as staff become more familiar with its possibilities. The adults are beginning to intervene more in order to improve the children's skill level, but this is not yet systematic enough. Children use the wheeled toys in the outdoor play area confidently. They pedal, steer and park the vehicles properly. They crawl under, through and over a plastic tunnel, but this is not used as well as it could be. Teachers could do more to tempt children into using the more neglected apparatus. The lack of climbing equipment restricts the children's ability to climb and balance in a more adventurous way. Bats and balls are available, but the children's striking skills are underdeveloped. Teaching is good in the more structured hall sessions so that they learn to control and co-ordinate their movements. They also use the space well.

## **Creative development**

75. The children's creative development is broadly average on starting school, although it is below this for a significant number of them. The teaching of skills and techniques is good and the children make good progress. For example, the children worked with the teacher in pairs to mix powder paint, prepare a colour wash and then, at another point, paint a tree in the style of Van Gogh. This was a sustained experience of good artistic endeavour. Although the teachers present a firm structure and direction to the activities, the materials and resources are sufficiently varied to capture the children's imagination so that they express themselves creatively. For example, a wide collection of twigs, pebbles and feathers stimulated several groups of children to produce 'outdoor art' in the style of Andy Goldsworthy that was entirely their own.

76. The children's imaginative play is limited, however. They enjoyed playing in the hospital role-play area, for example, but needed adult encouragement to choose a role and select the appropriate clothing and instruments. They quickly fell out of role when the teacher left. The children like singing, and occasionally play satisfactorily on the instruments on display.

## ENGLISH

77. Standards in English are average in Year 2, but well below average currently in Year 6. This is largely because of a weakness in writing across the school. Children read well by the age of seven and score highly in national testing. Very effective teaching in Year 2 ensures that their writing is as good as that in most schools. However, poor standards of writing in the tests for eleven year olds meant that the school missed its target for 2002 by a long way. The writing of older children is gradually improving, and the current Year 6 children are making good progress, including those children with special educational needs. However, there is a lot of ground for children to make up. The quality of their writing in English and across the curriculum is still poor, with boys attaining lower levels than girls. The target for 2003 is a very challenging one, but Booster classes soon to start are planned to give those children identified for extra help the incentive they need.

78. The school has taken steps to improve the teaching of writing, but it is taking time for them to influence standards at the end of the school. There are a number of reasons for this.

- Children try harder and learn faster in some classes than in others. The good teaching of the earliest stages of reading and writing in the reception year gives these children a fine start that is built on steadily and then more quickly in Year 2. In the junior years, not enough is expected of the children in Year 3 and progress also slows for some children during Year 5.
- The school lacks appropriate systems to ensure that every child is taught effectively in order to make every lesson count. The level of planning and instruction is too variable across the classes.
- Teachers do not all make the best use of recent training and up-to-date national guidance on the teaching of writing. Not enough is done to ensure that advice is put into practice. Some teachers rely too much on published materials to plan tasks for children. This restricts children's opportunities to write for real purposes.
- There is no tracking system in place at the moment to help teachers to plan for each child to succeed to the maximum: one is about to be put in place, however.
- Teachers do not insist often enough upon the very highest standards of presentation so that work is often untidy and careless, and children are not sufficiently reminded that only their best work will do.

79. Children generally listen well in lessons, even when the teacher's introduction is over-long. When teachers plan for children to discuss and work in pairs, as in an excellent spelling activity in Year 2, they talk to each other courteously and help each other to learn. These Year 2 children stayed in role as they acted out Little Red Riding Hood in a shadow puppet theatre, and loved every second. As children move up the school, such motivating opportunities are fewer. Yet when offered, children make the most of them. During a very good 'balanced discussion' about smoking, Year 6 children surprised their teacher by how quickly they learned to ask each other questions, relentlessly pursuing their ideas and responding to others. Adventurous teaching like this, linking reading, writing and speaking, helped reluctant writers, particularly boys, to see the value of having previously organised their ideas on paper and on screen. This does not happen often enough.

80. Children learn to read quickly and well in the infant classes. They are taught how to tackle unfamiliar words by breaking them down into the separate sounds and blending them together, and use this strategy confidently. This gives them confidence with print so that by Year 2 many are well launched as independent readers. They develop a delightful enthusiasm for books because the teachers promote this tirelessly, through parent-child reading sessions before school and at home, classroom displays that entice

the children, and regular visits to the local library. Junior teachers succeed in keeping a good proportion of children 'hooked on books' although it is mostly girls whose eyes sparkle as they name well-known children's authors such as Anne Fine and Jacqueline Wilson. However, they do not find much to inspire and extend their range and quality of reading in the class or school library. The co-ordinator is keen to remedy this but at present it helps to explain why most children have difficulty with the advanced skills of interpreting what they read, and understanding the impact of linguistic style. Group reading sessions led by the staff do not achieve these higher levels because teachers are not structuring the sessions sufficiently. They lift the children's enthusiasm for reading but do not present enough challenge and analysis. As a result, children in Year 6 are mostly competent, functional readers but could be better with more focused support and higher expectations.

81. Weaknesses in writing have a significant impact on standards overall as it is holding back the children's progress in other subjects, for instance in describing their findings in science. The school knows about this, and recent training workshops for the teachers mean that children are being introduced to different forms of writing, such as writing reports, instructions or letters. However, although generally improving, the quality varies from class to class, because the co-ordinator has not been able to make sure that advice and strategies are put into practice. Weak spelling, careless punctuation and untidy handwriting characterise much of the writing of older children. Teachers do not insist enough upon them taking care with spelling and handwriting during lessons, or when teachers mark their class work.
82. Children's writing for seven year olds is better for their age than it is for eleven year olds for theirs. At present, children in Year 2 achieve a satisfactory level and are making such good progress that they may well achieve better than this by the end of the year. The teacher is showing them how to include speech in stories as in a re-write of *Cinderella*, and the more competent use speech marks more or less correctly. She points out how authors use 'interesting words' so that their writing about the Three Little Pigs contains verbs such as 'squealed', 'announced' and 'cried' in place of the usual 'said'. Children who find learning to read and write more difficult make very good progress in writing simple, clear sentences in literacy lessons.
83. Junior children are slow to develop a more elaborate style of writing. This is because the teachers do not show the children how to apply the grammar that they learn in literacy lessons to their own writing. For example, the teacher in a mixed Year 5/6 class stimulated the children to list reasons for and against school uniform but did not develop this by showing them how to craft an opening sentence and use suitable connecting phrases. However, when children are given a firm structure and really interesting tasks, they respond well and achieve much better. In the parallel Year 5 class, children compose reports about the life of Anne Frank or Grace Darling that are close to average standard. Year 6 children are striving to catch up with the levels they should already have achieved, but as yet their writing is poorly structured, and has weakly punctuated sentences and untidy presentation. Intensive teaching is leading to improvement, however. The majority of the children can use the grammar and vocabulary needed for 'discussion writing' but they find difficulty in linking sentences together effectively. Their developing skills in ICT are having a good impact on their written work in general, however.
84. Teaching is good overall, with much of the good teaching in Years 2 and 6. Teachers are confident with the structure of the literacy hour and recognise how to use the framework of the literacy strategy guidance weekly to plan reading activities to link with writing. They provide sufficient opportunities for writing during literacy lessons, and avoid using too many worksheets. Lower attaining children are set suitable tasks and are given good support by teaching assistants. The missing element in many lessons is in providing variety and a high enough level of challenge and in using techniques and strategies from recent guidance on how to teach children the grammar of writing in interesting, stimulating ways. Some teachers rely too much on the recently adopted published scheme to structure the tasks for the children and there is not enough writing done for a real purpose such as note-taking to plan for an event. There is a tendency for teachers to talk too long, to answer their own questions and to do the thinking for the

children. Children need to undertake more independent writing for their own purposes in order to get to grips with language structures and use these for themselves.

85. Children are given extensive feedback that supports and encourages them but that does not always show them exactly how to improve. Because the school has no system of personalised targets for literacy in place, children are not clear enough about how they might move on to the next level. In the best lessons, children are constantly reminded how to do things well, such as ‘stretching’ words to see the spelling pattern, but too often start their tasks without any reminders about keeping up standards of handwriting, spelling and punctuation. This is partly because lesson introductions last too long, and the children are in a rush to get the work started.
86. The subject leader has good subject knowledge and a clear vision of what she hopes to achieve. She has not had the opportunity to monitor the teaching regularly, so she is less clear about the teaching and learning experiences of all of the children and of the variable standards achieved in different classes. She needs to be able to ensure that the various initiatives have the anticipated impact.

## **MATHEMATICS**

87. Standards in mathematics are average by the end of Years 2 and 6. This represents good progress for the school since the low results in the 2002 National Curriculum tests. There are several contributory reasons why children are achieving well in mathematics:
- the school has successfully implemented the National Numeracy Strategy;
  - the quality of teaching in Years 2 and 6 is very good;
  - there is effective use of teaching assistants in supporting children with special educational needs;
  - analysis of the previous year’s test papers identified number in problem solving as an area for development and this has been a focus during the current academic year;
  - scrutiny of children’s work by the subject co-ordinator identified areas for improvement for each year group;
  - ICT is used regularly to support children’s learning in lesson time and also at other times of the day;
  - analysis of children’s needs identified those to benefit from Springboard and Booster classes;
  - in Year 2, parents work with the children on mathematical problems before the start of the school day.
88. These improvements have not been in place long enough for children to attain even higher standards at the end of Year 6.
89. Year 2 children use their knowledge of counting in tens to confidently complete patterns of numbers on a grid. Higher attaining and average Year 2 children recognise strategies that can be used in calculations. They ‘round up and down’ numbers to the nearest hundred, in adding nine they add ten and subtract one, and confidently ‘halve’ and ‘double’ numbers. In a Year 2 lesson, children used their understanding of the value of digits within a given number to accurately place numbers on a number line. Higher attaining children explore addition and subtraction facts up to a thousand. All children show their calculations when working on one-step or two-step number problems. Progress is clear, building well on work in Year 1.
90. Higher attaining children in Year 1 learn to add and subtract numbers up to a hundred. They recognise that three digits can be added together, and solve simple problems involving money. In one lesson, for example, they counted in twos and fives, recognising simple number sequences. They identify shapes such as circle, triangle and rectangle. Lower ability and less confident children are able to add and subtract to 20 using counting beads. They confidently use the strategies to ‘count on’ and ‘count back’ as observed in a mathematics lesson using computers. The children in Years 1 and 2 generally attain levels that augur well for the further improvement of subject standards.

91. By the end of Year 6 higher attaining and average children have a well-developed knowledge and understanding of number and readily apply these in a range of activities. They plot and interpret data on graphs; they compare fractions, decimals and percentages, regularly practise using appropriate number operations in problem solving and use negative numbers. In a very good Year 6 lesson, children plotted positive and negative co-ordinates of the corners of rotated shapes on a grid with four quadrants. This represents significant improvement on the poor standards attained in 2002.
92. The progress made in the junior classes builds well on children's prior knowledge and understanding, and clearly shows the effect of an improved focus on standards, particularly for the younger pupils. In Year 3 higher attaining and average children add and subtract accurately to 100. They are confident in doubling and halving numbers, and can see the relationship to the two times table. In addition and subtraction they use their understanding of the value of digits within two and three-figure numbers to calculate the answer. In a Year 3 lesson on shape and space, children named triangles, rectangles, squares, pentagons and hexagons. The higher attaining children identified characteristics of different shapes. Children plotted and followed compass directions on a grid and higher attaining children described movements in terms of right angles. Year 4 children explored the relationship between multiplication and division. Higher attaining children use this relationship to check answers, and use a good range of strategies in calculations. In Year 5 the use of problem solving strategies is evident with calculations shown. However, as observed in a Year 5/6 lesson on fractions of a given number, these are not sufficiently detailed to illustrate that the child has clearly understood the process.
93. The quality of teaching is sound overall with some examples of very good teaching in Years 2 and 6. Teachers demonstrate good subject knowledge and the implementation of the National Numeracy Strategy is satisfactory. They use a reasonable range of planning resources in preparing lessons. At times, activities and vocabulary in lesson plans from commercial publications are not modified sufficiently to take account of the needs of the children. For example, in a Year 1 lesson on addition of money, the resources used were too small and did not effectively support the teaching. In a Year 3 lesson on using compass points to plot direction, vocabulary and activities were not effectively modified to meet the needs of the children. Thus, they were not motivated and some lost interest. Children's understanding of the value of numbers was developed well in a very good Year 2 lesson. Clear explanation and demonstration, coupled with effective use of white boards, engaged, challenged and motivated the children. Consequently children acquired knowledge and skills and made good progress. In a Year 4 lesson on area, teaching was focused and well organised, with clear demonstration and activities appropriately matched to children's abilities. However, the impact of the teaching on learning was not as effective as it might have been. This was because the teacher did not always insist on the children listening carefully enough.
94. In a Year 5/6 lesson on fractions, the teacher had good subject knowledge and used skilled questioning strategies. Children acquired and consolidated their knowledge and understanding of fractions and the relationship to division. Questioning challenged the children to clarify and explain their method of calculating fractions of a given number. In a very good Year 6 lesson on rotation of shapes the lesson was delivered with enthusiasm, pace and vigour. The lesson had clear explanations, good demonstration of method and effective use of visual aids. As a consequence, children remained interested, behaved well and had a good attitude to their work. Evidence from previously completed work in books indicates that marking is not used consistently to provide children with a clear understanding of how they might improve their work. Children's presentation of work is less than satisfactory in some classes because some teachers' expectations are too low, and they do not insist on higher standards. Homework is appropriately used to set the children further work arising from lessons.
95. Teaching and support staff work together as effective teams. Teaching assistants know exactly what is required of them and this enables them to give good support in teaching and learning. Subsequently, the school is able to meet the needs of those children with special educational needs. Support staff have received useful training on Springboard and Booster classes aimed at raising attainment. ICT is used effectively in the teaching of different strands of mathematics.

96. The subject co-ordinator has been in post since the amalgamation of the school, and is strongly committed to improving teaching and learning. She has a clear understanding of what needs to be done in order to continue to raise standards. The head teacher and the subject co-ordinator monitor the quality of teaching and learning through lesson observations, scrutiny of planning and children's work. The previous year's national test results have also been analysed and areas for development are incorporated into the subject action plan. The subject co-ordinator recognises the need to review and update the plan and link success criteria to raising standards. Resources for the subject are adequate and are accessible to staff and children in all classes.

## **SCIENCE**

97. Standards are rising in the subject across the school because:

- teachers prepare good practical and investigatory activities for the children;
- the children respond well to the teachers' expectations that they will co-operate with others in developing tests and recording results, and are interested in and concentrate on their work;
- almost all the children behave well, giving the staff the opportunity to help, prompt and challenge them whilst they work;
- the subject is well organised by an interested and knowledgeable co-ordinator who offers good advice and support to her colleagues.

98. Although standards are still below average for Year 6 children currently, they make good progress in their learning because the staff plan their lessons carefully, ensuring that they understand the topic being taught. This gives them the confidence to allow the children to experiment to seek answers to the questions set. This was particularly effective in a mixed Year 5/6 lesson, where children worked in pairs and groups to explore how salt and sugar dissolve in water. The children had time to prepare how they would tackle their investigation, and to choose the resources and materials they would need. In this lesson, the teacher gave the children responsibility within safe guidelines to conduct fair tests with one variable, and to decide how to record their results. Almost all of them responded very well to this, and collaborated successfully in developing, conducting and evaluating their investigations. This work was at average levels for the children in Year 6, and above average levels for Year 5. Sometimes, the children find explaining their thinking or results difficult because their writing skills are low.

99. Children in Year 2 have covered a good range of work since September, including the use of ICT, making good progress and achieving average levels for their age, with a few at higher levels. They sort materials by property well, and in working with magnets a high attaining child showed his understanding of his own learning by writing, "I have learned that only some metals can be magnetic." In a good lesson for a mixed Year 1/2 class, the children used a good range of magnets to complete a series of tests. One Year 2 girl had found that the magnet would attract a paper clip through paper, and predicted accurately that it would also work through a few sheets of paper, referring to the 'pull' of the magnet being strong. She felt that a thick plastic case would not allow the force through, but could explain how this had happened in a simple way when the clip was still attracted. This is at a good level for her age.

100. The children really enjoy their work in the subject, and are full of curiosity about the world around them, and how to test and find about such things as the effects of heat, or which materials conduct electricity. Boys and girls are equally involved, and achieve similar levels. Those children with special needs also take a full part, often supported by the staff. For example, a girl with a statement of her needs was helped by her support assistant to conduct a fair test with her friend. In another lesson, a boy with behavioural difficulties was skilfully brought back into the lesson by the teacher without confrontation, and showed by swift demonstration how well he had learned to make a switched circuit.

101. The quality of teaching is good and occasionally very good. The staff have taken to heart the idea that children are scientists in these lessons, and give them good opportunities to explore and find out from the

youngest age. In mixed age classes, the work is planned on a two-year cycle, and the staff ensure that the older children are not disadvantaged, by preparing open-ended investigations, and challenging the older children to extend their thinking. For example, in marking a Year 2 child's book, the teacher wrote, "Why was this not a fair test?" The child carefully explained why in response. Similarly, in a Year 3/4 lesson, the teacher extended the summary session by asking why electricity did not flow through the air between a battery pole and the wire, pushing the children until a child suggested that air might be an insulator in this case. Teachers also provide a good range of high quality resources to support the children's work. Occasionally, however, they do not allow the children sufficient responsibility for choosing their own resources, or deciding for themselves how to conduct a test, so that they do not make as much progress as they could in developing their investigational skills.

102. The co-ordinator manages the subject well, and is deepening her own skills by attendance on relevant courses. She is a subject specialist, and is helpful to other staff in their planning. She has not yet had the opportunity to monitor the children's work sufficiently, but there are active plans to enable this now that the budget position is clarified. There are good resources available, which are used well, and the subject has a good profile in the school, which promises to help raise standards over time.

## **ART AND DESIGN**

103. Standards of attainment in art are above average for children at the end of Year 2 and Year 6. Children's work on display around the building and in their sketchbooks shows an above average grasp of many art skills and an appreciation of line, shape, colour and texture. They make good progress, acquiring new ideas and skills throughout their time in school. The self-portraits in one child's book, for example, showed a considerable advance between his Year 1 portrait and that done a year later. The good standards and progress stem from a good curriculum and good teaching.
104. Art enjoys a high profile across the school. The amount and quality of work on display and in sketchbooks show this. The building is enhanced by colourful displays in classrooms and in the 'public' areas. Teachers present children's work well. The cylinders in Year 2, for example, provide a lively display, and a striking collage hangs on the Year 6 classroom wall. Much of the work on display is of a high standard. It shows children confidently using a variety of media. The subject makes a good contribution overall to children's spiritual and cultural development, although children do not have enough access to non-European art. There is little representation of the work of famous artists around the building.
105. Paper weaving by children in the reception classes shows care and a good level of skill. The children have graded blue colours well for their 'winter' pictures. Year 2 children have developed this same idea and used computers to generate good work in the style of Mondrian. Children in Year 1 have made good puppets, showing above average skill for the age group. Children in the Year 3/4 class have used ICT to produce arresting patterns, but the examples they worked on during the inspection were not as interesting. Their work on portraying relationships shows a good grasp of how shape and angle can determine a mood or feeling. Many of the still life pictures in Years 5 and 6 are good. They show a mature sense of shape and light and considerable skill in painting. Children's pencil sketching shows above average skill in many books and real flair in a few. Discussion with children confirms what the work suggests, that they enjoy working in art and find it satisfying and rewarding.
106. Teaching is good. Teachers have clearly interested children in art and developed their skills well. They attend to detail and this is evident in the care and skill children use in their work. Children in Year 3 and 4 had a clear idea of what they were doing in their lesson and what the final outcome would be. Teachers prepare lessons well and the sketchbooks show how progression has been built into the work across the school.
107. Art is well led and managed although procedures for monitoring the subject need further development, as does the system for assessment. The co-ordinator has a good view of what every class does through

displays round the school and through discussion with colleagues. Some teachers assess against the criteria at the end of each unit of work. The co-ordinator intends that every child will take a sketchbook through the school. This should then provide a main source of information about what children have done and how well they have succeeded in their work.

## **DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY**

108. Standards are broadly average towards the end of Year 2 and Year 6. Children of all abilities, including those with special educational needs, are achieving well in their current work.
109. By the end of Year 2, children experience a satisfactory range of activities and develop a reasonable range of skills. They carry out extensive work on making various types of puppets. In the process they manipulate different types of materials and explore and become familiar with their characteristics through folding, bending, shaping and cutting. They join materials together in different ways. For example, they made skeletons and constructed the joints with paper fasteners. However, there is little evidence that the children have followed the recommended design process. Year 6 children talk enthusiastically about their work. They describe how they made shelters in geography work and temples in their work on ancient Greece. They are particularly enthusiastic in describing how they make and design robots in a Bug Project organised by the local secondary school. They had a good understanding of the design process, illustrated in their design folders.
110. Teaching is satisfactory overall. In a Year 1 lesson, children achieved well because they were led through the design stage of the process of making glove puppets. They were then able to draw a design and label the various parts of the puppet. The teacher discussed the appropriateness of how to join different materials. This helped to develop children's understanding of the nature of the materials and joining methods. A teaching assistant and a group of parent helpers were fully involved in helping the children. They worked patiently with groups developing their sewing skills. Children were responsive, relationships were good and a good working atmosphere was created. In Years 3 to 6, children construct storybooks with moving parts and also shelters. Evidence of the design process was limited to an evaluation of the effectiveness of different kinds of joints in the study on shelters. However, work with the secondary school in Year 6 is creating an enthusiasm for design technology and an understanding of the design process.
111. The subject co-ordinator has been in post since the amalgamation of the schools. She has an action plan in place which recognises the need to audit teacher skills and identify training needs. Plans are in place to check on teachers' planning and she is building up a portfolio of children's work. She has correctly identified the need to develop further the design and evaluation elements of design technology.

## **GEOGRAPHY and HISTORY**

112. Standards by the end of Years 2 and Years 6 are broadly average in both subjects. There are no significant differences between the attainment of boys and girls. All children, including those with special educational needs, make sound progress over time in subject knowledge and skills. Lessons were observed in geography in the infants, but the focus was on history in the juniors. However, the geography scheme and teachers' planning show that the subject is adequately covered over the year.
113. By the end of Year 2 children are beginning to understand the passage of time through the study of houses and homes and how they have changed over time. They also handle and compare historical artefacts such as flat irons and clocks, and discuss their purpose. In geography, they demonstrate good understanding of far and near in distance, suggesting Manchester as far away, but Devon being further. They also offer very distant places such as Afghanistan and Australia. Children from Year 3 to Year 6 develop a sound understanding of periods and cultures such as those of the ancient Greeks, linking this work with geography, and the Tudors and the Victorians. They develop their sense of time in a more



formal context by studying famous people and their lifestyles, such as King Henry VIII. Children make associations between the past and present in terms of objects used and what people did then and what we do now. In Years 5 and 6 children study the Victorians and some tasks encourage them to reflect on their own experiences and compare them with the lifestyles of children of that period. A discussion with Year 6 children indicated they had a good sense of time, identifying the ancient Greeks as living over 2000 years ago and placing the Victorians in the 1800s. They said that they enjoyed history and could remember and describe their visit to Tullie House during their work on Victorians.

114. Teaching is satisfactory, with occasional examples of very good teaching in both subjects, but also unsatisfactory teaching when children were not sufficiently motivated. In a very good Year 2 history lesson, children used a stimulating computer program to place objects in the rooms of a Victorian house. Children were then drawn together to discuss differences and similarities between then and now. Similarly, in a very good geography lesson, the teacher used concentric circles to develop the children's understanding of far and near. This was a very effective technique, as the children could then associate the places they suggested with the descriptors 'near', 'far' and 'very far' away using the circles. Year 1 children have been following Barnaby Bear on travels round the world. They were thrilled with a present sent from Florida by Mickey Mouse, and this stimulated a good discussion about the places visited so far. The teacher took this lesson rather slowly, however, and some children began to lose interest before the present was revealed.
115. A class of Years 3 and 4 children studied a day in the life of King Henry VIII. This was a very good lesson because it was carefully structured and provided the children with both the knowledge and skills which enabled them to write a diary extract. Links with literacy skills were made clear to the children. The teacher asked, "How will we write our diary?" The children knew it was to be written in the first person. Children's attitude and enthusiasm reflected the teacher's. In Years 5 and 6, teachers role-played Victorian teachers with gusto and appropriate severity. Through this method, the use of historical objects, and focused discussion, children gained an insight into how things used to be compared to now. These active lessons were generally well received by the children, but in another lesson on the same topic, the teacher did not have sufficient resources or subject knowledge to promote the children's skills of historical enquiry, so that they became restless, and made insufficient progress.
116. There are satisfactory policies in place, with appropriate guidance for staff on what the children should learn and when. The co-ordinator of both subjects has been in post since the amalgamation of the schools. As she works in reception, she recognises the need to familiarise herself with the work of the juniors, and has begun to address this issue by examination of children's work and teachers' planning. The subjects are adequately resourced, and the co-ordinator is in process of auditing how they support the study units. Insufficient emphasis is placed currently on how the subjects can be instrumental in developing children's wider understanding of cultural diversity in Britain and the rest of the world.

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

117. The standards that children reach are currently in line with national expectations by age seven and eleven, but children reach higher standards in presenting written work than they do in other aspects such as handling data. Children are making good progress. This is because:
  - the school is very well resourced for ICT;
  - the central ICT suite is used effectively throughout the day by children and by staff;
  - there is a good plan for teaching ICT skills and for children to use the skills in other subjects;
  - teachers are developing their own skills and are well supported by a knowledgeable co-ordinator.
118. By the age of seven, children competently open programs and begin their work, and most can save it at the end of the lesson. They show good knowledge of how to use the computer to make their writing interesting, for example, by importing pictures. By the age of eleven, children use a more sophisticated

range of presentation skills, being able to access information from sources such as the Internet, import pictures and change the style of print and the layout of the page to make it more eye-catching. They know how to animate pictures and can put in hyperlinks. Lower attaining children type in more slowly but in many respects attainment in this aspect of ICT is fairly even. Differences appear in their use of English rather than the ICT skills. Higher attaining Year 6 children were confident in talking about what they do in ICT. They know how to enter data and create different types of graphs. They understand that it is possible to read and draw conclusions from graphs and databases but were not sure how to ask more complex questions. Similarly, children understand the basic principles of a spreadsheet but not how to use short cuts such as a formula. The work of children in earlier year groups indicates that standards should rise as children come through to Year 6 having had a regular programme of work and consistent use of computers.

119. Most of the observations during the inspection were related to children using ICT to support learning in other subjects rather than to the teaching of ICT skills. In this respect, the computer suite is used well and teaching is sound, providing incidental guidance rather than direct ICT teaching. In the best teaching, as in a Year 6 lesson, teachers use specialist vocabulary naturally to demonstrate how a particular program works. Teachers keep a close eye on what is happening and are quick to spot if there is a problem or if a child has loaded the wrong program. Mostly, children are enthusiastic about ICT, work hard in lessons and show a good degree of independence. They take a pride in their work and are happy to show what they have done earlier. Their interest and application are clearly related to the teachers' expectations. When these are high, children work quietly and with concentration. On the one occasion that children's behaviour was poor and too many of them achieved little in the lesson, it was a direct result of the teacher's ineffective control and management of the children.
120. The co-ordinator gives the staff a good lead and supports them well through advice and by dealing with minor technical problems quickly. She has begun to compile a portfolio of children's work, some of which has useful notes to help with assessment. The portfolio and work on displays show that teachers implement the good long-term plan for ICT. Children experience all the strands of the curriculum and their work is carefully balanced between acquiring ICT skills and using these skills. The computer club has been thoughtfully established to give priority to those children who do not have computers at home and also need more time to help them with their mathematics. It makes a good contribution to the learning and progress of these children.

## MUSIC

121. Standards of attainment are about average for children in Year 2 and Year 6. Although the volume of singing in assembly was small for such a large number of children, it was well in pitch and most children, including older boys, showed some enthusiasm. Children in the reception classes also sang tunefully and others of the same age showed at least average aural skills as they identified instruments played out of their sight. They know the names of these classroom percussion instruments and understand how to play them. Year 2 children showed a good grasp of short and long, and high and low, sounds by listening carefully. They also understand that sounds can be written down so that other people can read them. Year 6 showed a fair sense of pulse, one drummer keeping a steady underlying pulse very well. Others have a less secure grasp of simple rhythms and some found the African rhythms used in the lesson difficult. The lesson showed rhythm and pulse developing well from a modest base for Year 6 children. The video they watched showed work of very high quality led by a visiting teacher to the junior school some time ago.
122. Teaching varies but is satisfactory overall. None of the lessons seen was less than satisfactory and one was very good. Some teachers have good skills themselves in music, others have not. One accompanied the hymn assembly very competently and one of the reception teachers sang accurately to lead the children. Teachers organise lessons well, and children in another reception class wasted no time in their brief music session by singing as they prepared for lunch. The Year 6 lesson progressed smoothly

because instruments were to hand and the pattern well established. Teachers generally manage children well. This means that children can concentrate and learn. This good working relationship helped another teacher less confident with the musical content to keep the lesson moving, and the children interested and learning.

123. Music is satisfactorily managed. There is no formal system of assessment, and monitoring is at an early and informal stage. A satisfactory curriculum is in place but children need more opportunity to compose their own music and use their ideas to write music down. There is no record of children's work in their new school since the amalgamation. Peripatetic teachers teach flute, violin and keyboard, but children have insufficient opportunities to use their skills in class lessons. A choir formed for special events such as the First Communion makes a good link with the parents and wider parish community.
124. The school has a good collection of class percussion instruments but lacks appropriately organised storage. There are few instruments representing the wide range of musical traditions in Britain and the wider world. The contribution music makes to multicultural and social education in the school is limited.

## PHYSICAL EDUCATION

125. The subject has not been a focus for development since the school opened, but has a regular place in the timetable. Standards are about average by ages seven and eleven in gymnastics, dance and games. Children attend the swimming baths in Years 5 and 6, and most of them attain the nationally expected level. There are also opportunities for outdoor and adventurous activity for Year 4 children on a short residential trip. Some children are directed to sports clubs to improve their skills if they show talent, and currently a few boys practise with the town cricket and rugby squads. Links with these clubs also provide after-school coaching in the school open to both boys and girls. The co-ordinator also organises competitive team games in football and cross-country running.
126. The children are keen to take part in physical activities, and show a real sense of enjoyment in the hall. However, this occasionally becomes too boisterous when the teacher has not made her expectations clear, or lacks appropriate control. In most lessons, however, children behave satisfactorily, and when the teaching is very good, they respond very well.
127. The quality of teaching and learning is generally satisfactory, occasionally very good, and occasionally unsatisfactory. Most of the staff give the children clear guidance about how they should behave during gymnastics or dance activities in the hall. They have effective control, and ensure that the children work hard in a calm atmosphere. However, Year 1 children did not respond well to the teacher because she did not make her expectations clear before the lesson began, and did not teach the children simple, safe routines for such things as moving apparatus. Years 3 and 4 children, however, followed the teacher's clear instructions very well during a gymnastics lesson. They worked well to practise different ways of travelling and balancing, then combined these movements into a sequence. They showed good agility and co-ordination for their age, and a small group of girls who attend an out-of-school gymnastics club showed high level skills.
128. The co-ordinator is keen to develop the subject further, and has plans to introduce a good range of activities, including using the services of a development officer based in the local secondary school. Through this, there are funds available to free the co-ordinator from class teaching in order to monitor, evaluate and develop the subject further in the coming year. This is timely, as some children could achieve higher standards than they do currently, and some staff would benefit from advice in planning and delivering lessons in the subject.