

# INSPECTION REPORT

## THWAITES SCHOOL

Millom

LEA area: Cumbria

Unique reference number: 112166

Headteacher: Mrs C A Green

Lead inspector: Mr E Jackson

Dates of inspection: 24–26 May 2004

Inspection number: 258206

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:	Community
Age range of pupils:	4-11
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
Number on roll:	62
School address:	Hallthwaites Millom Cumbria
Postcode:	LA18 5HP
Telephone number:	01229 772554
Fax number:	01229 772554
Appropriate authority:	Governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr N Whitaker

## CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

Thwaites is a small village primary school three miles east of Millom. It has 62 pupils from 4 to 11

years of age on roll, with almost equal numbers of boys and girls. Its catchment area is very wide.

The intake number is 9, with some year groups oversubscribed and others with one vacancy. Almost all the pupils are ethnically white, and none learn English as an additional language. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs is about average, but the proportion with a statutory Statement of Educational Need is well above average. These needs range from moderate learning difficulties to speech and communication difficulties, autism and Downes Syndrome. Socio-economic circumstances vary widely, but are broadly average. Attainment at entry is broadly average, but covers a wide range. The school achieved a Healthy Schools Award in 2004.

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
3108	E Jackson	Lead inspector	Special educational needs English as an additional language English Information and communication technology Art and design Design and technology Music Physical education
40253	C Gosling	Lay inspector	
32073	J Barnes	Team inspector	Foundation Stage Mathematics Science Geography History Religious education

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## PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

### OVERALL EVALUATION

Thwaites is a **very good** small village school, very well regarded by its parents and the wider community. It is very well led and well managed, providing a rich quality of education for its pupils. It gives **very good** value for money.

#### The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- Leadership is very good, giving clear direction for the school's development.
- The staff promote pupils' personal development, self-confidence and independence exceptionally well.
- Teachers and support staff work together very effectively, and develop very good working relationships with pupils and their families.
- Pupils' achievement is generally good in English, mathematics and science.
- Consistently effective teaching leads to pupils becoming highly skilled learners.
- Teachers' planning for learning does not always show clearly enough how pupils' progress will be measured against National Curriculum requirements.
- Provision for pupils with special educational needs is very good.
- Pupils' presentation and handwriting are not good enough, particularly the older pupils.

The school's effectiveness has improved since its last inspection, and all key issues have been met.

### STANDARDS ACHIEVED

**Pupils' achievement is good overall, and very good for those with special educational needs.** Currently, children in reception achieve well, and are on track to achieve the levels expected in the recommended areas of learning for their age. They achieve particularly well in personal, social and emotional development. Year 2 pupils achieve well, and reach above average levels in speaking and listening, reading, writing, mathematics, science, information and communication technology and music. Pupils in Year 6 achieve well, and reach above average standards in English, mathematics and science, and above expectations in information and communication technology and art and design. In music, they achieve very well. The table below shows how 11-year-old pupils achieved in national tests compared to national results for the last three years, and to those in similar schools in 2003. These comparisons must be treated with extreme caution, however, as the number of pupils in each year group in the school is very small: there were only seven pupils in the 2003 Year 6 group. Standards attained in national tests vary considerably from year-to-year, as the table indicates. Over the last five years, results have been above the national average. This represents good achievement, although the improving trend is slightly lower than the national trend.

Results in National Curriculum tests at the end of Year 6, compared with:	all schools			similar schools
	2001	2002	2003	2003
English	C	A	E	E
mathematics	C	A	B	B
science	C	B	A	A

*Key: A - well above average; B - above average; C - average; D - below average; E - well below average. Similar schools are those with a similar proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals.*

**Pupils' personal development is very good**, and they become skilled, independent learners. This is a real strength of the school. Their **spiritual, moral, social and cultural** development is **very good**. Pupils' attitudes to learning are **very good**, and they behave **very well** in and around the school. Attendance is **well above average**.

## **QUALITY OF EDUCATION**

**The quality of education is good, with some very good features.** Its best feature is in how the staff, parents and governors promote a learning environment that celebrates each pupil's individuality. This is achieved through **good teaching with some very good features**, and rich learning experiences that develop thoughtful, questioning but determined learners. The high quality of working relationships fostered by the staff promotes the pupils' confidence and self-esteem very successfully. This is exemplified in the weekly praising assembly that helps the whole school community to share and celebrate everyone's achievements. The positive learning atmosphere also promotes good achievement in most areas of learning, remarkable in such a small school, where each member of staff has many subject responsibilities. There is very high proportion of the pupils with a statement of their individual needs, three of them in a class led by a recently qualified teacher. The whole school supports and encourages these pupils, who achieve very well for their capabilities. The good curriculum is adapted well to the school's circumstances, and is very well enriched by visits, including a wide range of residential visits for pupils in Years 3 to 6, that promote their learning very well. However, teachers' planning for learning does not always show clearly enough how pupils' progress will be measured. Care, welfare and guidance are very good, as is the partnership with parents. There are also very good and productive links with other schools in a local partnership, and with the local community.

## **LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT**

**The leadership and management of the school are good.** Leadership is very good, and the headteacher has clear vision for the school's development and for the education provided for all pupils. Management and governance are both good. The teamwork of the small teaching staff, who hold an extensive range of key subject responsibilities, effectively puts into practice the school's aim to develop skilled learners. The governing body takes an active interest in school and influences the approach the school takes to teaching and learning. However, the monitoring of achievement is not always sufficiently focused on National Curriculum requirements.

## **PARENTS' AND PUPILS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL**

Both parents and pupils generally hold the school in high regard, evidenced by the distances many travel to attend here. Parents particularly welcome the dedication of the whole staff, and the family feeling they generate in the school. Pupils also like the teachers' caring approach, opportunities for sport and ICT, and also the trips, including residential trips.

## **IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED**

Given that this is a very effective school, the most important things the school should do to improve are:

- Clarify how pupils' entitlement to the National Curriculum is met by using the National Curriculum attainment targets and other achievement guidance to assess their progress.
- Improve pupils' standards of handwriting and the presentation of their work.

and, to meet statutory requirements:

- Ensure that the governor's annual report to parents contains all the required sections.

## **PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS**

### **STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS**

#### **Standards achieved in areas of learning and subjects**

Pupils achieve well, and pupils with special educational needs achieve very well for their capabilities. Standards in all core subjects are above average.

#### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Children achieve well in reception, and reach above the levels expected for their age in personal, social and emotional development.
- Pupils continue to achieve well from Year 1 to Year 6 in English, mathematics, science and information and communication technology.
- Pupils achieve very well in speaking and listening, and in mathematics by the end of Year 2 and music by the end of Year 6.
- Pupils with special educational needs achieve very well, including those with statutory statements of their need.
- Older pupils' handwriting and presentation of work are often careless and untidy.

#### **Commentary**

1. Currently, children in the reception group achieve well, and are on track to achieve at least the levels expected in the recommended areas of learning for their age. They achieve particularly well in personal, social and emotional development. In language and literacy, in mathematics and in personal development almost all pupils are on course to reach or exceed the expected levels for their age by the end of reception year. Teachers' records show that similar levels are also likely to be achieved in the remaining areas of knowledge and understanding of the world, creative development and physical development.
2. The tables show how seven-year-old pupils achieved in national tests in reading, writing and mathematics, and how 11-year-old pupils achieved in national tests in English, mathematics and science compared to national results in 2003. These comparisons must be treated with extreme caution, however, as the number of pupils in each year group in the school is very small: for example, there were only seven pupils in the 2003 Year 6 group. Standards attained in national tests vary from year-to-year, as the tables indicate.
3. In the 2003 tests, Year 2 pupils achieved average results in reading, and well above average in writing and mathematics. These results compared very well with schools in similar circumstances in writing and mathematics, and matched those in similar schools in reading.

#### ***Standards in national tests at the end of Year 2 – average point scores in 2003***

Standards in:	School results	National results
reading	15.7 (15.3)	15.7 (15.8)
writing	15.9 (15.5)	14.6 (14.4)
mathematics	18.1 (16.3)	16.3 (16.5)

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*There were 9 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year*

- Year 2 pupils achieve well currently, and reach above average levels in speaking and listening, reading, writing, mathematics, science, information and communication technology (ICT) and music. The specific focus on reading improvement has had good impact this year, and pupils have good skills in using the sounds of letters and groups of letters to sound out words. Some of them have also begun to interpret text beyond its literal meaning, and read fiction and non-fiction texts confidently. Most pupils have well-developed speaking and listening skills and have good investigational skills for their age.
- Taking the last five years together, results for Year 6 have been above the national average. This represents good achievement, although the improving trend is slightly lower than the national trend. The 2003 results were unusually low for the school in English, but were above average in mathematics and well above average in science. The pace of pupils' progress varies from subject to subject.

### **Standards in national tests at the end of Year 6 – average point scores in 2003**

Standards in:	School results	National results
English	25.3 (28.6)	26.8 (27.0)
mathematics	27.9 (29.2)	26.8 (26.7)
science	30.4 (29.7)	28.6 (28.3)

*There were 7 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year*

- Currently, pupils in Year 6 achieve well, and reach above average standards in English, mathematics and science, and above expected levels in ICT and art and design. In music, they achieve very well. For example, they sing a good range of songs competently, and notate and play their own compositions using tuned and untuned instruments with style.
- Both boys and girls are confident speakers, and show in their discussions with each other and with adults that their speaking and listening skills are above the levels expected for their age. However, their handwriting is often careless and untidy, and work in books is not presented neatly. This occasionally leads to unnoticed mistakes in calculations or spellings.
- Most pupils have sound strategies for mental mathematics and have also have well-developed investigational skills in science. In each class, older pupils often work with younger ones which sometimes accelerates the progress of the younger pupils.
- Pupils with special educational needs generally achieve very well for their capabilities, although most attain levels below those expected for their age. Those pupils with a Statutory Statement of their special educational needs are very well supported to take part in all activities.

### **Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities**

Pupils' personal development is very good, and they become skilled, independent learners. Their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is very good. Pupils' attitudes to learning are very good, and they behave very well in and around the school. Attendance is well above average.

## Commentary

10. Pupils' personal development is a real strength of the school. The school's aims stress independence, personal responsibility and co-operation as major goals for learning, supported strongly by the parents. The whole staff works together to fulfil these aims very successfully, with good involvement from a number of governors. An important and very marked feature of the school is the way in which the pupils become skilled learners. They are expected from an early age to be inquisitive, ask questions, and develop good investigational skills, and they do.
11. Behaviour is very good in lessons and around the school. The school is a relaxed and calm learning environment where pupils and adults mix and work together very well. The key issue from the last inspection regarding the behaviour of older boys has been fully dealt with. The older pupils set a very good example for the younger ones, and help to ensure that they get on with each other in the playground and round the school. The school promotes excellent working relationships amongst the pupils, and with adults. This is particularly beneficial to those pupils with special educational needs who are included in all activities with tolerance and understanding. Occasionally, extreme behaviour causes concern for parents of other pupils in the class. The staff are very skilled in handling potentially difficult situations, however, and generally manage this behaviour sensitively and effectively.
12. The staff promote very good attitudes to learning amongst the pupils. They have very high expectations of how the pupils will concentrate on their work, and co-operate with staff and with each other. The pupils respond very well to the opportunities presented for independent and collaborative learning. As all the classes are mixed age there are many occasions for older pupils to help and support younger ones. Indeed, the Year 6 pupils are expected to lead the school in caring for the youngest pupils, and they do so willingly, with calm authority.
13. The school's ethos values pupils as individuals so that they develop very good understanding of spiritual, moral, social and cultural issues as they progress through the school, and particularly strong principles of what is right or wrong. Pupils display a keen sense of what is fair and whole school assemblies successfully promote an awareness of spirituality and the outstanding natural beauty of their surroundings to the pupils.
14. The school places a strong emphasis on residential visits that helps build awareness of social and cultural issues so that pupils speak very openly and honestly about their experiences of racial issues, for example. The pupils are very aware that the residential visits help them to mature and find out more about themselves and the importance of teamwork in achieving goals. There are good opportunities for pupils to learn about the variety of faith and cultural traditions in the world through religious education, history, geography, art, music and physical education. The quality of this work about the range and variety of these traditions in Britain is satisfactory.
15. Pupils accept responsibility readily for themselves, their work, and tasks around the school. For example, the Year 5 and 6 classroom is also used for assembly. The pupils move furniture and equipment around to accommodate this without fuss and without undue encroachment on lessons. The school council also assumes a degree of autonomy that is unusual in a primary school (see paragraph 33).

16. Attendance is well above average, and contributes well to pupils' success in learning. Parents make a significant contribution here, as many bring their children long distances to attend the school. There has been no unauthorised absence.

### **Attendance in the latest complete reporting year (%)**

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
School data	4.6	School data	0.0
National data	5.4	National data	0.4

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

### **Exclusions**

There have been no exclusions in the recent past.

## **QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL**

**The quality of education is good.** Good teaching based in a rich curriculum leads to the pupils achieving well, particularly in their personal development.

### **Teaching and learning**

The quality of teaching and learning is good with some very good features, and rich learning experiences develop thoughtful, questioning, but determined learners. Assessment is good overall, but satisfactory for the junior classes.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The staff have good subject knowledge and good understanding of how to link learning between different subjects.
- They are skilled in motivating and inspiring the pupils to learn.
- This enables the pupils to be very interested in their work, to collaborate well, and persevere.
- The staff insist on high standards of behaviour and independence, and provide very good role models for positive relationships.
- The support staff make a very good contribution to pupils' learning, particularly for those pupils with special educational needs.
- Assessment is good in the areas of learning for reception and in English, mathematics and science from Years 1 and 2, but does not always make clear enough what is expected of pupils of different ages in the junior classes.

### **Commentary**

17. The table shows that no unsatisfactory teaching was seen, and that teaching in most lessons was good. In one in every five lessons it was very good or excellent.

### Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 21 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
2	2	13	4	0	0	0

The table gives the number of lessons observed in each of the seven categories used to make judgements about lessons.

18. The positive learning atmosphere created by the staff and welcomed by parents and pupils promotes good achievement in most areas of learning. This is remarkable in such a small school, where each member of staff has many subject responsibilities. The headteacher teaches for four days, as well as running the school and coordinating four subjects. Similarly, a recently qualified teacher leads the Foundation Stage curriculum and information technology, with good support from her mentor, who is also the coordinator for special educational needs and five subjects. They work together remarkably well, ensuring through regular discussion and planning meetings that the complex web of activities, visitors and residential visits is effectively delivered.
19. There is a good concentration on learning literacy and numeracy skills in order that the pupils will be able to use these to support their learning in other areas. Speaking and listening develop strongly as the staff provide many opportunities for pupils to discuss their work with them and with each other. Much of the assessment of pupils' progress and achievement in English and mathematics is through informal discussions, from which pupils and staff generally develop a good understanding of what has been learned, and what steps should be taken next.
20. Each class has mixed age groups, so that teachers' planning for learning has to cover a wide range. This is effective, particularly for the reception, Year 1 and 2 pupils. Here, the very good use of support staff ensures that the different year groups have work planned specifically at the right level to promote their further development. This planning is most effective in the areas of learning for children in reception, and for other pupils in English, mathematics and science. Teachers' planning in other subjects does not always make clear the levels of expectation for the different year groups in a class. For example, in games lessons pupils have good opportunities to practise throwing and catching a ball. However, lesson plans do not always show the different levels pupils of different age and competence will be expected to achieve. This makes the assessment of pupils' progress and achievement difficult.
21. The high quality of working relationships fostered by the staff promotes the pupils' confidence and self-esteem very successfully. This is exemplified in the weekly praising assembly that helps the whole school community to share and celebrate everyone's achievements. Here, staff and pupils give certificates to those pupils (and staff) who have excelled in some way during the week. A boy with special educational needs was praised by two older pupils for his effort and progress, and he danced out of assembly at the end proudly waving his certificates. An older boy received three certificates for bravery in coping with a blow in the eye from a ball in games. This reinforces very successfully the school's key message that personal development and academic learning are intrinsically linked in the all-round progress of the pupils.

22. The school uses residential visits as an important aspect of the pupils' learning from Years 3 to 6. Parents and pupils value these experiences, and they contribute significantly to learning in a number of areas. A key focus for all these experiences is to develop pupils' life skills, and their confidence and competence as independent learners. Year 3 and 4 pupils described their experience as contributing very well to their team work skills. They have a range of outdoor and adventurous activities that they plan beforehand, and they write about these and talk to younger pupils about them on their return. Year 6 pupils related the benefits they have gained from planning and costing their trip to London. The high quality 'Rough Guides' they produced on their return show how effectively this approach allows them to use the skills they have developed in a practical situation.
23. One teacher works one day per week, taking each class for music, and the Year 5 and 6 class in the afternoon to provide time for the headteacher to perform her school-wide duties. This teacher does this well, remarkably knowing each child's name and disposition throughout the school. She delivered an excellent music lesson for the youngest class, supported very well by three support staff.

#### **Musical inclusion delights children with special educational need.**

A class of 20 mainly reception children, with some Year 1 and Year 2 pupils, enjoyed listening, singing, clapping and playing instruments together. The part-time teacher knows the children well. This is vital, as there are three pupils with complex special educational needs, each with a support assistant. She skilfully ensured with the support of the support staff that all the pupils took a full part in the lesson, and coaxed those who have difficulty in co-operative group activity to join in. Her engaging and swiftly moving repertoire of songs and musical activities excited and motivated the whole class. Within this, she managed to focus individual tasks to develop the confidence and involvement of the children with special educational needs. They smiled with shared pleasure, one of them shouting with joy as he managed to play the instrument in strict time with the rhythm of the song. All the pupils fully enjoyed this musical feast, and groaned when the lesson was over.

24. For general teaching and learning activities the reception group includes three children with statutory statements of their special educational needs, one of whom is of reception age, and one from each of Year 1 and Year 2. One of these children attends on a part-time basis, to be integrated gradually until he is able to benefit from working with children of his own age. As the year groups are small, many activities begin or end with reception, Year 1 and Year 2 pupils together, as they are for registration. This allows the Year 1 and Year 2 pupils with statements to be with their age peers for a significant amount of time. The pupils often then separate into year groups for the main part of the lesson, and the three pupils with statements work as part of the reception group with their support assistants. This works well, and the reception group make good progress as a whole, and those pupils with special educational needs make very good progress, particularly in their personal development.

### **The curriculum**

The school has an effective curriculum. There are very good opportunities for rich experiences for the pupils within and beyond the school day which enhance their learning well. The accommodation and resources also make a good contribution to learning.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- An extensive range of experiences in all age groups successfully supports learning and personal development, particularly the residential experiences and after-school clubs.

- The provision for pupils with special educational needs is very successful in enabling them to make brisk progress.
- Although satisfactory and used very well, the accommodation has limited space indoors which restricts ready access to some facilities, such as the library, areas for group and individual work.
- The evaluation of the curriculum and its effect on teaching and learning is regular, continuous, and informal. Although this generally works very well, it has limitations in sharing the process with others and checking the impact of the curriculum on pupils' progress over time.

## Commentary

25. The curriculum meets statutory requirements. The school effectively adapts and enhances its provision to ensure it meets pupils' needs and also supports the school's strong commitment to ensuring that pupils have the skills to be good learners. As this is a small school, the planning and organisation that has resulted is complex but overall very effective. A school priority is to know each pupil well and create a learning environment in which pupils can make a confident contribution to their own learning and that of others. This is done well. This enables pupils of different ages and levels of attainment, particularly those with special educational needs, to be included in each other's work and play. As a result, there is a familiarity with other stages of learning that enables pupils to see what they might achieve, and to be prepared to ask for help.
26. Against this positive background, the staff have developed a system for planning experiences which generate stimulating learning opportunities. This includes activities after the school day, such as learning to play the guitar, early work on learning French, and sport such as Kwik Cricket. In addition, there are five residential visits for junior year groups, notably a trip to London which is planned and organised by the pupils. There is provision for sex education and learning about the advantages and danger of drugs, as well as developing the pupils' social skills. Good use is also made of the opportunities for sport provided by the consortium of local schools, led by a local secondary school. Overall, this system ensures pupils at all levels of attainment have worthwhile opportunities which encourage them to make progress.
27. In order to make sure that pupils make suitable progress in their learning, the staff pay particular attention to planning the curriculum by building on what pupils already know and can do. Lesson plans are detailed, mainly because there is an emphasis on individual progress, and pupils are encouraged to identify what they understand and also where they need further explanation or practice. This results in the curriculum provision being flexible from year to year in order to match the needs of pupils in a particular year group. This generally works well.
28. However, the good range of curricular experiences is not sufficiently well linked to a clear process for setting targets for achievement, with timescales, which enable comparisons of pupils' progress with the national expectations for different age groups. In most subjects teachers have the expertise to set these expectations informally as they plan lessons, but sometimes the pace of learning is too slow for some pupils to achieve as well as they should. In addition, as pupils often record their written work in topic books which include several subjects, their progress in specific subjects is not easy for staff or pupils to monitor and to decide if the progress made is good enough.
29. The accommodation is used well to support the school's active approach to learning. Classrooms are of a reasonable size and refurbishment and extensions have helped to provide an ICT suite and an outdoor classroom that is extensively used. The extensive grounds are a valuable resource including a large garden area and an activity trail with climbing and balancing equipment. Within the school, the regular movement of furniture enables assemblies and drama to take place and a small library is available. However, there is no hall, so for some physical education activities the pupils have a long walk to the village hall. There is little room for the quiet teaching of small groups. This situation is set to improve as bids to improve this situation by extending the school building have recently been accepted by the local education authority. Resources are generally good and meet the needs of the present curriculum and of

the pupils with special educational needs, although access to the material in the library is not yet supported by a suitable catalogue system.

### **Care, guidance and support**

The levels of care and support provided for the pupils are **very good**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The ethos of the school ensures pupils learn and develop as individuals.
- Staff have close and trusting relationships with pupils.
- The school council has authority and responsibilities.
- The school makes good use of the facilities it has.

### **Commentary**

30. The school cares for the pupils as individuals so that they develop into caring but confident children who are concerned about their relationships with others. The pupils are from different age groups and with varied abilities in each class but they work very well with each other so that learning is a pleasurable and stress-free experience. Pupils display a level of care towards others by ensuring, for example, that the school gate is kept locked for safety purposes, helping pupils with special needs in a natural and caring way and the awarding of 'praising certificates' to both other pupils and staff. Because of the small size of the school there are frequent opportunities for pupils to take on responsibilities, be it a leading part in drama or to participate in a chosen sport for the school. Staff use these opportunities well to guide and support the pupils in these roles.
31. Because pupils are in one class for a number of years, all staff know the pupils very well and relationships are very close with pupils having trust in the staff and feeling able to approach them if they have concerns. Staff know the pupils' individual capabilities very well and also know their family circumstances so that guidance and support is individual to the child and any problems quickly identified.
32. The school has developed an individual approach to encouraging the school council to develop and progress in its own way and at its own pace. There is no committee, no agenda, no minutes and meetings are arranged as required. Years 4, 5 and 6 can be democratically elected to the council if required but this year there are no Year 4 members because they perceive the task as being difficult for them: some are already thinking about being on the council next year. The council plays a very active and vigilant monitoring role around the school, be it observing for bad behaviour in the playground or being watchful that younger pupils are being well treated. The school has given the school council a great deal of freedom to develop and in return they have used their authority in the school responsibly.
33. The pupils benefit from the large play areas, the activity trail and imaginative use of other areas as part of the focus on healthy living.

### **Partnership with parents, other schools and the community**

Links with parents and other schools are very good. Links to the community are good.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The school places a very high priority on communication with parents.
- The school has very well developed links to other schools.
- Reports to parents are generally very informative, but they do not provide sufficient information on how pupils are progressing in relation to national expectations.

## **Commentary**

34. The school places a very high priority on building good relationships with parents so that pupils benefit from the help that their parents can give them. Following the introduction of mini-buses to transport a significant proportion of pupils to and from school it was noticed that parents no longer had the regular opportunity to meet with the school staff at the start and end of the school day. The governors therefore embarked on an improvement programme and produced a questionnaire for parents. From the information provided, a parent governor, together with another parent, took over the half-termly newsletter to parents, which contains a wide range of information. This details the curriculum areas each class will be working on so that parents can assist their child, for example.
35. The governors introduced 'tea and talk' sessions before the end of a school day where parents can meet governors and also produce a 'what's on' notice that includes community events as well as a list of coming school activities. Parents also benefit from a shared assembly each Friday and the school's genuine open door policy ensures that parents have rapid access to staff if necessary.
36. Nursery, primary and secondary schools in the area have formed a long-established, successful Millom Consortium. The consortium strives to ensure that pupils in the area are not disadvantaged by living in a remote rural area and meets regularly to achieve their objectives. The local secondary school is very positive in its comments about the capabilities and personal qualities that pupils from the school display. A range of visits is carefully arranged so that the transition from a small school to what could be a very large school is an enjoyable process for the pupils.
37. The annual reports that parents receive on their child's progress and learning are very personal to the child, give targets for the core subjects and state what the child needs to do to improve. However, a minor weakness is that they do not give sufficient information on how the child is progressing in relation to national expectations for their age.

## **LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT**

Overall, the leadership and management of the school are good. Leadership is very good. Management and governance are both good.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Leadership provides exceptionally strong commitment to including all pupils in the school's provision whatever their background, gender or level of attainment.
- The headteacher has very clear vision for the school's development and for the education provided for all pupils.
- The teamwork of the small teaching staff is very effective in putting into practice the school's aim to develop skilled learners.
- The monitoring of the work of the school is effective in many ways, but it is not sufficiently systematic to ensure all pupils are achieving to their full potential.

- All the staff are strongly committed to improvement, indicated by their enthusiasm for professional development.
- The involvement of the school in a consortium of local schools provides a very useful additional dimension to the leadership and management of the school.

## Commentary

38. Leadership is very good. The school is very well led by a capable and experienced headteacher. The governing body and headteacher share the view that pupils should have a good appetite for learning, be competent in the subjects of the curriculum and develop the skills to pursue their own improvement. The headteacher skilfully enables the day-to-day work of the school to support this view by providing a wide range of opportunities for pupils to be actively involved in their own learning, with the guidance and support of adults. As there are only two other full-time teachers, the school has chosen a collective approach to the leadership of the curriculum. This works well. It requires the staff team to be involved frequently in discussions on how to plan and teach the curriculum and individual pupils, which in turn demands the sharing of expertise and guidance.
39. When the full-time staff do not have the necessary expertise to ensure innovative leadership, the team approach is extended to include part-time staff, such as the specialist music teacher. In addition, teachers sometimes directly influence their subject, by teaching it throughout the school, as in religious education. The teaching assistants are also fully involved in the team in the expectation that everyone will be prepared to take the initiative in their areas they work. This works well as there is a consistent approach to pupils and learning from all staff, and an eagerness to improve through challenging professional development. Pupils of all ages and levels of attainment benefit from this shared understanding of the school's approach. They are well known and encouraged by every adult, which is of particular value to those with significant special educational needs who achieve well in the family atmosphere and from the "can do" attitude.
40. Management is good. The regular meetings of staff and governors consider how the school might improve based on their assessments of pupils' progress, and the headteacher has maintained a successful drive to improve the school's facilities for many years. The headteacher has a sound overview of the work of the school through teaching the two oldest year groups, and through the regular review and planning meetings with the teaching staff which form the basis of teaching and learning. The monitoring of pupils' performance in relation to national expectations for their age is less effective, so that it is not always clear whether pupils' evident progress is sufficiently brisk. The involvement with the consortium of local schools brings the advantage of discussing common strengths and weaknesses and has enabled some activities to benefit from communal strengths. For example, the co-ordinators for special educational needs provision worked together to produce a joint policy on gifted and talented pupils.
41. The management of staff performance is well supported by clear systems, including discussions about the achievement of pupils in their care. Staff report their targets for improvement have developed their skills, especially in using stimulating resources to capture pupils' interest. Continuing professional development is a major feature of all staff adding to both their confidence and expertise. The induction arrangements for the new teacher have worked very well, with full inclusion into the leadership and management discussions enabling her to quickly gain the knowledge of how the school works and to have an opportunity to share fresh ideas.

42. Support staff are effectively deployed and several carry significant responsibilities for the progress of pupils, mainly, but not entirely, those with special educational needs. The workload of teachers is heavy as this is a small school, but helped by the significant contributions of the support staff especially working with small groups of pupils. The use of other adults to support administrative tasks, some of the after school provision and music, also lightens the workload a little. Sound financial management and due regard for best value in purchasing enables the school to maintain a steady improvement in resources and facilities.
43. Governance is good. The governing body takes an active interest in school and influences the approach the school takes to teaching and learning. This is clearly evident in the expectations set during the appointment of a new headteacher to replace the present headteacher when she retires at the end of the current term. Governors know the school well. There is a regular routine of a governor visiting the school each month, in addition to the visits made by the chair and other individual governors. The monthly visits result in written reports to the governing body and usually reflect the expertise of individual governors. For example, one governor with expertise in agriculture recognised a plant in the school grounds as being undesirable for health reasons, and a parent governor was keen to see how well the pupils had settled with a newly appointed teacher. The governors seen during the inspection were knowledgeable about both the school and wider educational issues, and due attention is paid to ensuring that statutory requirements are met. For example, governors are keen to ensure that their draft policy on race equality is finalised and adopted. They have a sound knowledge of their roles and the reasons for the priorities in the strategic plan for improvement.
44. This plan is suitably based on a review of the previous year with staff then providing outline priorities for the next three years. These are discussed with governors, and parents are consulted to establish what the school does well and where they feel improvements are needed, before the plan is finalised. The governors have confidence in the headteacher and staff but also have suitable means to check that the improvement plan's actions are being undertaken. The governing body has the benefit of the headteacher's written report at each meeting which has a regular item on pupils' achievement. National test results provide only limited information as each year group usually consists of less than ten pupils. Nonetheless, the performance management of all teaching staff, reports from parents and the secondary schools, analysis of test results and the willingness of pupils to share their views, are all taken into account and contribute to the governing body's understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses. Although the improvement plan is not presented in an easy format for evaluation, the priorities are broadly in line with the inspection findings.
45. The school has very effectively used its resources to ensure suitable staffing levels and support, but a barrier to raising achievement is having a small teaching staff to deal with the full age range and areas of responsibilities. However, the school's approach to personal development has ensured the pupils are exceptional learners and most bring their own initiative, independence, skills and energy to improving their own achievement.

### ***Financial information for the year April 2003 to March 2004***

Income and expenditure (£)	
Total income	178,192
Total expenditure	178,188
Expenditure per pupil	2,874

Balances (£)	
Balance from previous year	6,227
Balance carried forward to the next	14,066

## **PART C: THE QUALITY OF EDUCATION IN AREAS OF LEARNING and SUBJECTS**

### **Foundation Stage**

**Provision in the Foundation Stage is good.** (As there are only seven pupils in reception, and no nursery, a short report is provided).

46. The school's standard intake into reception comprises only nine children, and seven were admitted this year. Although the school does not have a nursery, most of the children admitted have had experience of nursery education. There is often a broad range of attainment among the new entrants, although most are about average for their age. The previous inspection took place at a very early stage of the year when the children had only just entered the reception year so few judgements could be made. However, the school has continued to develop the Foundation Stage since the last inspection and the curriculum is now firmly in place with improved provision.
47. At present there are seven pupils in the reception year, along with two older children who benefit from the Foundation Stage experiences. They are taught in a class which also contains Year 1 and Year 2 pupils, but have additional adult support and special facilities, such as access to sand and water play, to ensure the Foundation Stage curriculum is taught in a suitable environment for younger children. The class teacher is responsible for the Foundation Stage, plans their work and often introduces new learning, before the teaching assistants continue with helping the children to practise what has been taught or develop their learning in other ways. This organisation works well, helped considerably by the availability of a teaching assistant who has special responsibility for a child with special educational needs.
48. The quality of the teaching is good and the children achieve well. The teacher's planning is detailed, providing suitable activities for the age group and guidance for the teaching assistants who have a significant role in teaching this age group. Good use is made of the outdoor classroom for creating learning opportunities, such as sand and water play. Children also have regular one-to-one attention from an adult, which gives good opportunities to build relationships and to check their understanding. However, the range of attainment within the group is widening, and insufficient attention is given to checking that every pupil has the challenge that enables them to achieve as well as they can, especially those pupils who learn quickly and are beginning to find some work easy.
49. Not all areas of learning were observed during the inspection, but in language and literacy, mathematics and personal, social and emotional development almost all pupils are on course to reach or exceed the expected standards for their age by the end of the reception year. Teachers' records indicate that similar standards are also likely to be achieved in the remaining areas of knowledge and understanding of the world, creative development and physical development.

### **Strengths and weaknesses**

- Pupils' achievement is good and some are now ready for more challenging activities.
- Teaching assistants provide good quality support.
- Pupils with special educational needs make very good progress.

- Alterations to the building have improved the accommodation and facilities for the age group.

## Commentary

50. In **communication, language and literacy development** the school's emphasis on the use of spoken language is a major feature of the children's work. They have the advantage of working alongside older pupils regularly and gain much from listening to their discussions in class and in play situations. Particularly useful is the vocabulary associated with subjects such as mathematics, for example, the names of shapes and numbers. Most reception year pupils have the confidence to contribute to class discussions, and are well able to express their views and communicate their needs in small group discussions. When working with teaching assistants on activities such as handwriting or games which reinforce their understanding of the names and sounds of letters, children listen carefully and follow instructions well. Most read simple words correctly and their own writing is emerging into recognisable letters and sometimes words. The children have a love of stories and books, and retell a fictional story well, with an understandable sequence of events and good knowledge of the characters. Overall, progress is good, children achieve well and almost all are on course to reach at least the standards expected for their age at the end of the reception year.
51. In **mathematical development** the children achieve well for their age. They have made good progress since they entered school and the most competent are now ready for more challenging activities. Sometimes the children are included in the early stages of the teacher's introduction of a mathematics lesson for the older pupils before leaving to undertake activities more appropriate to their age. This works well. For example, in a lesson about the properties of various two-dimensional shapes, the children initially took part in the class discussion where they had the benefit of older pupils naming and describing the shapes chosen unseen from a "feely bag" before they took their turn. This was a short session but effective in giving the children an opportunity to hear and use the language of mathematics. This understanding was then consolidated in a small group session, taught by the teaching assistants, where the children had the personal attention to check the extent of their knowledge of shapes. They were encouraged to describe various shapes including the colour, and to recognise similarities and differences. By the time they moved into the playground and garden to identify shapes in the natural and built environment, they were confident and accurate in their recognition. For example, several children clearly demonstrated that they knew the difference between the square shape of a paving slabs and the rectangular shape of the bench seat. Overall, achievement is good and almost all are on course to attain at least the expected standards for their age by the end of the reception year.
52. Good provision is made for the children's **personal, social and emotional development**, and they respond well. Personal development is a strength of the school and begins with the youngest children. There is a wide range of learning experiences, including working together in small groups; taking responsibility for themselves such as when they walk back into school after playtimes or when in a large group such as an assembly. Their behaviour is good and they know school routines well. They have good relationships with the staff, who know them well, and this gives them confidence to explore ideas and share views. They are keen to learn and most show remarkable skill for their age in working independently while also recognising when they need to ask for support,

and how to ask for it. Achievement is good and all are on course to at least meet the expectations for their age by the end of the reception year.

## **SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 1 and 2**

### **English**

Provision in English is **good**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Standards are above average by Year 2 and Year 6, and pupils achieve well across the school.
- Teaching is good, sometimes very good, and leads to good learning for the pupils.
- Recent changes to developing pupils' reading skills have been successful.
- Pupils are confident in discussions with staff and other pupils, and are good listeners.
- Handwriting is often untidy and spoils the presentation of work, although the quality of the content is often good.

### **Commentary**

53. Standards have returned this year to their usual above average levels for the school by Year 6, as at the last inspection. This follows a fall last year when three pupils out of seven in the cohort did not achieve the expected level in the national tests in 2003. However, as the cohorts are so small, caution is needed in interpreting test results. For example, results in the tests in 2002 were well above average. Results have risen over the last five years, but at a slightly lower level than the national rise. By Year 2, standards are also above average now, improved in reading since last year when they were average, and maintained at above average in writing. These standards represent good achievement since entry for both Year 2 and Year 6 pupils. There is no pattern in the relative attainment of boys and girls from year to year. Pupils with special educational needs generally achieve very well, making very good progress towards the targets set for them.
54. Pupils achieve particularly well in speaking and listening. The school promotes this aspect in all areas of the school's work, and pupils are encouraged to discuss their work in pairs and groups regularly. They listen well, and follow instructions carefully. Reading is encouraged effectively, and many pupils are avid and determined readers. Parents are very supportive here, and support the school well by helping their children at home. Following disappointing results last year, the school has adopted new strategies this year to promote interest and confidence amongst the pupils. For example, reading in groups is better focused, and pupils' skills have improved well. Writing and spelling skills are above average, and pupils in Year 2 write good descriptions of how to ride a horse, or start up a trials bike, at levels above those expected for their age. Handwriting is satisfactory overall, but deteriorates for older pupils because the teachers' expectations are not high enough.
55. The quality of teaching is consistently good, and occasionally very good or excellent. For Years 1 and 2, it is good. In a good Year 1 reading session, the teacher took a systematic approach to developing the pupils' skills in sounding letters, and developing the pupils' understanding of how the letter 'e' has 'magic' properties when it is at the end of a word such as 'late' or 'mine'. She used a good range of techniques, including singing a little rhyme, to reinforce the pupils' learning well. Year 2 pupils listened very carefully as the learning support assistant retold a story, joining in well with the repeated chorus. Good links were made here between listening (to the story), speaking (discussing own chorus) and writing (setting the rhythmic chorus down on a whiteboard).

56. In an excellent session for Year 4 high attaining pupils, the teacher built very well on the well-planned and completed homework about a radio play written by a friend of hers. The pupils were excited and strongly motivated, using drama briefly to explore nuances of characterisation before developing the characters further. The teacher kept a very good pace, and gave the pupils very clear guidance based in excellent planning for this activity. The two teachers who taught Year 5 and 6 pupils combined well to continue the development of the fantasy story based on a theme from the pupils' artwork. It was clear that the culmination of the school's development of the pupils' learning skills is expressed particularly well by the older pupils. This was exemplified by the high quality guides prepared for next year's group of pupils to help them plan their trip to London. The pupils used their ICT skills well to produce an illustrated booklet often containing sharp advice and good humour.
57. The subject is well led and managed, and a good overview is kept of the work of the whole school. The changes planned in this year's school improvement plan based on monitoring and evaluation have been effective in raising standards. Standards have been maintained since the previous inspection.

### **Language and literacy across the curriculum**

Speaking and listening develop well in other subjects such as science and mathematics. This is because pupils are encouraged to discuss their work as they progress. Reading supports work in geography and history well, and is substantially used in ICT for research. Pupils write frequently about their work across the curriculum, and older pupils have a 'rough book' in which they annotate their learning in their own way. Handwriting often mars the quality of presentation of work, however.

### **MATHEMATICS**

Provision in mathematics is **good**.

#### **Main Strengths and weaknesses**

- Standards are good by Year 2 and Year 6 and most pupils achieve well throughout the school.
- Teaching is good overall, with particular skills in the questioning and flexibility in modifying planned work to meet pupils' needs.
- Pupils have positive attitudes and the ability to recognise when they need support.
- Assessment, although sound, is not sufficiently reflected in the planning of pupils' learning.
- Teaching assistants work very effectively with small groups of pupils or individual.
- The presentation of pupils' work in junior classes is often untidy and, on occasions, leads to inaccuracies.

### **Commentary**

58. The results of national tests from the small cohorts of Year 2 and Year 6 pupils provide only a general guide to attainment. However, in 2003 the school's results at Year 2 were well above those of other schools nationally and also those of schools with similar free school meals entitlement. This was a considerable improvement from the previous year. Results for Year 6 pupils were above schools nationally and also similar schools. This was a slight fall from the previous year. Over the last few years, the school's results at

Year 6 have at least matched those of schools nationally and similar schools, and have often been above them.

59. Standards now are above average overall and have improved since the last inspection. Although there is variability between pupils, most attain the expectations for their age group, and a significant minority exceed them. By Year 2 standards are good and pupils achieve well, including those with special educational needs. Over a third of Year 2 pupils are working above the level expected for their age across a good range of topics in mathematics with good presentation and a secure base of practical activities.
60. By Year 6, the good standards have been maintained and pupils continue to achieve well. Most pupils are confident in their mathematics work and approach new learning with interest. Most have sound strategies for mental mathematics, can explain their methods or reasoning when solving problems and can identify when they need help.
61. Pupils with special educational needs achieve very well, although standards are often below those expected for their age group. They work well with other pupils and generally gain from the pace of group work, although they often need the additional support of an adult to ensure they have understood the work they have completed. The teaching assistants work well in these circumstances, often giving a pupil individual attention and so enabling them to achieve their targets.
62. The quality of teaching is good overall. Teachers have good subject knowledge and prepare resources for lessons well. They are particularly skilful at framing questions which challenge pupils at different levels of attainment. Planning for lessons is often detailed, although it tends to emphasise the teaching rather than the objectives for pupils' learning. There is a clear focus on number work, but suitable attention is given to other areas of mathematics. The expected learning for pupils at different levels of prior attainment is rarely identified precisely, especially in Years 3 to 6, and this reduces the effectiveness of assessment. However, during lessons the teachers are often clear about what they expect of pupils and use their time well to check that pupils understand. If it becomes evident during a lesson that a particular group of pupils is not suitably challenged, with tasks that are either too hard or too easy, it is not unusual for teachers to modify their planned organisation in order to improve the match of teaching and tasks to the pupils' needs. This is a strength of the teaching and, given the pupils' ability to respond well to different circumstances, there is usually little disruption to the lesson.
63. In the class containing pupils from the reception year to Year 2, this flexibility is also evident on occasions, but is not needed often as the teacher's planning has to take account of the learning of very young children and the deployment of staff, some of whom work with pupils with significant special needs. As a result the match of work to the pupils' stage of learning is usually anticipated accurately in advance. This enables suitable resources to be available for different groups of pupils and also gives the teacher the opportunity to have a sustained period of time with a small group of pupils. This teaching of smaller groups is also evident in other classes and works well. It has the advantage of enabling the pupils to start work quickly without an overlong introduction to the lesson, and also to allow the teacher to check carefully, through questioning and observation, how well the pupils are progressing.
64. Throughout the school the pupils' learning is enhanced by the regular use of practical work in all year groups, and the high proportion of time that the pupils are actively involved in

interesting mathematical tasks during a lesson. However, although work is assessed and recorded, with examples of good quality marking in the infant class, there is not a clear strategy to ensure that all pupils are making the progress they should. Recent initiatives have led to targets being set for yearly improvement and progress within a specific aspect of mathematics, but these are at an early stage and not yet systematically implemented.

65. Pupils have good basic knowledge of aspects such as place value and multiplication patterns, which enables them to work quickly when undertaking new work or investigations. They are active in searching for solutions to any difficulties they may have, and when guidance is requested from the teacher, they listen carefully to the explanations and quickly modify their strategies. When responding to questions they are willing to explore different ideas and often ask questions in return.
66. The presentation of pupils' work is often untidy. This is sometimes because the work has been completed during an investigation, but usually it is because expectations are too low. This is particularly important in mathematics as there were examples of untidy work leading to inaccuracies, for example, in calculations where numbers were not aligned, and in measuring acute angles where the angle had been drawn with a blunt pencil making the angle difficult to measure.
67. The leadership and management of the subject are good. The co-ordinator is in her first year in the school and sets a good example of how to teach the subject in a class which contains several year groups. She has good subject knowledge and also recognises the expertise of other members of staff. She ensures staff are aware of national issues in mathematics and provides advice when needed. She has an opportunity to check the progress of pupils in other classes when she teaches Years 5 and 6 for one lesson each week, but otherwise the scrutiny of pupils' work is limited. Nonetheless, regular involvement in the team discussions about planning pupils' experiences through the school provides a general view of their progress. However, these discussions are not sufficiently informed by a systematic programme of checking individual pupils' achievement.

## **SCIENCE**

68. Only one lesson was available to be observed, in a class of Year 2, 3 and 4 pupils, so overall judgements about provision cannot be made. However, standards have been maintained at the levels seen at the last inspection.
69. Standards of attainment in science currently are good by Year 2 and Year 6. The 2003 national test results are from very small cohorts of pupils, nonetheless the Year 2 results indicated that the proportion of pupils attaining the expected Level 2 for their age compared well with other schools nationally, although were lower than other schools at the higher Level 3. Results at Year 6 have been at least satisfactory and sometimes good for the past three years and in 2003 were well above other schools nationally and above those of similar schools with a high proportion of pupils attaining the higher Level 5.
70. A planned cycle of topics throughout the school ensures appropriate work is covered in line with the National Curriculum requirements. There are suitable arrangements to revisit key skills and knowledge as the pupils move through the school in order to consolidate their understanding. There is a strong emphasis on practical work and in the lesson observed it was clear that the pupils enjoy the subject. Pupils are encouraged to bring

their own ideas to their work in science and, although the same topics were often covered by all the year groups in a mixed age class, the variety of methods and differing conclusions indicated the individuality of much of the work. This approach works well in ensuring that pupils have a broad range of experiences and topics to study, including the health and growth of the human body, although work involving planning investigations and tests without close direction from the teacher is the least well represented aspect of science.

71. Finding a single scientific activity which can be successfully adapted to meet the needs of the wide range of ages and levels of attainment in each class is a challenge for teachers. In both the pupils' work and the lesson seen, there is a tendency for there to be too little difference between the expectations for different groups of pupils despite the teacher's best efforts. This affects the work of pupils in the lower attaining group, which is often incomplete, more than those attaining the higher levels.
72. The subject is well led and managed. There is a science policy in place and clear guidance for teachers about what topics are to be taught in each year group, and how to help pupils develop the skills of scientific enquiry. Teachers have also observed each other teaching science in order to share expertise and help consistency of approach. Although assessment of science takes place, it is not affecting the planning of teaching and activities sufficiently, and as science work is often presented in topic books which include other subjects, monitoring of pupils' progress is time consuming. Nonetheless, pupils are excited about their work in science and keen to share what they know. Even from a young age their curiosity is encouraged. For example, in the school's garden one reception age pupil wanted to know how the roots of plants knew that they had to grow downwards into the soil. This approach to encouraging learners to think independently and raise questions is providing a good basis on which to systematically build scientific knowledge and skills.

## **INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY**

73. Only one lesson was observed, so overall judgements on provision cannot be made. The school has identified the need to raise pupils' skill levels by Year 6, but in those aspects seen, these were good.
74. Standards achieved are above average in those aspects seen in Year 2 and Year 6, mainly word-processing, research, and importing and manipulating images on screen. Pupils understand how to use digital cameras, tape recorders and other control equipment.
75. In the lesson for Year 2 pupils, they were taught to resize pictures and text they had merged on screen, and develop a 'Wanted' poster for a robber from a story they have been reading. They made good progress because the teaching was effective, and achieved above the levels expected for their age. They were comfortable in using the school's small new computer suite, and in working with the programs available.
76. Year 6 pupils have a good range of work saved in their personal files, and access them confidently. They explain what they have learned, and the features of the various computer programs they use. They have all produced good guidebooks using a desk-top publishing package.

77. The recently appointed teacher has taken on the role of advising staff on developments in the subject, and older pupils often help younger ones to develop their skills. For example, Year 6 pupils helped the reception pupils to use a floor robot. Resources available have improved recently, and standards in those aspects seen have risen since the last inspection. The pupils are very keen on the subject, and say that they have good opportunities to develop their skills.

### **Information and communication technology across the curriculum**

78. There are good opportunities for pupils to learn how to gather and store information for a variety of topics, culminating in the preparation for the Year 6 trip to London. Pupils use word-processing skills often in English, and data-handling programs in mathematics and science. They create images using art software, and explore CD-ROMs and the internet for information in geography and history.

## **HUMANITIES**

### **Geography and history**

79. No lessons were seen in history or geography, so no overall judgements are possible about provision.

80. The situation remains the same as the last inspection with history and geography taught within a rolling programme of topics. In junior classes, basic work is enhanced by a series of residential and other visits which, although covering several subjects, include a significant proportion of geographical skills and knowledge. This is particularly evident in the work relating to the visit to London by older pupils who have a major role in planning the visit. This involves arranging suitable travel plans; guidance on what to pack for the visit and identifying places to visit and the routes to take. Studies in history reflect the National Curriculum topics, including a topic on the Tudors for Year 5 and 6. The pupils' past work indicates a suitable level of detail is considered, but there was not enough evidence to make secure judgements on standards in either subject. However, some high quality work related to the school visits was seen in junior classes. Given the school's topic and visits approach, the system for checking that pupils make steady progress does not ensure that all pupils are achieving suitably high standards.

### **Religious education**

Provision in religious education is **satisfactory**.

### **Strengths and weaknesses**

- Pupils are knowledgeable about Bible stories and have a good understanding for their age of the moral and social messages conveyed.

### **Commentary**

81. Only one lesson, in the infant class, was observed. Standards are at least sound by Year 2 with good achievement for Year 2 pupils. There was insufficient evidence to judge standards and achievement in Year 6.

82. In the one lesson observed, the story of the prodigal son was brought to life by the teacher's enthusiasm and skilful direction of the pupils, using drama to engage their interest. Emphasising how each character would feel, their body language and the words chosen, proved an effective way to encourage young pupils to reflect on a complex message. By the end of the lesson, Year 2 pupils were able to recognise the tensions, argue their responses and reflect on different viewpoints. In junior classes, pupils' written work indicates other religions are studied and older pupils have a sound basis knowledge of the key features of the other main religions in Great Britain.
83. The leadership and management of the subject are satisfactory, with the co-ordinator being the specialist teacher and planning the curriculum through the year groups. The improvement in religious education noted at the last inspection has been maintained. The subject is taught in line with the locally agreed syllabus for the area, and has a regular place in the school timetable. Most lessons through the school are taught by the subject leader and this provides a good continuity of experiences from class to class. The subject is well supported by the school's day-to-day approach of respecting and caring for others and their preferences. This provides familiar experiences for pupils to relate to some aspects of the religious education syllabus.

### **CREATIVE, AESTHETIC, PRACTICAL AND PHYSICAL SUBJECTS**

84. No lessons were seen in art and design, one in design and technology, two in music and two in physical education.
85. The school places strong emphasis on the all-round development of the child, and ensures that this aspect of their learning has a secure place in the overall curriculum. The pupils comment that they really enjoy these subjects.
86. In **art and design**, there is a consistent approach across the school to developing the basic skills of observing, drawing, using a range of tools such as brushes, and a variety of media, such as chalk pastels, paint, modelling clay and fabrics.
87. Sketch books are used from the infants on to help pupils to try ideas out before completing them in finished work. Year 2 pupils have developed still life paintings of fruit and vegetables and tessellated patterns. Year 6 pupils have developed a wide range of techniques, including adapting the geometric and life forms from a study of Escher's work. This study has also been used as a stimulus in story-writing, making good links with work in English. There are also examples of good work in the style of Mondrian, using the pattern techniques from native Australian art, and carefully made and painted 'cushion' portraits of famous Tudor figures.
88. There are good examples of work by artists and craftspersons on display round the school as an inspiration and stimulus for the pupils.
89. In **design and technology**, younger pupils have designed and made a moving puppet, and older pupils have constructed powered carousels. In the lesson seen, Year 5 and 6 pupils continued to construct a wooden frame building using square dowel and rigid corner pieces. They have learned to cut a mitred corner at 45 degrees competently to make a pitched roof, and to fix the frame using glue.

90. They show average skills for their age and achieve satisfactorily in designing, making and evaluating their work. They appear not to have sufficient opportunities to use the skills they learn to design and make models for their own purposes from this evidence.

## **Music**

Provision in music is **good**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- An enthusiastic teacher catches and holds the pupils' interest.
- The pupils learn a wide range of songs that they sing well.
- Some pupils make very good progress in learning to play a musical instrument.

### **Commentary**

91. Standards achieved are above average in Year 2 and well above average in Year 6. This is because there is a real enthusiasm for the subject across the school, and the lead teacher is skilled. One lesson seen was excellent (see paragraph 24), and another was good.
92. Pupils sing well, and have a good repertoire of songs that they really enjoy performing. In the praising assembly, those pupils who are chosen for a certificate then choose the next song to be sung by the whole school. This is then performed by all, led with obvious pleasure by the staff, but in which all the pupils from reception to Year 6 join.
93. The teacher guides the pupils through the main elements of the subject skilfully, building on their growing skills as they move through the school. She helps the younger pupils to develop a good understanding of pulse, and to clap and accompany songs using untuned percussion instruments. She introduces simplified notation, but develops an understanding of standard notation as pupils' progress. She does this well through the use of a good variety of recorded music, songs, and the pupils' own compositions using tuned and untuned instruments. By using music from a variety of cultures she stimulates the pupils' cultural development. She also encourages pupils to listen to and appreciate both the music they and their peers create, and recorded music in different forms.
94. Some pupils learn to play guitar or woodwind instruments. No guitar playing was observed, but two girls played the clarinet in assembly. They have achieved good standards in a relatively short time, and have the confidence to play through mistakes, and to pick the music up in time if they have missed a note.
95. The subject is well led, and has improved since the last inspection.

## **Physical Education**

Provision in physical education is sound, with good features.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The school focuses well on pupils' physical health, in line with the Healthy Schools award.
- There are good outdoor facilities for games and fitness.

- There is no hall for gymnastics or dance.
- Pupils have good opportunities to take part in a wide range of games.

## **Commentary**

96. Standards achieved are as generally seen in Year 2 and Year 6. The school has a good focus on pupils' physical development, and parents have contributed well to the development of the school grounds by helping to pay for an excellent activity trail round the field. This is used well by the pupils (and on occasion the staff) to perform feats of agility and strength. Pupils are enthusiastic, and join in the physical activities provided with zest and enjoyment.
97. Reception children and pupils in Years 1 and 2 walked to the village hall for a parachute activity in the adjacent field. The facility is available to the school as they have no hall, although one is planned for the near future. The walk is testing for their age (almost a mile) prior to further physical activity. This group includes three pupils with significant special educational needs, and despite the reluctance shown by one of them, they were included fully in the team activities. These were managed well by the staff, so that all the pupils developed a good level of team co-operation.
98. The older pupils practised cricket and rounders' skills in their lessons. These were handled effectively by the teacher, who takes all the Year 3 to Year 6 pupils for their physical education lessons. Another pupil with significant special educational needs is in one of these classes, and despite some difficulties, the pupil took part in most of the activities. The teacher has good understanding of how to help pupils develop the necessary skills, but did not give sufficient opportunities for those in Years 3 and 4 to extend their skills. One group, however, made very good progress in a throwing and catching practice. The cricket practice was more effective for Year 5 and 6 pupils as it developed the skills in a game situation.
99. There are good opportunities for pupils to take part in games and sports activities with other schools, and to learn to swim. Outdoor activities are promoted well on the school fields, and through a series of residential activities, including canoeing, abseiling and sailing.
100. The coordinator leads the subject enthusiastically, and there is great hope that the acquisition of a hall will improve provision significantly. The subject has been maintained as an important element of the school's personal development programme for the pupils.

## **PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP**

101. The school has this aspect of learning at the heart of its curriculum. Only one lesson was observed, with the reception and infant class. This was in the theme of 'People who help us', teaching the pupils about '999' emergency services. This was effective in developing the idea for the pupils that these are helpful services, but should only be called on in real need. This was handled well by the teacher so that pupils made good progress in understanding the central message. The school council is expected to determine how to make its own decisions within broad parameters to develop the understanding that decision-making is an important activity in a democratic society. The programme is delivered in separate lessons, and also through subjects such as science and history, and the significant programme of residential visits. Because it is central to the school's work, it

actually permeates all that the school tries to achieve for and with the pupils. It is very successfully implemented as a central but informal plank of the pupils' all-round development.

## PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

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

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