

INSPECTION REPORT

**LEES HILL CHURCH OF ENGLAND PRIMARY
SCHOOL**

Brampton, Cumbria

LEA area: Cumbria

Unique reference number: 112256

Headteacher: Mrs Pam Roelich

Lead inspector: Mrs L J Traves

Dates of inspection: 22nd and 23rd September 2003

Inspection number: 256719

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Primary
School category:	Voluntary Controlled
Age range of pupils:	4 – 11 years
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
Number on roll:	41
School address:	Lees Hill Brampton Cumbria
Postcode:	CA8 2BB
Telephone number:	01697 72577
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Appropriate authority:	The Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr S Mortimer
Date of previous inspection:	March 1998

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

The school is situated in the rural hamlet of Lees Hill, near Brampton in Cumbria. It is much smaller than most schools and draws its 41 pupils, aged between 4 and 11 years, from the nearby villages. About half of the pupils are from farming families and the other half have parents who work in Brampton and further afield in a range of professions and industries. The majority of pupils are white and speak English as their first language. A well below average number of pupils have free school meals (5.6 per cent) and fewer than average pupils have special educational needs (16.7 per cent). A much higher percentage of pupils than average have statements of special educational needs (5.6 per cent). Although there are equal numbers of girls and boys, in some year groups there is an imbalance. Children's attainments on entry to school vary widely from year-to-year. However, the current reception pupils have skills which are above those normally expected for children of this age. The school has won a number of prestigious awards in recent years. These include The Active Mark Gold Award, The Artsmark Silver Award, The Healthy Schools' Award and a Schools' Achievement Award. The school has been recognised as a Leading Literacy School for Cumbria and was voted Cumbria Village School of the Year for 2003.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
24039	Mrs L J Traves	Lead inspector	English Information and communication technology Geography History Religious education The Foundation Stage
19870	Mr K Osborne	Lay inspector	
18370	Mr K Johnson	Team inspector	Mathematics Science Art and design Design and technology Music Physical education Special educational needs

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REPORT CONTENTS

	Page
PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT	1
PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE MAIN INSPECTION FINDINGS	
STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS	3
Standards achieved in areas of learning, subjects and courses	
Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities	
QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL	6
Teaching and learning	
The curriculum	
Care, guidance and support	
Partnership with parents, other schools and the community	
LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT	10
PART C: THE QUALITY OF EDUCATION IN AREAS OF LEARNING AND SUBJECTS	12
AREAS OF LEARNING IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE	
SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 1 AND 2	
PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS	23

PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

OVERALL EVALUATION

This is a very good school with some outstanding features. Its caring, family ethos ensures that the personal development of pupils is excellent. Standards are high and particularly so in English, mathematics and art and design. Pupils achieve very well, as a result of very good teaching and the exciting learning experiences on offer. The school is very effectively led and managed at all levels, with the headteacher providing outstanding leadership. It gives very good value for money.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- The leadership of the headteacher is outstanding;
- Key staff and governors perform their roles very well;
- Very good teaching enables pupils of all abilities to reach high standards;
- It develops pupils as mature, well rounded individuals, who respect themselves and others;
- Pupils get off to a flying start in the Foundation Stage;
- It provides a very rich range of learning experiences both within and outside lessons;
- It creates very strong and effective partnerships with parents, the community and other schools.

The school has improved significantly since the previous inspection in 1998. It has dealt particularly well with the issues identified for improvement. For example, teachers' planning is now of a high standard and all pupils are challenged at the appropriate level. The governing body now plays a much stronger part in running the school. In addition, teaching has improved and standards are better.

STANDARDS ACHIEVED

Results in National Curriculum tests at the end of Year 6, compared with:	all schools			similar schools
	2000	2001	2002	2002
English	A	C	A*	A*
mathematics	A	A	A*	A*
science	A	B	C	D

*Key: A - well above average; B - above average; C - average; D - below average; E - well below average
Similar schools are those whose pupils attained similarly at the end of Year 2.*

Pupils achieve very well. Care needs to be taken in comparing test results because the small numbers of pupils in each year group can mean that one pupil represents as much as 33 per cent. The 2002 science results are a good example of this because just one more child achieving the higher level (Level 5) in the tests would have resulted in grades being well above average. Results in English and mathematics in 2002 for Year 6 pupils were in the top 5 per cent in the country, when compared to all schools nationally and those in similar situations. Results in the national tests for pupils in Year 2 have been in the top 5 per cent in the country in reading, writing and mathematics, for the past three years. Children in the Foundation Stage are on course to exceed the goals set for them in all areas of learning, by the end of the reception year. Throughout Years 1 to 6, standards are high in all subjects. Pupils across Years 1 to 6 achieve particularly well in English and mathematics and standards in art and design are much better than usually seen. Standards in design and technology and in information and communication technology (ICT) in Years 3 - 6 have improved significantly since the last inspection and are now above average throughout the school.

Pupils' personal qualities, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development are excellent. Pupils show tremendous enthusiasm for all aspects of school life and have a real thirst for learning. Behaviour is exemplary, both in lessons and around the school. Pupils get on extremely well with each other and older pupils take a pride in caring for their younger schoolmates. They develop as well-rounded, self-confident individuals. Attendance levels are excellent.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION

The quality of education provided by the school is very good. Teaching is very good throughout the school. It is of particularly high quality in English and mathematics, where levels of expertise are strong. Pupils with special educational needs achieve very well because of the very good support they receive from all the adults who work with them. The curriculum is very well planned and organised to meet the needs of all pupils, including those with particular gifts and talents. Opportunities provided to enrich pupils' learning, both within and outside the classroom, are excellent. Pupils develop very well as independent learners.

Pupils receive a high level of care within a strong family atmosphere and, as a result, they flourish. All staff know them very well and pupils trust and respect all the adults who work with them. There are very effective links between home and school that support pupils' learning. The school has also forged extremely productive links with other local schools and the community to enrich pupils' learning.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

The leadership and management of the school are very good. The headteacher's leadership of the school has transformed the quality of education provided and the standards reached. All aspects of the school are managed very well. Governors are very closely involved in setting the direction for the school and checking on how well it is doing.

PARENTS' AND PUPILS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

The parents have very positive views of the school. They are particularly happy with the leadership and management of the school and the quality of teaching provided. The pupils enjoy school and have trust and confidence in the adults who work with them. They want the school to have more space for learning and play.

IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

This is a very effective school and there are no major improvements needed. However, two minor areas that the school may wish to consider improving are:

- The consistency of pupils' handwriting and presentation, particularly in Year 6;
- The computer keyboard skills of Key Stage 1 pupils to enable them to word process more quickly.

PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS

STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

Standards achieved in areas of learning, subjects and courses

Standards are **very good** throughout the school and pupils of all abilities achieve **very well**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils reach particularly high standards in English, mathematics and art and design;
- Overall, standards have improved since the time of the last inspection;
- Standards in design and technology and ICT have improved considerably since the last time the school was inspected;
- Pupils with special educational needs achieve as much as they can because they are very effectively supported.

Commentary

1. Care should be taken in analysing the performance data, as with such small numbers of children, one child can account for approximately 33 per cent. Nevertheless, standards in the national tests for 7-year-olds have clearly risen in reading, writing and mathematics since the last inspection. For the last 3 years, results for this age group have been consistently in the top 5 per cent in the country, when compared to all schools and to those in similar circumstances. This is an impressive achievement. Results for pupils in the tests for 11-year-olds have shown significant fluctuations in English and science. This has usually been the result of the effects of the small pupil numbers and the varying numbers of pupils with special educational needs in each year group. However, in 2002, results in English and mathematics were in the top 5 per cent in the country when compared with all schools, those in similar circumstances and the pupils' previous results when they were 7-years-old. In the science tests, the performance of one pupil made the difference between results being in the top 5 per cent compared to similar schools and being below average. When results in all three subjects are taken together over the last three years, results have risen faster than the national picture. The as yet unvalidated results for pupils of both 7 and 11 years in the 2003 tests show a very similar picture in mathematics and English, and a significant improvement in the science test results and teacher assessment.
2. Improvements in standards have been brought about through stronger curriculum planning, which now takes the needs of all pupils into account. Boys and girls achieve equally as well as each other because the school keeps a close eye on any differences in performance and rectifies any gaps. Other key factors in raising standards have been improvements in the quality and consistency of teaching and strong and effective leadership and management, both of the school and of subjects. Two good examples of this are in writing and science. In writing, the school embarked on a 4-year project to improve standards, in response to a close analysis of assessment data. The impact of this can be seen in the gains in learning pupils now make in each year. At Key Stage 2, pupils often demonstrate greater achievement in their writing in class than they do in the tests. In science, a strong emphasis on practical work and on children carrying out tasks independently has raised standards throughout the school. Teacher assessments for 2003 show that all the pupils in Year 2 reached the higher level (Level 3) in the tests. The majority of the current Year 6 pupils are achieving very well and are already reaching above average levels in the subject. Pupils' progress is carefully tracked in most subjects and, as a result, pupils build quickly on their skills from year-to-year.

3. Standards in design and technology are now better than seen in most schools at both key stages. This is a significant improvement since the last inspection when standards were judged to be below average. Pupils now reach good standards because they can build progressively on their skills from year-to-year. Good teaching and high expectations ensure that they achieve well. Standards in ICT, at Key Stage 2, have significantly improved and are now better than expected for pupils of this age. Greater staff confidence, an improved curriculum and better resources have had a strong impact. Standards in art and design are particularly high, as a result of staff expertise and the range of learning experiences provided.
4. Children in the Foundation Stage achieve very well overall. They are on course to exceed the goals set out for children of this age in all areas of learning, by the end of the reception year.

Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities

Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities are **excellent**. Other aspects of personal development, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development are **very good**. Attendance is **excellent**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils participate fully in lessons, and in the wide range of clubs and other activities;
- They behave sensibly and show considerable maturity, from reception right through the school;
- They start working as soon as they arrive at school, and often continue through break and lunch times;
- Very good relationships reflect the school's aim to create a 'family' atmosphere;
- There have been no exclusions;
- The school provides an extensive range of relevant activities including visits to cultural events, competitive sport, creative opportunities, multicultural experiences and charitable activities;
- Circle time and discussions develop children's self-esteem and thinking skills;
- Links with other schools allow pupils to meet other children;
- Residential courses enhance the development of team skills and a sense of responsibility;
- Attendance in the latest school year, 2002 - 2003 was 97.9 per cent, among the highest of all primary schools; there were no unauthorised absences; pupils are almost always punctual;
- Pupils' experiences of other cultures within the United Kingdom are not as strong as those of their own culture and those of the wider world.

Commentary

5. Mature behaviour and consideration for others is expected from all pupils, including the very youngest. Behaviour is better now than at the time of the last inspection when it was judged to be good. A clear list of expectations is displayed and understood by all. The school's strong 'family' ethos, which matches the very good teaching and the very rich curriculum, ensures that pupils enjoy school, behave exceptionally well and care for each other. For example, the older girls help 4-year-olds to learn to skip; lunch tables are organised to let older pupils serve the younger ones; pupils know that some friends have had unhappy experiences at other schools, and make a point of befriending them. Experiences, such as taking part in poetry competitions, sharing musical and cultural activities at other schools, sports coaching at the high school and the residential visit for the juniors have all helped to create a high level of self-esteem and independence. Pupils with special educational needs are very well supported by support assistants, who recognise when individual help is needed inside or outside the classroom. The recently created class councils provide good opportunities for pupils' ideas and views to be heard.

6. The range and quality of cultural activities provided is very extensive and has improved since the last inspection. It is a key feature of the school's provision. Because many of these activities take place in other local schools or in Carlisle, pupils gain valuable social experiences of the wider world and of meeting other children. Theatre performances and concerts complement pupils' own productions at Easter or Christmas. They also join in a music festival at the local secondary school. Pupils are challenged to display their own creative skills and win prizes in national competitions for art, poetry and music. The school works very hard to widen pupils' experience of other cultures. A series of sessions on Indian dance, music and arts and crafts at 3 local primary schools helped to widen their knowledge of world cultures, whilst the infant pupils' visit to Samye Ling Buddhist monastery extends their religious awareness. However, pupils are not generally so well aware of minority ethnic groups in Cumbria or the North of England. Team skills and interpersonal relationships are developed through sports coaching and team games tournaments, as well as in a 3-day residential visit for all the junior pupils.
7. Discussion with junior pupils aged between 7 and 11 years revealed a high degree of maturity, and the ability to think seriously about their lives and skills. They stressed the need to care for each other and the environment, to make the world a better place, to work for peace and happiness. They understand the need for rules and for principles, such as being truthful, sensible and kind. They appreciate the possibilities provided in circle time and the class council to discuss and influence their life at school. Their only complaint is that they find the premises and playground are too small.
8. Children in the reception class, after only 3 weeks in school, have made excellent progress. They have settled in particularly well, and rise to the teacher's high expectations of them. They play very well together, sometimes without direct supervision, and relate very well to the infant pupils in the same classroom. They mix well with older children in the playground and can use knives and forks at lunchtime. They already meet the expected standards for pupils at the end of the reception year in their personal and social development. This is a significant improvement since the last inspection.
9. Attendance is excellent because the school stresses the importance of full attendance to parents and pupils. Children know that if they are away from school they miss out on literacy and numeracy lessons and this affects their learning targets. Parents support the school's policies and, on the whole, avoid taking family holidays in term time. Parents know they have to let the school know when children are away, but if no message has been received, the school telephones home immediately.

Attendance in the latest complete reporting year (%)

Authorised absence	
School data	2.6
National data	5.4

Unauthorised absence	
School data	0.0
National data	0.5

The table gives the percentage of half days (sessions) missed through absence for the latest complete reporting year.

Exclusions

Ethnic background of pupils

Categories used in the Annual School Census
White – British
Chinese

Exclusions in the last school year

No of pupils on roll	Number of fixed period exclusions	Number of permanent exclusions
43	0	0
1	0	0

The table gives the number of exclusions, which may be different from the number of pupils excluded.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

The quality of education provided by the school is **very good**. Teaching, the assessment of pupils' progress and the curriculum are all **very good**. Pupils are **very well** cared for, guided and supported.

Teaching and learning

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 16 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
1 (6%)	9 (56%)	5 (31%)	1 (6%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)

The table gives the number of lessons observed in each of the seven categories used to make judgements about lessons; figures in brackets show percentages where 30 or more lessons are seen.

The quality of teaching is very good throughout the school. Teachers make very good use of assessment to move children's learning on at a rapid rate. As a result, children of all abilities achieve very well and reach high standards. This is an improvement since the last inspection, when teaching was judged to be good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teachers have high expectations of work and behaviour;
- Teachers have a very good grasp of the subjects they teach;
- Work is carefully planned and lessons are very well organised to meet the needs of all pupils;
- Pupils are challenged very effectively and, as a result, learn rapidly;
- High quality support is given by classroom assistants to those with special educational needs and other pupils;
- There are excellent relationships at all levels which give pupils confidence;
- Staff encourage pupils to become independent and manage their own learning.

Commentary

10. Pupils learn rapidly and achieve very well because of the very good teaching they receive. A key factor in teaching is the high expectation all staff have of pupils' work and behaviour. This is underpinned by the excellent relationships that exist between staff and pupils. Much is expected of pupils, but they are encouraged and supported at every level in achieving their potential. In return, pupils work eagerly and strive to do their best, not only for themselves, but also to please the adults who work with them. Consequently, the pace in lessons is sharp and pupils produce a large volume of work. In response to the very good examples staff provide, pupils support each other. There were many occasions seen when older pupils were working alongside their younger classmates. For example, in a history lesson, Year 4 pupils assisted their Year 3 classmates with research into Greek gods, prompting them when they were 'stuck' and helping them to record their findings.
11. Teachers' planning is exemplary and demonstrates their very good grasp of the subjects they teach. The joint planning undertaken by the headteacher and the part-time member of staff who takes her class for part of the week, ensures that the pupils in Key Stage 2 experience just the same level of challenge and learning is seamless. In both classes, tasks are carefully devised which very effectively meet the needs of all pupils, whatever their abilities. Pupils are often challenged to the limit of their understanding by the tasks set and the questions posed. Teachers are very skilled at explaining new ideas in ways that pupils can understand. As a result, they 'cotton on' to new ideas quickly. This success fires their

enthusiasm and raises their self-esteem. As they move through the school, their confidence in themselves as learners develops to the point where, by Year 6, pupils are able to manage tasks with little intervention from adults. For example, in a very good science lesson, Year 6 pupils were required to devise, plan and implement an experiment to look into the effects of different materials on deadening sounds. The seven pupils worked together collaboratively, sharing their knowledge and dividing up the various tasks. They worked quickly and efficiently, selecting their own materials and methods of recording, drawing sensible conclusions to share with the rest of the class.

12. Teachers and support staff use the information they gain from assessing pupils' progress to very good effect in lessons. Assessments are accurate and pinpoint exactly the next steps in pupils' learning. As a result, pupils are set clear targets, based on their previous achievements. These targets are shared with pupils in a way that helps them understand what they need to do to improve. Older pupils, in particular, can explain their targets and talk about what they are doing to achieve them. Staff often carrying out marking and give feedback as the pupils work. Comments are well focused and help them see how they might improve. Consequently, pupils develop a very good understanding of themselves as learners and make rapid progress.
13. The work of the classroom support staff has a very significant impact on pupils' learning. They use their expertise very effectively, working alongside teachers to plan in detail for the groups and individuals they support. Pupils with special educational needs benefit particularly well because the support they receive is highly focused, sensitive and tailored expertly to meet their individual requirements. As a result, these pupils achieve very well in relation to their abilities. Other pupils benefit, particularly in literacy and numeracy sessions, which are organised to provide high levels of adult support where required. Spelling and reading sessions, which take place at the start of the school day, are very effective because support staff maximise the amount of direct teaching available to pupils in the mixed-age classes.

The curriculum

The curriculum meets the needs of all pupils' **very well**. Opportunities provided to enrich pupils' learning are **excellent**. Resources for teaching and learning are **very good**. Accommodation is **good** because the best use is made of it. However, space is rather limited.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The overall quality and range of learning opportunities is very good;
- The enrichment of the curriculum through visits, visitors and activities outside lessons is excellent;
- Pupils who have special educational needs are supported very well;
- The school is highly successful in its efforts to include all pupils equally in all aspects of learning;
- Teachers and support staff are highly skilled and promote excellent team work;
- Limited space inhibits an even more rapid development of skills in physical education.

Commentary

14. Curriculum provision has improved significantly since the previous inspection. Planning and relevant programmes of work are now of high quality for all subjects. All national curriculum requirements are fully met, including those for religious education. Personal, social and health education and citizenship (PSHCE) is very well planned and promoted very strongly, not only within the areas of science and religious education, but also through the very strong, supportive ethos of the school.

15. Children in the Foundation Stage are very well provided for. Relevant learning opportunities are planned for them so they build up their basic skills rapidly. They are also very well challenged through their integration with the older children and achieve well beyond expectations at times. This is most notable in the quality of their artwork and their personal and social skills.
16. For infant and junior pupils there is challenge and a pace to learning, as a result of the very well planned curriculum. Pupils are encouraged to work independently to solve problems and are frequently seen collaborating and sharing ideas with their peers. In a science lesson, for example, pupils in Year 6 were set the task of formulating their own ideas and planning and conducting an investigation, before reporting back at the end of the lesson. This challenged their ability to use scientific skills and to negotiate with others to draw conclusions.
17. The inclusion of all pupils in the life of the school is excellent. All staff equally value every child's contribution. Pupils who have additional learning needs are supported very well and make very good progress. Pupils' confidence and self-esteem are raised significantly by the way staff deal sensitively with specific difficulties.
18. Excellent opportunities are provided through the wealth of activities which enrich pupils' learning. Fieldwork and visits to places of historical interest, a residential visit, participation in arts and sporting events and visitors to school who engage pupils in music, sculpture and dance help to excite pupils and stimulate learning. The headteacher works tirelessly to secure the best for all pupils. Pupils respond to these opportunities vigorously and thrive on competition.
19. The school is very well resourced. There is a planned refurbishment programme which, to date, has provided a library space and enhanced the quality of both the indoor and outdoor environment for staff and pupils.
20. Although space is limited and the school has no hall, best use is made of every corner. The school ensures that lack of space does not limit experiences, for example, in physical education, because it makes every effort to overcome this by using the facilities offered by other schools. However, small amounts of time are taken up each day because the Key Stage 2 pupils have to move their work and tables, for example, to set up for lunch and assembly. Although they do this very well, an extra teaching and learning space would be of benefit and the school is exploring ways of funding this.
21. The strength of the curriculum is reflected in the school's success in gaining achievement awards for literacy and numeracy standards, arts and sport and being justly nominated as Cumbrian Village School of the Year 2003.

Care, guidance and support

The school provides **very good** care, guidance and support for pupils. There are **very good** systems in place for consulting pupils and involving them in the school's work.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Staff know the pupils and their families very well. Child protection procedures are very secure;
- Health and safety procedures are very good and involve governors and staff;
- School meals are excellent; the school has Healthy School status;
- Children, including those with special educational needs, and those in reception, get very good support from teachers and classroom assistants;
- There are very good systems for consulting pupils and involving them in the school's work.

Commentary

22. Pupils' are very effectively cared for, guided and supported. Staff know them very well. All staff and the lead governor are up-to-date with their training in child protection. The governor with this responsibility has appropriate expertise in child protection procedures.
23. Health and safety arrangements are very good. This is an improvement since the last inspection. The school is very good at guarding pupils against risks. Risk assessments are in place as required for physical education and out of school visits. Asbestos has recently been removed from the school boiler house and outdoor store and a new physical education store purchased. Improvements have been made to the road outside the gate, including the provision of a streetlight to make home time safer in the winter. There are effective policies in place for promoting racial harmony and eliminating bullying. The school has been awarded the Healthy School status, deservedly, given the emphasis the school places on this area of its work and the high quality of school dinners, which are taken by all but one of the pupils. Healthy exercise through sports is strongly encouraged. The school ensures that, because of the lack of internal and external space for physical education, close attention is paid to health and safety requirements in this area.
24. Teachers know the children well; this is helped by the mixed-age classes of three or four years' duration. Support staff work very effectively with individual children and groups. Not only are pupils with particular needs catered for exceptionally well, but also those of higher ability are very well challenged and extended. For example, two Key Stage 2 pupils of particular high ability are already working on tasks planned in conjunction with the secondary school. The staffs' in-depth knowledge of the pupils means that targets are set which are based on each child's specific needs and abilities. The 4 reception pupils who joined the school three weeks before the inspection have settled in very well. They enjoy their work and have learned the routines of school very quickly. They receive good care in the playground and in the dining room.
25. Key Stage 2 pupils are very happy with the way that class councils and circle time work. Several of their ideas have already been taken up. They feel that circle time makes everyone equal and able to say things without being afraid that others will laugh at them.

Partnership with parents, other schools and the community

Partnership with parents and the community is **very good**. Links with other schools and colleges are **excellent**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- High quality printed information is provided for parents, together with the school's website;
- Effective consultative and informative meetings are held for parents;
- Voluntary help from parents and fund raising by the PTA are valuable supplements to the school's own provision;
- Excellent links with other schools and colleges are provided through the small schools' initiative, links with local secondary schools and specialised links with the Cumbria Institute for the Arts.

Commentary

26. The headteacher has the outstanding ability of making strong and effective links with parents, the community and other institutions for the benefit of the pupils. The support of parents has been crucial to raising the number on roll and improving the school's facilities. Information for parents is edited and produced in school, using standard ICT equipment, and is of high quality, making good use of digital cameras and colour printers to show photographs of the school's work. The school website also contains copies of the

prospectus. Reports on pupils' achievements are well written, sometimes using standardised phrases to describe what has been learned, but always with a clear personal statement and targets for improvement. Meetings are held for parents of children who are due to join the school, for example, to explain routines and how literacy and numeracy are taught. Meetings are also held to consult parents about sex education and to discuss progress. In a school with just over two teachers, this represents very good liaison.

27. Press publicity is also used effectively. Wider opportunities to display pupils' work, for example at the Gilsland Show or Lanercost Priory are grasped regularly. The school takes full advantage of opportunities to attend workshops at Tullie House Museum in Carlisle, or residential facilities near Newcastleton. The school's quality has been recognised by awards, such as Artsmark Silver and Activemark Gold, as well as The School Achievement Award and The Cumbria Village School of the Year.
28. Partnerships with other small rural schools have valuably widened the curriculum and contributed to improved assessment procedures and management systems. The Key Stage 1 teacher's excellent skills in teaching literacy are shared with teachers from other schools, who visit Lees Hill. Specialist links with the Cumbria Institute for the Arts and two local comprehensive schools have helped to provide enhanced opportunities for music, art and physical education. The school is used as a place of worship and for meetings of The Women's Institute and The Parish Council.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

The school is led and managed **very well** at all levels. The headteacher's **outstanding** leadership is a significant aid to pupils' learning. School governance is **very good**. The governors play a key role in moving the school forward.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The headteacher's leadership of the school is outstanding. She has transformed the school through her commitment and energy;
- The headteacher has created a very strong and effective partnership with staff, governors and parents, who pull together to ensure they provide the best education possible for the pupils;
- The Foundation Stage, special educational needs and all curriculum areas are managed very well, which ensures high standards;
- The governors play a key part in the strategic development of the school;
- There are very effective procedures in place for monitoring and evaluating the work of the school and developing the skills of all staff;
- The school has very well established methods of monitoring pupils' performance, which ensures that pupils of all abilities achieve as well as they can;
- Funding is used very effectively to improve accommodation, resources and staffing levels to support learning.

Commentary

29. The leadership of the headteacher is outstanding, as it was judged to be at the last inspection, when she had only recently been appointed to the post. Since that time she has worked with drive and energy to transform the school, working very closely with the other full time teacher, who undertakes her leadership and management roles very well. The governance of the school has also significantly improved and is now very good the headteacher and staff are very well supported by the extremely efficient administrative officer.

30. The impact of the headteacher's outstanding leadership is evident in the consistently high quality achieved in all aspects of the school's work. She works very effectively as a team with the other full-time teacher to drive every aspect of the school forward. A very strong feature of the headteacher's leadership is her skill in communicating her high expectations and her sharp vision for the school to all members of its community. Commitment to high standards is non-negotiable and this expectation inspires all, including the pupils, to rise to the challenge and give of their best. She leads, first and foremost by example, combining an almost full teaching timetable and a heavy management load, maintaining high standards in both areas. She achieves this not only through her own energy and commitment, but also through utilising the skills and talents of others to very good effect. The headteacher is highly skilled in supporting staff in achieving the high standards she demands of them. She has created a climate in which all staff are able to learn and develop. This is exemplified by the encouragement she has given to support staff to further their expertise through training and the support she has given to the other full-time teacher in taking increasing responsibility for aspects of the school's work. She also pays close attention to developing her own skills through training and through seeking the evaluation of others of her work. As a result, all staff are highly skilled in the work that they do and have a strong and significant impact on pupils' learning. The headteacher also recognises the need, in the context of a small school, to look outward and guard against insularity. Consequently, she has drawn in and effectively utilised expertise from other schools, in addition to providing quality support for others outside the school.
31. First-rate systems have been devised by the school for checking on all aspects of its work. For example, pupils' performance is carefully analysed and challenging targets are set, as a result, for the whole school and individual pupils. The accuracy of these systems is one reason for the improvement in results and the sustained high performance of pupils in the national tests. The high quality information gathered on pupils' progress enables teachers to set work at exactly the right level of challenge and consequently they achieve very well. Teaching and learning are checked on systematically and the curriculum is constantly under review. The school is able to maintain a high level of consistency in all areas of its work because standards are not allowed to slip.
32. The leadership and management of special educational needs are very effective. The headteacher, who acts as special educational needs co-ordinator, ensures that meticulous systems are in place for supporting these pupils and that funds are used to best effect to benefit them. As a result, pupils make very good progress because their needs are comprehensively met. Similarly, the high quality leadership and management of the Foundation Stage ensure that pupils get off to a flying start because their individual needs are catered for very well.
33. The impact of the governing body on the life and work of the school has improved significantly since the last inspection. It now plays a much stronger part in setting the strategic direction for the work of the school. Through their own monitoring of the school's work they have a very comprehensive understanding of its strengths and its priorities for development. Governors play a key role, for example, in performance management and school improvement planning. A good example of their impact on the work of the school can be seen in the refurbishment of the building that has taken place and the redevelopment of the school grounds, which now provide an excellent environment for both work and play. School finances have been supplemented through bids for extra grants and the monies used very effectively for this purpose. Governors have also been instrumental in funding an increase in the number of support staff employed. This is supporting pupils' learning very well and helping to maintain standards, particularly in view of the increase in pupil numbers. The school effectively seeks best value for the money it spends, for example, by comparing costs and consulting pupils and parents about new initiatives.

Financial information

Financial information for the year April 2002 to March 2003

Income and expenditure (£)	
Total income	142, 706
Total expenditure	124, 711
Expenditure per pupil	2834

Balances (£)	
Balance from previous year	22476
Balance carried forward to the next	17995

PART C: THE QUALITY OF EDUCATION IN AREAS OF LEARNING, SUBJECTS AND COURSES

AREAS OF LEARNING IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

Provision is **very good** overall in the Foundation Stage.

This is an improved picture to that found at the time of the last inspection. There are currently 4 children in the group, all boys, who had been in school for 3 weeks at the time of the inspection. They are taught in a class alongside Year 1 and 2 pupils. The co-ordinator, who is also the class teacher, leads and manages the area very well. She has replanned the curriculum to ensure that all the expected areas of learning for children of this age are covered and that pupils have the appropriate opportunities to learn through play.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision in personal, social and emotional development is **excellent**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The consistently high expectations of all staff;
- The excellent examples provided by staff and older pupils;
- High quality planning which ensures that all opportunities are taken to develop pupils' skills;
- The creation of a secure, relaxed yet purposeful learning environment in which children can do their best.

Commentary

34. This is a result of excellent teaching and is a significantly improved picture from the time of the last inspection. The school gives a very high priority to this area and ensures that opportunities for development are woven into all other areas of learning.
35. After just three weeks in school, the reception children are well versed in the classroom routines and the staff's expectations of them. These expectations are made clear through staff and older pupils constantly modelling the required behaviour and through the care and encouragement children receive. Excellent relationships at all levels ensure that children quickly become confident and develop excellent attitudes to school life. They expect to enjoy school and are hardly, if ever, disappointed.
36. An excellent example of the impact on children's learning of the attention given to this area was seen in an activity focused on knowledge and understanding of the world.
37. Very clear explanations were given to the children as to what was expected of them and what the end result should be. A wide range of well organised and labelled resources was readily available. The classroom assistant was very well briefed as to what the expected outcomes were and knew exactly when to intervene to prompt learning and when to stand back. The 4 reception children worked together outdoors to construct their route between home and school. They worked together purposefully to cut strips of black paper to make the road. Two boys explored how many more strips they would need and where to place them, taking turns to try things out. They decided to build houses using the construction sets, concentrating intensely and keeping up a dialogue with each other about their work. One boy hunted in the small world toys to find an extra person to complete his family. A church and a bridge were added, after debate with the classroom assistant about which features they pass. When the route was completed, the children decided to 'travel' the route using toy cars. Throughout the task, high levels of concentration were sustained, with the children

being thoroughly absorbed in decision making and problem solving. They worked largely without direct adult supervision, co-operating and collaborating extremely well for pupils of this age.

COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY

Provision in communication, language and literacy is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- High quality teaching;
- An interesting curriculum, tailored to meet children's needs;
- A strong emphasis on developing early reading and writing skills;
- Very good support from classroom assistants.

Commentary

38. Very good teaching ensures children develop a love for books and enjoy a wide range of opportunities for writing. Teachers and support staff model the processes of reading and writing very well and this enables children to make the appropriate links between them. A strong emphasis is also placed on children learning the phonic skills to help them decode and spell words, which gives them great confidence in both reading and writing. Plenty of opportunities are provided for children to choose books for themselves and to share them with each other. Opportunities are also provided for children to use their emerging writing skills in a range of contexts, for example, in the 'toy shop' role play area, where they have made their own price lists. Children listen carefully to others and are keen to respond to questions, for example, in shared reading sessions. They develop their spoken language skills through role play.

MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision in mathematical development is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Very good teaching results in rapid learning;
- Classroom assistants give very strong support;
- An exciting range of practical activities is provided.

Commentary

39. All pupils are likely to exceed the expectations for the area by the end of the reception year. They are provided with a wide range of practical, hands-on experiences to develop their mathematical understanding. For example, in one session, they made thick and thin 'worms' from plasticine to consolidate their understanding of these concepts. The activity was extended through the children sorting the worms they had made into two different groups. Children's counting skills and their understanding of number is developed for example, through the use of rhymes such as, 'Five Little Speckled Frogs' and games such as, 'Ten Little Carriages'. Classroom assistants are very skilful and give high quality, focused support, expertly complementing the teacher's work. As a result, they are already meeting the expectations set out for children at the end of the reception year, after only a short time in school.

KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE WORLD

Provision in knowledge and understanding of the world is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The curriculum is very well planned;
- A wide range of practical, hands-on experiences are provided;
- Topics are woven together so that children make connections in their learning;
- Children benefit from learning alongside the older pupils in most areas.

Commentary

40. All pupils are on course to exceed expectations in this area by the end of the reception year and some goals have been already met. Teaching is very good. Reception children benefit from working alongside the older pupils. This often stretches their understanding, for example, in class discussions. A good example of this was observed when the whole class were discussing the features they see on their journey between home and school. The reception children soon 'cottoned on' to the idea and came up with interesting examples such as, 'fields and trees.' However, questions are always carefully framed for them to ensure they have the chance to be involved at their own level. Children are given plenty of opportunities to explore their environment, for example, by going on a 'sound walk' around the school grounds and experimenting with sand and water.

PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision in this area of learning is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Very best use is made of the outdoor area to develop children's physical skills;
- Learning experiences are very well planned;
- There is a very effective balance achieved between children exploring for themselves and activities directed and supported by adults.

Commentary

41. Children are provided with a very good range of opportunities to develop their physical skills, both indoors and out. The dedicated reception play area gives them space to safely play with wheeled toys, developing their control and awareness of others. The adventure play area is a wonderful resource, which gives them the opportunity to refine their skills and develop their confidence further, through climbing, balancing and jumping. Regular playtimes with the older pupils further enhance their development, as they are taught, for example, to skip. Children also develop their skills of throwing, catching and kicking appropriately, as they take part in games' lessons with the Key Stage 1 pupils. Good teaching in these sessions enables children to make good progress in relation to their various abilities. All are likely to exceed expectations in this area by the end of the reception year. Very good support from the classroom assistant ensures that they work at the appropriate level. Children's manipulative skills are developed very well through the many opportunities they are given to work with tools, such as scissors, crayons and paint brushes, to thread beads and to model with plasticine. They already have very good pencil control.

CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT

Provision is **very good**.

42. No direct teaching was seen in this area, therefore, no judgement can be made on its quality. However, many examples of children's work were seen and the teacher's planning was scrutinised. A very wide range of interesting experiences is planned for the children to give them the chance to work with different media and materials. However, children are also given good opportunities to select their own. As a result, children make very good progress, particularly with their painting and drawing skills and most are on course to exceed the standard expected at the end of the reception year. Over time, the children improve their skills in drawing, crayoning, painting and using materials in different ways. Work on display and in photographs shows that, throughout the year, children learn different techniques, such as printing and collage. Work produced is of a high standard for children of this age. Children use everyday materials, such as boxes and tubes, for example, to make models, using glue to join the different parts and choosing how to finish them. They also use a 'paint and draw' programme confidently on the computer to create their own pictures. Children enjoy singing, for example, in assembly and have plenty of opportunities to play instruments and explore the sounds they make.

SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 1 and 2

ENGLISH

Provision in English is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils achieve very well because of consistently very good teaching;
- Very effective leadership and management of the subject drives up standards;
- Teachers plan very effectively to meet the needs of all pupils and challenge them appropriately;
- Teachers have consistently high expectations of their pupils;
- High quality assessment arrangements ensure that pupils make rapid progress;
- There is a very strong emphasis on teaching the basic skills of reading and writing;
- Pupils are given the opportunity to use their literacy skills in many different contexts;
- The consistency of handwriting and presentation of the older pupils in Key Stage 2 could be better.

Commentary

43. Standards in English are well above average at both key stages. This is a significant improvement since the time of the last inspection. Results in the national curriculum tests at the end of both key stages have sustained well above average levels for the last few years and have sometimes been in the top 5 per cent in the country.
44. Pupils achieve very good standards in English because teaching is consistently very good and on occasions, excellent. Teachers' planning for the mixed-age, mixed-ability classes is exemplary. It clearly sets out what each group of pupils will learn and how this will be achieved. Joint planning between the headteacher and the part-time teacher who takes her class twice weekly ensures that there is a consistent approach and the same high expectations of pupils. Classroom support assistants share in the planning process and have their own very comprehensive plans to guide their teaching and support of groups and individuals. These groups include the more able as well as those with particular needs. Very good quality assessment of pupils' progress underpins this process and enables teachers to accurately pinpoint the next steps in learning. As a result, all pupils are challenged effectively

and work at the most appropriate level to meet their needs. All pupils have individual targets in English, which are shared with them and checked on regularly. Older pupils, in particular, can confidently explain their targets, what they need to do to achieve these and how far they have progressed towards meeting them. Teachers' have very high expectations of pupils' application and work rate. Pupils respond to this by working with maximum effort. An excellent lesson on evaluating and writing instructional texts was observed in the Key Stage 2 class.

The different objectives for the lesson were shared expertly with pupils who were working in 3 groups. As a result, each group was very clear about what was expected of them and was highly focused. Well timed reminders about the objectives and tightly focused support from the teacher and two classroom assistants ensured the pace remained sharp and pupils learned rapidly through every part of the lesson. The tasks for each group were set at just the right level of challenge to stretch pupils to the limit and make them think hard. As a result, all were thoroughly engaged in learning and remained keen and interested throughout. Staff gave expert help, intervening at exactly the right point to move learning on, without taking over. The class teacher assessed pupils' understanding as they worked, giving instant feedback, which either spurred them on to further challenges or reinforced previous learning. This kept the momentum going and ensured all pupils made the best possible progress.

45. A key factor in the school's success in English lies in the very good leadership and management of the subject. The 2 co-ordinators ensure that there is continuous improvement through close analysis of how well pupils are learning. Issues for action are identified and a clear path for development set out. For example, the identification of a gap between performance in reading and writing led to a 4-year plan to improve writing standards. The success of this can be seen, not only in the results the school achieves in the tests, but also in the high quality writing pupils produce for a wide range of purposes. Pupils' poetry writing is of particularly high quality, demonstrating a much higher standard than sometimes reached by pupils in the tests. It demonstrates a sensitivity and control over the writing process usually produced by much older pupils.
46. Throughout the school there is a strong emphasis on the development of the basic skills of reading and writing. At Key Stage 1, high quality, systematic teaching of phonics ensures children quickly have the skills to work out unfamiliar words in both their reading and writing. This work is built on very effectively through Key Stage 2, where pupils have regular, targeted group spelling sessions. As a result, by Year 6, pupils are competent spellers and this adds greatly to their confidence and ability as writers. Guided group and individual reading sessions are used to very good effect to develop and extend pupils' skills, ensuring rapid progress. These sessions ensure that those experiencing difficulties are well supported and those who are more able are effectively stretched.
47. The handwriting and presentation of work of the oldest pupils, whilst satisfactory overall, could be improved further to meet the high standards achieved in other aspects of English. Pupils produce neat, well presented work in a clear style in their handwriting lessons and for work that is to be displayed. However, this is not consistent at other times. Consequently, some work in their books is rather untidy and does not represent the best they can achieve.

Language and literacy across the curriculum

48. Teachers provide pupils with many opportunities to practise their reading, writing, speaking and listening skills in other subjects. In most lessons, pupils are expected to present their findings or sum up what they have learned. By Year 6, pupils are very articulate and can express themselves with growing precision. Teachers help pupils to view writing as an exciting, purposeful activity. They fire them with enthusiasm through the tasks they provide. Work on Shakespeare's 'Macbeth', for example, inspired pupils to produce their own 'witches' spells', relishing the opportunity to use gory words and phrases. Teachers also draw opportunities for children to practise their writing skills from every situation. In subjects such as history and geography, pupils produce well crafted accounts of life in Victorian

times, biographies of famous people and reports of surveys undertaken. There are many examples of pupils creating short stories and class anthologies of poems. Being given opportunities to enter writing competitions further motivates pupils. They have been winners on several occasions.

MATHEMATICS

Provision in mathematics is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards of attainment are consistently very high and have risen since the previous inspection;
- Pupils work very hard and achieve very well;
- The quality of teaching is very good;
- Provision for pupils who have special educational needs is very good; more able pupils are appropriately challenged;
- Highly effective leadership and management have resulted in high standards.

Commentary

49. Pupils at the end of Year 2 and Year 6 attain consistently very high standards in national tests. Their achievements are considerably higher than those of pupils in similar schools. In both infant and junior classes, there is a very clear focus on investigative work. This encourages pupils to think about ways to solve mathematical problems, apply knowledge and skills, and fosters their independence as learners. Pupils are clear about their individual targets, which they strive to meet. More able pupils are stretched and challenged very effectively.
50. The quality of teaching and learning is very good overall. The mathematics' curriculum is planned very effectively so knowledge and skills are learned systematically. Teachers' expectations of pupils and the way they engage all pupils in work at a level appropriate to their ability are outstanding features of lessons. Relationships, and consequently behaviour, are excellent. The quality of support provided by teaching and classroom assistants greatly enhances pupils' learning. They manage groups and individuals skilfully so that pupils, especially those who have additional needs, work more confidently and make very good progress.
51. Pupils show very good levels of interest in, and application to, their work. The ethos of the school encourages this and it is common practice for some pupils to start work before the school day begins and to continue during break times because they want to finish what they are doing.
52. Teachers mark pupils' work well. Comments frequently challenge older pupils to improve on what they do. Pupils correct the errors they have made. During lessons, staff assess pupils' progress very effectively. Consequently, difficulties are discussed and pupils are quickly reassured and their learning moves on at a rapid pace.
53. Leadership and management provided by the headteacher and Key Stage 1 teacher are highly effective. The mathematics' curriculum is challenging for all pupils and enables them to achieve very well.

Mathematics across the curriculum

54. Pupils use their mathematics' skills very effectively across the curriculum. For example, they confidently use their measuring and calculating skills when carrying out experiments in science. They use co-ordinates to find places on maps of the local area and produce a range of different graphs on the computer, for example, to display information gained from traffic surveys in nearby Brampton.

SCIENCE

Provision in science is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils achieve very well;
- Standards have improved and are now well above average;
- Teaching and learning are very good;
- Pupils' attitudes and their enthusiasm for work are excellent.

Commentary

55. The very well planned curriculum, with a strong focus on independent investigative skills, has led to improved standards and achievement since the last inspection. Pupils at both key stages now perform very well in comparison to similar schools and to schools nationally. Science topics are covered in depth, and there are relevant links with other curriculum areas, such as PSHCE. Mathematical and literacy skills are also promoted well when pupils record their work.
56. The quality of teaching is very good overall. Lessons are sharply focused and planned to challenge all age groups. In the infant class, for example, children had to concentrate on using their senses to identify different sources of sound. A 'discovery walk' around the grounds added interest to the lesson and pupils recorded their findings in different ways. Junior pupils were given the responsibility of devising their own 'fair test' when investigating more subtle aspects of sound such as whether it can be muffled by layers of material. Year 6 pupils worked independently and demonstrated very good application of mathematical and ICT skills where they used 'data loggers' to record results.
57. The excellent relationships pupils have with one another ensure that they work collaboratively and organise themselves without fuss. They are curious and sustain interest in their work.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

Provision in ICT is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards have improved since the last inspection;
- Staff expertise and resources have improved significantly;
- Very good subject leadership and management ensure that improvement is continuous;
- Very good assessment arrangements ensure that children build on their skills rapidly and work at the appropriate level of challenge;
- Pupils have many opportunities to use different forms of ICT to support work in many subject areas;
- Pupils' keyboard typing skills at Key Stage 1 are not as good as they could be.

Commentary

58. Standards in ICT are better than expected for pupils at the end of both key stages. This is a significant improvement from the time of the last inspection, when standards were judged to be average at Key Stage 1, but below average at Key Stage 2. No lessons were seen during the inspection, therefore, no judgement can be made on teaching. However, children were observed using the computer in many different contexts and their previous work and teachers' planning were scrutinised. This demonstrates that provision for ICT is good.
59. Improvements in standards have been brought about through the commitment of staff and governors in developing the subject. Both teaching and support staff have undertaken training and supported each other in developing their expertise and keeping abreast of new developments. As a result, they are confident with the equipment and the software they use and this, in turn, instils confidence in the pupils who then learn rapidly.
60. The headteacher and full-time class teacher jointly ensure that the subject is led and managed skilfully. They work closely together, sharing their knowledge and expertise of each key stage to ensure a strong curriculum. Their close evaluation of the subject enables them to decide on the right priorities for development. They also support each other and other staff within the school in becoming skilled in the use of new equipment such as, the interactive whiteboard.
61. One of the main reasons for pupils' good achievement is the very good assessment arrangements now in place. Pupils' skills and their ability to apply these are regularly assessed and the next steps in their learning are closely identified. This enables teachers to set work at the appropriate level of challenge and pupils to build progressively on their previous learning. A good example of this was seen when a very competent Year 6 pupil was given the task of showing others how to use the computer-linked microscope. He had been allowed to take this home to learn how to use it himself. This task really stretched him. Pupils with special educational needs and those who are less confident benefit from the high quality support they receive from the classroom assistants.
62. An area for improvement is the speed at which Key Stage 1 pupils can type in their work. Most are slow, typing with one finger, whilst searching for the keys. This means that word-processing tasks sometimes take longer than they might. Staff have recently identified this as an area for improvement after a visit to another school.

Information and communication technology across the curriculum

63. Teachers plan worthwhile opportunities for pupils to use ICT in most curriculum areas. As a result, pupils see computers and other equipment such as, sensors and data loggers as an integral part of their learning. For example, Year 6 pupils independently used data loggers in science to test and record the decibel levels of sounds made, as part of an experiment. Year 2 pupils used a 'paint and draw' programme confidently to draw plans of their journeys from home to school. High quality multimedia presentations have been created by older pupils, linking with their local studies topic in geography and history. Computers are also used frequently to support work in literacy and numeracy lessons at both key stages.

HUMANITIES

Geography and history

Provision in geography and history is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils study an impressive range of topics in depth;

- Learning is enriched through opportunities for practical work, visits and visitors;
- Lessons are very well planned and organised to meet the needs of all pupils;
- Very good use is made of pupils' literacy and ICT skills for recording and research.

Commentary

64. In the two lessons observed, a history lesson at Key Stage 2 and a geography lesson at Key Stage 1, teaching was very good. A scrutiny of pupils' work suggests that, over time, teaching is at least good and enables pupils to achieve well. In both of the lessons seen, high quality planning ensured very effective learning for all pupils, including those with special educational needs. Tasks were tailored very precisely to provide the right level of challenge for different groups. For example, in the Key Stage 1 geography lesson, Year 1 pupils were constructing a large-scale map of their routes from home to school, cutting paper to make the roadway and adding features from the landscape and the built environment they had drawn. Year 2 pupils were completing a similar task, drawing their routes in greater detail on the computer. Pupils remained thoroughly engaged and completed their work to a good standard because of the high expectations of the teacher.
65. In the Key Stage 2 history lesson seen, Year 5 and 6 pupils were researching the topic of Greek Gods, using the Internet. They were skilled at selecting just the right information they required and understood the need to check various sources to determine the accuracy of their information. Year 3 and 4 pupils were finding information from books, using their research skills confidently and recording the information in their own words. There are many good examples of pupils recording their history and geography work in a variety of ways such as, through charts, graphs, letters and recounts. Writing frames are used very effectively to support younger pupils and those who may need extra help.
66. Very good use is made of visits to places of interest to support and enrich pupils' learning. For example, pupils visit the Roman fort on Hadrian's Wall at nearby Birdoswald and Tullie House Museum to take part in Victorian days. They study the buildings and carry out traffic surveys in Brampton and visit the contrasting locality of Maryport. Such experiences fire the pupils' imaginations and the work they produce as a result is lively and of good quality.

Religious Education

Provision is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- There is a good balance between pupils learning about Christianity and other world religions;
- Pupils are encouraged to ponder life's important questions and reflect on their responses;
- Pupils learn about the messages of different religions as well as facts about them.

Commentary

67. No actual lessons were seen. However, the quality of pupils' work and their responses in discussions and assemblies suggest that teaching in this area is at least good. Pupils achieve well and standards are above those normally seen. They are better than they were judged to be at the last inspection. Improvements have been brought about through thorough curriculum planning, which ensures the needs of all pupils are effectively met. Good use is made of visits, for example, to a local Buddhist temple and to local churches, to make the subject come alive for pupils. Drama is also used effectively in this way and pupils perform for visitors to Lanercost Priory. Good use is also made of displays throughout the school to stimulate pupils' interest.

68. Throughout the school, pupils are encouraged to reflect on what it means to have a faith and to learn from religions as well as about them. Both Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2 pupils discuss and write about life's important questions at an appropriate level. They ponder on the nature of God and pose questions that they would like to ask Him, for example, showing great sensitivity and maturity in their comments. They learn about the messages we can take from different faiths through studying stories, for example, from the Bible and relating them to their own lives. By the time they are 7-years-old, pupils have a good grasp of a range of stories from different faiths. By the age of 11 years, pupils understand the similarities and differences in the way people of different religions worship and know much about their different customs and festivals. Work is recorded in a wide variety of ways and good links are made with other areas of curriculum. For example, pupils have written prayers and printed Hindu designs. The subject is effectively led and managed to ensure pupils build progressively on their skills from year-to-year.

CREATIVE, AESTHETIC, PRACTICAL AND PHYSICAL SUBJECTS

No lessons in art and design or design and technology were seen, therefore, no judgement on teaching or provision can be made. However, a wide range of pupils' work was seen and teachers' planning was scrutinised. Similarly the two physical education lessons observed covered games' skills. Video and photographic evidence of dance and gymnastics was analysed.

Art and design

Commentary

69. The quality of work seen on display and in portfolios indicates some very good achievement in this subject, with pupils throughout the school reaching high standards, particularly in observational drawing and painting. The high quality of the work seen demonstrates clearly the impact of the expertise of both teachers on pupils' learning.
70. The subject has been very effectively led and managed. The school has recently achieved The Artsmark Silver award for its innovative curriculum, which provides a very wide range of high quality experiences for all pupils. The sculpted woodland creatures inspired by a local artist and the painted flowers submitted for a local competition are just a small sample of the very high quality of work done by pupils. Pupils are very enthusiastic about creative work and take great care over designs and finished paintings and models. All pupils from the Foundation Stage onwards benefit enormously from the levels of knowledge and expertise brought into the classrooms by the teachers and visiting artists.

Design and technology

71. Pupils' finished models, the plans and evaluations of their work and photographic evidence show that pupils achieve very well and reach standards which are often much better than usually seen. This is an improvement since the last inspection, when standards were judged to be average in Year 2 and below average in Year 6. This is because very good leadership and management have ensured that the curriculum is much more effectively planned. As a result, pupils now build more rapidly and systematically on their skills from year-to-year. Pupils also take part in exciting experiences such as, working with a local craftsman to make 'sound models' and working with a wood sculptor to carve a bench, both for the outdoor play area. Activities such as these, not only help pupils to see the relevance of their designs and their work in everyday life, but also fire their enthusiasm. This is clearly illustrated by a Year 6 child's comment. When asked about his fondest memories of school, he replied, 'My technology lessons.'

Music

Provision for music is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards of performance by the end of Year 6 are good overall;
- The curriculum is well planned. Pupils enjoy music;
- The quality of teaching is good with some very good aspects.

Commentary

72. Pupils achieve well in music and reach standards which are better than expected for pupils in Year 2 and Year 6. By the end of Year 6, a significant number of pupils are developing good musical knowledge and skills by learning to play clarinet or flute. They perform confidently as individuals or as part of a group and are becoming skilled at reading music. Standards of singing throughout the school are better than typically heard. Pupils have a good sense of rhythm and sing tunefully.
73. Pupils enjoy music because of the interesting and varied curriculum. Experiences are enriched by the quality performances of visitors to the school who demonstrate many different instruments and musical styles including, those from other cultures. Pupils develop good musical vocabulary and have many opportunities in lessons to explore sounds and rhythms on tuned and untuned instruments.
74. The quality of teaching is good overall. Music is now taught weekly by a qualified music teacher. This is a recent development and its impact is being closely monitored. A peripatetic instrumental teacher also visits the school weekly. The teacher's expertise ensures that pupils are well challenged and for junior pupils, for example, it was evident that the teacher's excellent singing voice was a highly effective model when they learned a new song very quickly. Singing was not only beautifully in tune but also expressive and controlled because of the teaching. During the second part of the lesson, pupils worked collaboratively to develop rhythms which depicted animal movements to prepare for a first performance of 'Carnival of the Animals'. Pupils worked enthusiastically and some of their individual contributions were thoughtful and created imaginative effects.

Physical Education

Provision for physical education is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils achieve very well in gymnastics and dance by the end of Year 6;
- Enrichment of the curriculum is excellent.

Commentary

75. Pupils achieve well, and often very well, in physical education because of the extensive range of opportunities provided. Pupils are very competitive and video and photographic evidence records many successes in sports' tournaments and events including orienteering, cross-country and five-a-side soccer. Standards reached in gymnastics and dance are high for a significant number of pupils. Opportunities provided for them at a local secondary school ensure pupils build very well on the skills they learn at school. Pupils have the opportunity for swimming lessons at a local high school and the majority achieves the national curriculum swimming standard by the time they leave. Whole-school events such as, learning to skip (linked to fund-raising) engage all pupils well in physical activities. The

commitment shown by staff and pupils to providing as many opportunities as possible for pupils in innovative ways has rightly gained the school the 'Activemark Gold Award.'

76. Good teaching was seen in the two games 'lessons observed during the inspection. These lessons were active and vigorous. No time was lost because resources were well prepared and organised and pupils knew what to do and they changed activities sensibly. Very good features of learning were the support for pupils with special educational needs and the way in which older pupils were required to take responsibility for helping others who were less well co-ordinated.
77. Space for indoor and outdoor physical education is limited but, commendably, this does not deter the school from providing regular lessons and seeking all available ways to enhance provision. Furniture is moved in classrooms to create space and best use is made of the small playground and field. Pupils' health and safety is of paramount importance at these times. Pupils are regularly taken elsewhere to enable them to apply these skills in a more challenging range of team games and activities. The school plans to build its own hall, as funds allow, to maximise pupils' learning in this area within the school.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP

78. No direct teaching was seen in the subject during the inspection period. Regular 'Circle Time' sessions (when pupils discuss issues important to them) ensure that pupils can explore problems and share their thoughts. Very good opportunities are also provided for pupils to learn about how to keep themselves healthy and safe, for example, in science and physical education. The school has achieved a 'Healthy School's Award' for its commitment to this area. Pupils are encouraged to become good citizens through thinking about the needs of others. Older pupils take a pride in helping their younger schoolmates, both in lessons, at lunchtime and on the playground. This adds much to the strong family ethos of the school and contributes greatly to pupils' social development. They also play an important part as citizens of their own community, for example, through the performances they give for visitors to nearby Lanercost Priory. Pupils are given regular opportunities to express their view and have played a part in setting the direction for the school through the class councils which have been set up.

PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

<i>Inspection judgement</i>	<i>Grade</i>
The overall effectiveness of the school	2
How inclusive the school is	1
How the school's effectiveness has changed since its last inspection	2
Value for money provided by the school	2
Overall standards achieved	2
Pupils' achievement	2
Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities	1
Attendance	1
Attitudes	1
Behaviour, including the extent of exclusions	1
Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2
The quality of education provided by the school	2
The quality of teaching	2
How well pupils learn	2
The quality of assessment	2
How well the curriculum meets pupils needs	2
Enrichment of the curriculum, including out-of-school activities	1
Accommodation and resources	3
Pupils' care, welfare, health and safety	2
Support, advice and guidance for pupils	2
How well the school seeks and acts on pupils' views	2
The effectiveness of the school's links with parents	2
The quality of the school's links with the community	2
The school's links with other schools and colleges	1
The leadership and management of the school	2
The governance of the school	2
The leadership of the headteacher	1
The leadership of other key staff	2
The effectiveness of management	2

Inspectors make judgements on a scale: excellent (grade 1); very good (2); good (3); satisfactory (4); unsatisfactory (5); poor (6); very poor (7).