

INSPECTION REPORT

BARROW C OF E PRIMARY SCHOOL

Great Barrow

LEA area: Cheshire

Unique reference number: 111270

Headteacher: Mr R Thomas

Lead inspector: Mr J Brennan

Dates of inspection: 1st – 3rd November 2004

Inspection number: 266373

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
Gender of pupils: Mixed
Number on roll: 50

School address: Great Barrow
Chester
Cheshire
Postcode: CH3 7HW

Telephone number: 01829 740455
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Appropriate authority: The governing body
Name of chair of governors: Eleanor Johnson

Date of previous inspection: May 1999

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

Barrow is a small village school situated in the village of Barrow, on the outskirts of Chester. Pupils come from a range of social backgrounds and, because of the small number of pupils joining the school in any one year, the abilities of the year group as a whole can vary considerably from one year to the next but for children in the current cohort are typical for their age. Currently nine per cent of pupils come from families entitled to free school meals. This is broadly average. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs is also broadly average. Five pupils have special educational needs, one of whom has a statement for their needs. Pupils are almost exclusively from a white British background.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
21094	John Brennan	Lead inspector	Art and Design
			Design and Technology
			English
			Science
			Citizenship
			Religious Education
			English as an Additional Language
			Special Educational Needs
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31012	Ann Welsh	Team inspector	Foundation Stage
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			History
			Information and Communication Technology
			Mathematics
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			Physical Education

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

OVERALL EVALUATION

This is a fairly effective school. Pupils' achievements are satisfactory, although they do better in acquiring the basic skills than in the use they put them to. This is because of some shortcomings in management. Successful leadership has led to a very positive ethos, in which relationships are very good, and pupils behave very well. The school gives satisfactory value for money.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- Pupils achieve well in learning to read and in speaking and listening and, in Years 3 to 6, in mathematics.
- A lack of ambition in some teaching means that work is not always thought provoking and insufficient opportunities are provided for pupils to work independently.
- Pupils get on very well with each other and with adults.
- The school leaders have created a very good atmosphere for learning as a result pupils have very positive attitudes to school.
- There are shortcomings in the way the school monitors teaching and learning and analyses performance data.
- There is a good range of visits and clubs which enliven pupils' experiences.
- The school is a central part of the local village community.
- The school works well with parents.

The school has made satisfactory improvement since the last inspection. Standards have risen in information and communications technology (ICT). They have not improved sufficiently over time in writing and in science, they have declined. There is scope to give pupils more independence and choice in lessons, a weakness noted in the last inspection. Despite best efforts, some aspects of accommodation are unsatisfactory. Curriculum planning has improved but the continuing lack of monitoring means that there are variations in how well schemes of work are implemented.

STANDARDS ACHIEVED

Results in National Curriculum tests at the end of Year 6, compared with:	all schools			similar schools
	2002	2003	2004	2004
English	A	D	A*	A*
mathematics	B	C	A	A
science	B	D	A	B

*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' achievements are satisfactory. Children in the Foundation Stage achieve well in their personal development. Achievement in language and literacy skills and in children's mathematical development in the Foundation Stage is satisfactory and pupils are on course to meet the early learning goals expected of them. It was not possible to judge standards and achievement in other areas of learning. The small number of pupils taking national tests leads to significant variations in national test results which are not a reliable indicator of standards. Results over time at the end of Year 2 have been below the national trend and in writing especially have declined significantly over time. Here too few pupils achieve

higher than expected levels. Results in the national tests for 2004 for Year 2 were well above average in reading and below average in writing and mathematics. Results in national tests at the end of Year 6 for 2004 were well above average in English and mathematics and above average in science. Inspection findings show that pupils achieve well in speaking and listening and reading. Standards are above those expected in Year 6 in speaking and listening and well above average in reading. Although current standards in writing in Year 6 are above average, achievement is not as good as other areas of English. Higher attaining pupils achieve well in Year 3 to 6 but achievement is not as strong for some lower and middle attaining pupils. Achievement in mathematics in Years 1 and 2 is satisfactory and standards are average. In Years 3 to 6 achievement is good and currently standards are above average. Standards are in line with expectations in science in Year 2 and Year 6 but pupils' ability to experiment is outstripped by their factual knowledge. Pupils meet the requirements of the locally agreed syllabus for religious education and now achieve satisfactorily in ICT to reach standards that are in line with expectations in Year 2 and 6. Standards also meet expectations in history. It was not possible to judge overall standards in other subjects. Pupils who have special educational needs make steady progress against the targets set for them.

The provision the school makes for pupils' **personal qualities, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good.** Relationships and behaviour are very good and pupils enjoy school. Attendance is good and punctuality very good.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION

The quality of education provided by the school is satisfactory. The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. Good work habits are fostered from the moment children start school and can be seen in the very good relationships teachers have with pupils and the calm and productive atmosphere in classrooms. Teachers are successful in targeting basic skills but are not as successful in making work exciting or interesting. Work is not always matched to ability and the unsatisfactory nature of assessment means that teachers and pupils do not have enough information about how to improve performance. Pupils who have special educational needs make steady progress because of the targeting of reading and some basic skills in writing. The curriculum is enriched by a good range of visits and clubs. The lack of a school hall and shortcomings in facilities for children in Reception hinder the curriculum.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Leadership and management are satisfactory. Good leadership, especially by the headteacher, creates a very positive ethos. Staff and governors are mutually supportive. The headteacher has taken too much responsibility on himself. The limited amount of time for checking up on school performance is not well used and procedures for monitoring the quality of teaching and interrogating performance data are unsatisfactory. Governors fulfil their statutory duties but have not been proactive enough in shaping the management structures in the school.

PARENTS' AND PUPILS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

Parents and pupils hold the school in high regard. Pupils say they enjoy school and their parents feel this also to be the case. Parents are very pleased with the personal knowledge

teachers have of their children. Pupils feel that they have an adult to talk to if they are worried.

IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

The most important things the school should do to improve are:

- The structures and practices for monitoring the quality of teaching and learning and planning for the future.
- The ways in which the school analyses and assesses performance to pinpoint areas for improvements in pupil performance and the performance of the school.
- The opportunities pupils have to investigate, to work independently and in thought provoking ways.

PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS

STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

Standards achieved in areas of learning and subjects

Achievement is satisfactory. Standards at the end of Year 2 are currently average and above average at the end of Year 6. Achievement in the Foundation Stage is satisfactory and children are on course to meet the early learning goals.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- In the Foundation Stage pupils achieve well in their personal, social and emotional development.
- Throughout the school pupils achieve well in speaking and listening to reach standards that are well above average in reading and above average in speaking and listening.
- Although achievement is satisfactory pupils do not do as well in writing as in other aspects of literacy.
- Achievement is good in mathematics through Years 3 to 6 and standards are above average.
- A lack of opportunities and weaknesses in the teaching of scientific investigations means that this lags behind pupils' factual knowledge.
- Pupils are given insufficient opportunities to apply their basic skills in other subjects in demanding enough ways.

Commentary

1 Given the small number of children in the Foundation Stage attainment on entry to school can vary significantly year upon year. Children in the current cohort began school with abilities that are typical for their age. Overall achievement in the Foundation Stage is satisfactory. Children are on course to meet the early learning goals for children of this age in language and literacy, and in their mathematical development. The exception to this is in pupils' personal development where the good role models of staff, trusting relationships and varied opportunities to work alongside other children, lead to good achievement and a greater number of children are on course to exceed expectations in this area.

2 As would be expected in a school of this size, results in national tests swing considerably from one year to the next, with the attainment of one pupil making a considerable difference one way or another to overall results. For example, results in the national tests for the end of Year 6 in 2003 point to standards being below average in English and science and average in mathematics. However, results in 2004 are much higher than this and were well above average in English and mathematics and above average in science. Results in the national tests at the end of Year 2 were well above average in reading, above average in mathematics and below average in writing. However, results in 2004 were not as strong as this. Results in reading remained well above average but they were below average in writing and mathematics. Results over time and differences in performance between subjects in any one year provide a more secure picture of attainment and may point to areas for further investigation by management. Results for Year 6 pupils have been very variable over time and for 2003 the trend of results was below that found nationally. The improved results for 2004 are likely to improve on this picture. However, although results in Year 2 have matched national improvements, the further decline in results in 2004 is likely to depress comparisons with the national trend. Results in writing for example, declined significantly over time. The full picture of

achievement in the school has not been delved into deeply enough, with a tendency to put variations in performance down to cohort differences. Management practice and, in particular, assessment procedures, have not been searching enough in this regard.

3 Inspection findings show that throughout the school pupils achieve well in speaking and listening and in reading. The quality of relationships aids progress in speaking and listening and the good teaching of group reading sessions promotes reading skills. As a result pupils leave the school as confident and articulate speakers, able to debate in a mature and open manner. Currently standards are above average in Year 6. As readers, pupils in the current Year 6 are able to synthesize information from books and understand the motives and reasons for the author's choice of words and standards are well above average. It is in these areas that pupils who have special educational needs also do best and many are working at expected levels in Year 2 and Year 6.

4 Some weaknesses in teaching and a lack of monitoring of performance have meant that achievement in writing is not as good as other areas of literacy. Results overtime in national tests at the end of Year 2 match the findings of the inspection that higher attaining pupils do not do as well as they could in writing in Years 1 and 2. Results in each of the last four years in writing have been considerably below that of reading. It is rare for pupils to exceed national expectations in writing at the end of Year 2. The picture is better for higher attaining pupils in Years 3 to 6 and these pupils achieve well. However, some shortcomings in the demonstrations of writing means that middle and lower attaining pupils do not always do as well as they might in composing their own writing. These pupils and those who have special educational needs tend to progress quicker in the basic skills of spelling and handwriting because of the concentration on these areas.

5 Pupils achieve well in mathematics in Years 3 to 6 where they are given opportunities to problem solve and, particularly in Years 5 and 6 where work is better matched to ability. As a result of this good achievement standards are currently above average. Teaching is not as successful in pitching work at the right level in Years 1 and 2, achievement is satisfactory and as a result standards are average.

6 In both Year 2 and Year 6 standards in science are in line with expectations and achievement satisfactory. Pupils do better in acquiring factual knowledge than in their ability to apply scientific knowledge to investigations. Although there has been a recent extension in the amount of practical 'hands on' science, too much of what pupils have done to date is of a factual nature and insecurities exist in teachers' ability to teach investigational aspects of science

7 Pupils do not always make the best of their basic skills in other subjects because tasks do not demand enough of them. Although standards meet the requirements of the locally agreed syllabus for religious education, work does not serve pupils' writing skills as well as it might. As at the time of the last inspection standards meet expectations in history in both Year 2 and 6. However, once again teachers do not always require pupils to write about history in a thought provoking way. In ICT standards have improved since the last inspection and because of improvements in curriculum planning and resources pupils' achievement is now satisfactory and standards meet expectations at the end of both Year 2 and Year 6. It was not possible to judge overall standards in art and design, design and technology, geography, music, or physical education.

Standards in national tests at the end of Year 2 – average point scores in 2004

Standards in:	School results	National results
reading	17.0 (8.5)	15.8 (15.7)
writing	14.3 (14.0)	14.6 (14.4)

mathematics	15.5 (17.3)	16.2 (16.3)
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There were 8 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year

Standards in national tests at the end of Year 6 – average point scores in 2004

Standards in:	School results	National results
English	31.0 (26.0)	26.9 (26.8)
mathematics	29.7 (26.5)	27.0 (26.8)
science	30.3 (28.0)	28.6 (28.6)

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

Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities

Pupils' attitudes and behaviour remain very good. Attendance is good and pupils are rarely late. The overall good provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development has been maintained.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils enjoy coming to school and are very positive about their work.
- Relationships are very good; pupils behave very well and are increasingly mature.
- The sense of community and concern for the wider well being of pupils aids pupils' personal development.
- The caring ethos of the school and the strong sense of community and respect for others the school engenders results in good provision for pupils' personal development.

Commentary

8 Pupils are happy and parents agree that their children like school. They respond very positively to an ethos where everyone is valued. The headteacher knows the pupils very well and, together with all staff, shows a strong commitment to the care and well-being of each pupil. As a result, pupils work and play in a calm and considerate manner and co-operate very well with each other. Pupils respond to the very good relationships with their teachers by working hard. They are keen to take part and respond particularly well to challenging activities.

9 Good teaching in the Reception class promotes children's personal development well and throughout the school teachers ensure that pupils behave very well. Discipline has a very low profile yet is extremely effective. Incidents of unacceptable behaviour are rare. There have been no exclusions. Pupils are aware of the cumulative sanctions for poor behaviour but one pupil stated "it never gets that far". This creates a very positive ethos and one in which easy going relationships flourish. Very caring relationships, backed by a strong moral code have ensured that the provision for pupils' moral development remains very good. Pupils say that they feel comfortable about discussing any problems because they know teachers will take the time to listen in a sensitive way.

10 The school engenders a strong community spirit which lies at the heart of the good provision for social development. From the word go, in the Reception class, teachers provide many opportunities for pupils to work together in pairs or groups, to share equipment and to help each other. Year 6 pupils talk proudly about their roles as monitors or, for example, road safety monitors, and demonstrate their willingness to take on

responsibility. However, the range of opportunities for this is limited. Pupils say that they like to go on visits, including residential ones, to places of educational interest. These also serve pupils' personal development well.

11 Provision for pupils' spiritual development remains good. Its strengths lie in the very caring ethos of the school and the way pupils' achievements are celebrated. While promoting its strong Christian faith, the school ensures that pupils also recognise and respect the beliefs of other world faiths. Although the school promotes pupils' self-esteem very well, for example, during the reward assembly each week, it is not as strong in promoting their self-awareness. The lack of specific learning targets limits the opportunities for pupils to think more deeply about themselves and to make connections across their work.

12 Provision for pupils' cultural development remains good. Visits to local museums and places of interest are built into the curriculum and pupils make a detailed study of the history and geography of Barrow village. Close links with the church ensure they develop a good knowledge of Christian traditions and parish culture. However, pupils' understanding of life in a multi-cultural society is not as strong and they do not have the benefit of visitors from other world faiths or from visiting places of worship belonging to them.

Attendance

Attendance in the latest complete reporting year (95.5%)

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
School data	4.5	School data	0.0
National data	5.1	National data	0.4

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

QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

Pupils receive a satisfactory quality of education. The quality of teaching is satisfactory. The curriculum is soundly based and added to by a good range of trips and visitors. Aspects of accommodation hinder pupils' learning.

Teaching and learning

The overall quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. The quality of assessment is unsatisfactory.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The quality of relationships creates a very good climate for learning.
- The teaching of the basic skills in English and mathematics helps pupils achieve well in acquiring these.
- Some teaching lacks ambition and does not always encourage pupils to apply their basic skills in thought provoking ways.
- A lack of coherence in assessing pupils' work does not give teachers or pupils a clear enough idea of what needs to be done to improve performance.
- Teachers meet with mixed success in matching work to pupils' ability.

Commentary

13 A consistent strength of the teaching is the atmosphere for learning teachers build with pupils. Teachers treat pupils with consideration and respect, they are quick to praise pupils' efforts and so pupils feel valued and motivated to learn. Little energy and time is expended in controlling pupils' behaviour therefore teachers and pupils can go about their work in peace. Even when working independently pupils continue to work hard, enabling the teacher to work with a chosen group of pupils.

14 Teachers consistently exploit this spirit for learning most effectively in helping pupils acquire the basic skills in literacy and numeracy, most especially in the teaching of speaking and listening and of reading, which are invariably good. In these aspects achievement is good throughout the school. Ample opportunities are provided for pupils to give their views and to listen to the views of others. This starts in the Reception class where good teaching of pupils' social and emotional skills establishes good habits that continue to serve pupils well as they move through the school. Occasions for research in reading enable higher attaining pupils to draw upon their abilities, while the targeting of reading for pupils who have special educational needs ensures that these pupils progress well in the targets set for them. Teachers are also successful at promoting the basic skills in writing, so that pupils spell accurately and have the tools with which to craft written work. The teaching of key skills is a common feature of mathematics lessons and is most successfully taught in Years 3 to 6 where pupils have a chance to apply what they are learning.

15 It is the ability to set challenging work that draws upon pupils' basic skills and utilises the enthusiasm of pupils that sets the best teaching apart. For example, pupils in Years 5 and 6 spent their time very productively researching in books and using the computer to find out key facts about Viking Gods. However, occasions for independence and the imaginative use of key skills, particularly those of writing are underdeveloped and are not a common enough feature of teaching. There is scope in Reception, for example, for pupils to be given more opportunities to make choices about their learning. As was the case at the last inspection there is still a tendency for teachers to rely on worksheets and on factual writing. This can result in pupils copying out details and does little to promote autonomy of thought. In science the potential for investigative work is not well exploited, much of the work in books is of a factual nature and some of the teaching of investigative science is insecure.

16 Teachers conscientiously mark work, which succeeds in motivating pupils to work hard as it praises efforts. However, it is not leading to improvements over time because it does not make it clear to pupils what aspects of their work they need to improve. More formal assessments do not get to the heart of what pupils need to do next and do not give the teacher a clear steer for future planning. This undermines the time and effort spent assessing pupils. For example, comments such as 'slow but steady' and 'handwriting' typify the assessments of writing in Years 3 and 4. This in turn undermines the setting of individual targets which are not specific enough to lead teaching or learning forward with a sharp sense of focus.

17 Improved curriculum planning ensures that teachers have schemes of work which allow for the progressive learning of knowledge and skills. These are used with mixed success to overcome the challenge of teaching mixed aged classes. Two problems are evident in work across the school and across subjects. Firstly, pupils of different ability are often given the same work. This provides work that is too easy for higher attaining pupils

and too difficult for pupils who find learning harder. On other occasions pupils are set work according to their age. This takes a simplistic view of ability and misses that fact that there are younger, more able pupils, who are capable of more, and older, less able, pupils who find the work too difficult. For example, in an otherwise good mathematics lesson in Years 3 and 4 a small number of able Year 3 pupils were capable of multiplying numbers in their head but instead, along with other Year 3 pupils, had to draw out a repeated pattern of addition to multiply numbers.

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 16 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
0	0	5	10	1	0	0

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

The curriculum

The curriculum is satisfactory overall. It is enriched by a good variety of additional activities. Resources are satisfactory but accommodation is unsatisfactory.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The impact of improvement in curriculum planning is reduced by a lack of monitoring.
- Additional activities that enrich learning add to the value of the curriculum.

Commentary

18 Following the last inspection the school revised the way the curriculum is put together. Improvements to the curriculum for ICT, particularly in the sequential planning for the acquisition of skills and the coverage of all the elements, has raised standards to those expected by the end of Years 2 and 6. Much of the coverage of the foundation subjects in Years 3 to 6 is through a whole school topic, often one with a history base, on a four year cycle. It follows that the coverage of history is strongest while coverage of other subjects is variable. This is particularly the case for design and technology, and to a lesser extent art and design, with the result that there are gaps in the pupils' acquisition of skills. Monitoring of the curriculum is very limited and has missed present shortcomings.

19 The curriculum is enriched by work in the locality where activities link subjects such as history and geography. Where this occurs pupils have a natural context for study and learning is made more relevant and interesting. The curriculum is also enhanced by visitors to the school and a good range of educational visits provide pupils with effective first-hand experiences. Good extra-curricular provision which includes sporting activities, French, an ICT club and a craft club adds to pupils' experiences of school and to pupil's positive attitude of school life. Pupils and parents say they appreciate these.

20 The accommodation has improved following the addition of a mobile classroom but remains unsatisfactory overall. It is as difficult to find space for physical education inside the building as it was when the school was last inspected. The use of the village hall continues to compensate for the lack of a school hall but makes the teaching of gymnastics

very difficult and holds back achievement. Part of the Reception, Years 1 and 2 classroom acts like a corridor and there is no ready access for outdoor activities for Reception children. Although the curriculum for the Foundation Stage is sound, accommodation undermines changes the Reception teacher and the teaching assistant have recently made and in particular contribution to achievement learning outdoors can make.

Care, guidance and support

Arrangements to ensure pupils' care, welfare, health and safety are good overall. Pupils receive satisfactory support and guidance. Pupils' views are sought satisfactorily.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Staff know pupils very well, this helps them to feel safe and secure and gives them the confidence they need to do well at school.
- Staff have a good knowledge of pupils' personal needs and are on hand to listen to these but shortcomings in assessment undermine academic guidance.
- The school relies on informal ways to gather pupils' views about school.
- The school has the necessary policies for health and safety but administration of these relies too heavily on the headteacher.

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Commentary

21 Parents rightly feel that their children are well cared for at school. Relationships between pupils, teachers and other support staff are very good. Staff know their pupils' individual personalities and their families very well, this is seen as a strength of the school by parents. The very positive atmosphere makes pupils feel happy, secure and valued at school. Consequently, pupils are not afraid to ask questions, to volunteer answers or to try out new experiences. The programme for settling pupils into school is adequate. Older pupils show very good care and concern to new starters, and this helps them feel settled in school quickly. A significant minority of parents commented about the length of time that children attend on a part-time basis and the quality of the links with the pre-school provision from which most children transfer. This has prompted staff to review current practice.

22 The quality of relationships and concern for the individual, helped by the good pupil teacher ratio, ensures that close attention is given to pupils' personal and social needs. Pupils feel that they have a sympathetic ear to turn to when they are worried. However, weaknesses in the arrangements for assessing pupils' progress means that pupils do not always receive enough help to identify what they need to do to improve their work and so are not clear about what they need to learn next. The exception to this is for pupils who have special educational needs, where although targets are somewhat narrowly based, they are sharply focused. Pupils have some ownership of these as they have some say in shaping them and this helps direct their efforts.

23 The small size of the school means that the school is able to seek pupils' views in an informal way. Staff talk regularly with pupils about their likes and dislikes, which gives them some opportunity to play a part in the work and development of the school. However, practice is rather patchy and older pupils, for instance, indicate that they would welcome greater involvement in school decision-making.

24 Overall the procedures to ensure that pupils work in a healthy and safe environment are satisfactory. Governors fulfil their duty to complete an annual risk assessment throughout the inside of the school. However, the headteacher has many responsibilities in relation to covering the day-to-day administrative tasks associated with health and safety, leaving little time to monitor the success of current practice or to identify any gaps in provision. Therefore although good attention is given to ensuring pupils' safety on educational visits, more thought could be given to identifying potential risks in using the village hall. The policy for ensuring pupils' safety whilst using the Internet at school is relatively new. The school has still to ensure that it is fully in place, monitored and reviewed regularly.

Partnership with parents, other schools and the community

The school has established good links with parents, the community and with other schools.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils make a very good contribution to the life of the village.
- Parents are supportive of the school, and involve themselves well in pupils' learning.
- Parents respond positively to the school's attempts to consult with them.
- The school has established good educational links with other small schools in the area.
- Pupils' annual progress reports for parents do not always identify what their children need to learn next.

Commentary

25 Parents are happy with the education the school offers their children, and those parents who attended the meeting prior to the inspection expressed their satisfaction with most aspects of the school. Parents show a genuine interest in pupils' learning by their good attendance at consultation meetings. These place them in good position to help with their children's learning. A small but active 'Friends of Barrow' group organise social and fund raising activities for both pupils and parents. This helps with the sense of community and with improving resources for learning.

26 Overall, information given to parents about the school and about pupils' progress is satisfactory. It includes newsletters, the prospectus and the annual governors' report to parents. Whilst the information in pupils' annual reports to parents meets requirements, the reports are inconsistent in the amount of detail they include about how well pupils are doing against national expectations. In addition, targets for pupils' future learning are generally too vague to help parents to understand what their children need to aim to achieve next. The school organises a range of well-attended curriculum evenings annually, which provides parents with good information about the work of the school. Parents of pupils who have special educational needs are appropriately involved in their children's learning and from time to time are sent some information pertinent to their child latest targets.

27 Formal consultation with parents about the work and development of the school is achieved through the annual governors' meeting, which is very well attended by parents. This is supplemented by times when the school formally asks parents for their opinions, for example, over the timings for the end of the day. An open door policy is established and gives parents very good informal access to the school. Most parents say they feel

comfortable about approaching the school. All in all therefore parents have a range of ways in which they can make their views felt.

28 Overall, links with the community are good. The school has a very high profile within the immediate locality, and pupils make a very good contribution to community life. This helps pupils appreciate their role in village life and helps them develop a sense of citizenship. Very strong links exist with the local church. School events are held regularly in church and the village hall, including the Harvest Festival, leavers' assemblies and Christmas concerts. These are well promoted and attended by the community as a whole. Pupils have made a good range of visits into the locality to enhance their learning in several subjects, including history and art and design.

29 The school has established good links with other schools, and the links with other small schools in the area are particularly good. Pupils are given good opportunities to mix with pupils from other small schools and to develop socially, for example, through joint sporting activities. The group of schools also share funds, resources and best practices to benefit both pupils learning and provide valuable support for staff. In addition the recent extension of links to the local secondary school, which acts as a specialist school for ICT, has enhanced provision in this area.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

The overall quality of leadership and management is satisfactory. Good leadership, especially by the headteacher, is undermined by unsatisfactory management structures and practices. The leadership of other key staff is satisfactory. Satisfactory governance ensures that statutory duties are fulfilled but governors have not been wholly successful in overcoming some of the barriers to achievement the school faces.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The headteacher's very caring attitude has created a very positive ethos and a mutually supportive team of staff and governors.
- Governors are supportive of the school but do not hold it to account well enough.
- Not enough thought has been given to adapting management structures to the size of the school.
- Weaknesses in how the school collects and analyses data and monitors teaching and learning undermine its ability to pinpoint and rectify shortcomings in performance.

Commentary

30 Leadership, especially that of the headteacher, has created a school with a very positive atmosphere. The headteacher leads the way, through the very open and considerate way in which he works with pupils and adults, setting a very good tone. Staff treat each other and pupils very well. This is one of the principal reasons why the behaviour and attitude of pupils is as good as it is. As a result the school operates very well on a daily basis and is a pleasant place for pupils and staff to work in. Through his teaching role, the headteacher is in a good position to understand the demands placed on staff and this is brought to bear well in whole school meetings in which staff plan together and help each other with any concerns they may have. This creates a good sense of togetherness and high morale.

31 On occasion the concern for the well being of individuals is misplaced and in an attempt not to over burden staff the headteacher takes too much on himself. There are instances of good delegation for example, much of the financial side of the school is well managed by an able school administrator. However, the headteacher has become too involved in routine management tasks

such as day-to-day health and safety matters, which could be done by others. This puts increasing pressure on what little management time the headteacher has. Governors have offered some support in this area and have taken responsibility for some aspects of management. For example, they have been proactive in pursuing long standing accommodation issues. The school has met with some success in overcoming this particular barrier to achievement. A new classroom has alleviated some of the shortcomings noted in the last inspection but the lack of a school hall and outdoor play facilities for Reception children continue to hinder achievement. Governors also ensure that their statutory duties have been met, and they have for example, joined with the school in drawing upon and effectively monitoring the Race Equality Policy. The recently appointed chair of governors offers the headteacher very regular assistance and provides a good sounding board. Governors are aware that the headteacher is attempting to do too much but have not been insistent enough that changes are made. This in turn means that shortcomings in management practice and information gathered about performance undermines their capacity to hold the school to account. Governors' views of how well the school is doing relies on informal methods rather than reflection upon wide ranging evidence. This does not put them in a good position to plan for the future.

32 Not enough thought has been given to matching the management structure of the school to the number of staff the school has to draw on. The conventional organisation of a subject manager for each area of the curriculum is not working well. Where a co-ordinator has one principal job, as is the case with ICT, improvement to provision have been made. However, where an individual has several subjects to manage, as is the case for English, mathematics, science and religious education, all of which are led by the headteacher, change is more difficult to effect and some shortcomings in provision go unchecked. Management structures do not make the most of the sense of team which successful leadership has generated. Currently each teacher has responsibility for planning the curriculum for their phase, or in the case of the teacher for Years 1 and 2 and the Foundation Stage, the phases in which she teaches. There is some confusion over how this fits with the work of subject co-ordinators who are not able to see how well schemes of work are being successfully implemented by teachers.

33 The inappropriate nature of management structures is compounded by weaknesses in assessment procedures and the monitoring of teaching and learning, both of which lack coherence and rigour. The school does carry out a series of tests but these are not collated in a way that allows the school to view the performance history of each pupil and to spot underachieving pupils or investigate patterns and trends in performance. The exception to this is special educational needs in which pupils who have particular needs are identified. The school has too readily put the variable performance in national tests down to the small number of pupils who have taken the tests and has not probed to see if there are any deeper seated reasons. When performance falls short of expectations weaknesses over time, such as in writing through Years 1 and 2 have therefore been missed. A lack of quality assurance work and in particular monitoring of teaching, which is limited to the performance management of teaching, does not put the school in a good position to pinpoint strengths and weaknesses in teaching and learning. The school is therefore not in a strong position to arrive at a reasoned improvement agenda based on assessment and monitoring. As a result the current school development plan is too ambitious. Each subject of the curriculum has an action plan, most of which have been written by the headteacher. However, these are not written from a position of knowledge and are too far reaching to make the best use of the limited management time available to the governors, the headteacher and staff.

Financial information

Financial information for the year April 2003 to March 2004

Income and expenditure (£)		Balances (£)	
Total income	172,247	Balance from previous year	31,468

Total expenditure	182.041
Expenditure per pupil	3,640

Balance carried forward to the next	21,674
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PART C: THE QUALITY OF EDUCATION IN AREAS OF LEARNING AND SUBJECTS

AREAS OF LEARNING IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

34 **Provision is satisfactory overall.** It is good in personal, social and emotional development because staff work hard to ensure that there are opportunities for children to extend their skills in this area of learning across all of their activities. Overall, teaching is satisfactory, with some good teaching observed in personal, social and emotional development and in mathematical development. Care is taken to plan a wide range of stimulating and challenging activities across the six areas of learning. Assessment procedures are in place but the information gained from them is not used consistently to plan further work to match the differing abilities of the children. Although only joining the school in September, the co-ordinator, together with the classroom assistant already work as an effective team, both being adept at working with not only Reception children but also Year 1 and 2 pupils who are also members of the class. Accommodation is unsatisfactory on two counts. The classroom is used as a thoroughfare thereby limiting the arrangement of furniture and resources and there is no ready access to an outdoor area. This limits children's experiences across the curriculum but particularly their physical development. However, staff have worked hard to make the best of the accommodation by creating attractive and interactive displays of the children's work.

35 Induction procedures are satisfactory and parents are given the opportunity to meet with the Foundation Stage staff before their children start school. The co-ordinator's hard work, energy and diligence have already given her a good overview of provision and her comprehensive action plan shows she is fully committed to improving the provision for Reception children.

36 It was not possible to gather sufficient evidence to form an overall judgement about the following areas of learning. Evidence was collected by examining planning and children's work and by talking to the co-ordinator.

37 In **knowledge and understanding of the world** planning indicates a good range of activities to help children to widen their understanding of the world and stimulate their curiosity. Practical activities are used effectively to enhance their learning, for example, growing beans and sunflowers and recording their progress. They develop a good understanding of their own culture as they celebrate the main Christian festivals. This is extended well to include other cultures such as Hinduism when children celebrate Divali.

38 In **physical development** there are many opportunities planned for children to develop skills in handling tools, including pencils, scissors and paintbrushes. Outdoor activities are restricted although, children do have access to the main playground to use wheeled toys. At the moment, other activities are limited to those using small apparatus.

39 In **creative development** there is a strong emphasis on stimulating role play areas. Children make an appointment to attend the "Barrow Surgery" where they discuss their ailments with the "nurse" or "doctor". Work on display denotes a good range of media being used. Children carefully built up their colour collage by selecting shades of the same colour from an interesting selection of textures.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision in personal, social and emotional development is **good**

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Warm and trusting relationships help children to be kind and considerate and to care for each other.
- Good teaching allows children to develop socially and emotionally as well as intellectually.
- There are not enough opportunities for children to initiate their own activities and to make choices and decisions.

Commentary

40 Children's personal development blossoms during their time in Reception because staff are skilled at promoting it in everything children do. Adults are very good role models. Their calm and polite manner communicates itself to the children who in turn are courteous and considerate when talking to both adults and each other. They share equipment amicably and are always ready to lend a hand. One boy helped his friend to find a triangular cutter and a girl said to her partner "let's work together and help each other" as they searched for the letter "b". The positive attitudes of staff boost children's self-esteem and encourage them to persevere until the task is finished. Children are confident about trying the variety of interesting activities planned across the curriculum but, at times, there are not enough opportunities for them to initiate their own ideas and their opportunities to make decisions are limited. This in turn limits their independence and sense of responsibility. During their time in Reception, children achieve well in this area of learning and most are on course to meet or exceed the standards expected for their age.

COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY

Provision in communication, language and literacy is **satisfactory**

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Opportunities for developing speaking and listening are woven into many activities.
- Teaching is too directed at times.
- Activities are not always matched to children's ability.

Commentary

41 Adults employ their own good use of language to help children to broaden their vocabulary and to improve their diction. Almost every activity involves asking questions and emphasising words and names and staff are careful to take time to listen to what children say. There are many good opportunities for children to speak to an audience whether in an adult-led group or to the whole class. This increases their confidence and boosts their self-esteem as well as improving their oratory skills. There is a very strong emphasis on learning to recognise the sounds of letters and children are taught to form letters correctly. However, at times, these sessions go on for too long and the ensuing worksheets are the same for all children regardless of ability. This limits the achievement of less able children who struggle to complete activities that are too challenging for their ability. Parents have an effective role in helping their children to master the skills of reading by helping them to learn new letters and words, and in developing their understanding of the story content. Many children are on course to meet the targets for this area of learning by the end of Reception and about a third are on track to exceed them, particularly in reading.

MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision in mathematical development is **satisfactory**

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Adults question children very well and use a wide range of good quality resources to develop their mathematical skills.
- The regular focus on counting routines and number rhymes helps children to develop a good sense of number sequence.
- Activities are not always matched to children's abilities.

Commentary

42 Children achieve well when adults make learning fun. For example, children enjoyed sorting out their teacher's "mistake" when she set out the large and attractive domino numbers and they were very attentive when answering questions posed by her puppet. Counting forwards and backwards as they sing and acting out number rhymes helps them to acquire an awareness of number order and also adds to this sense of fun. On other occasions they begin to develop an awareness of subtraction as they "buy" a currant bun and take it away. When children use workbooks to record their number work in a more formal way teaching is less successful. Children all work on the same page at the same time regardless of ability. This sometimes lacks challenge for the higher ability children who complete the work very quickly and their learning is not extended on these occasions. Overall achievement is steady and most children are on course to achieve the expected goals and a significant number are likely to exceed them before they move to Year 1.

SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 1 AND 2

ENGLISH

Provision in English is **satisfactory**

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The very good quality of relationships gives pupils the confidence to express their views and thoughts.
- Reading skills are systematically promoted.
- Weaknesses in curriculum management have missed shortcomings in assessment and the organisation and teaching of writing.
- There is an inconsistent approach to helping pupils use literacy skills in other subjects.

Commentary

43 Standards remain much as they were at the time of the last inspection. Satisfactory leadership has helped teachers become skilled at teaching speaking and listening and reading. However, teaching is satisfactory overall because of some weaknesses in the teaching of writing. As a result of this pupils do not do as well in this area of English as in other areas.

44 Teachers are very successful in creating a good atmosphere for learning. Relationships are easy and teachers waste little time admonishing pupils. Teachers are good at exploiting this atmosphere to promote speaking and listening skills. They are helped in this by the small number of pupils in each class which ensures that pupils have ample opportunities to say what they think. Teachers give good opportunities for pupils to discuss work with a partner or in a group and, at the beginning and end of lessons, to explain thinking. Pupils' very good behaviour is such that they listen to each other's views with respect; with older pupils able to debate views. Speaking and listening is also effectively promoted in group reading sessions, with pupils having to seek out the motives for a character's action and to justify opinion by reference to text. As a result pupils achieve well in speaking and listening. Standards in Year 6 are above expected levels and many pupils are confident, articulate and mature speakers.

45 The way in which teachers help pupils talk about books is one aspect of the school's successful approach to teaching reading. The concentration on the sounds letter make is a common feature of the teaching in Years 1 and 2 and gives pupils a good grounding in basic reading skills. Pupils who have special educational needs receive extra practice in reading which helps boost their performance. Here, regular checks on reading age help the school identify how well pupils are doing. The bedrock of reading is the group reading sessions that form a part of many literacy lessons. Teaching in these sessions is good. Pupils in a lesson in Years 5 and 6 were helped, for example, to discuss the differing personalities of the two main characters in *Stig of the Dump*. Here, the teacher skilfully blended moments to hear individuals read with questions that helped pupils interrogate the text. Good attention was paid to intonation and the performance of reading aloud. As a result of the high profile given to reading pupils of all abilities achieve well in learning to read and standards in the current Year 6 class are well above average.

46 The close concentration teaching pays to basic skills, such as grammar and handwriting means that pupils write with accuracy and achieve well in this aspect of writing. However, the school is not as successful in ensuring pupils craft their writing with the needs of an audience firmly in mind. Achievement in this aspect of writing is satisfactory in Years 1 and 2 and in Years 3 to 6 it is good for higher attaining pupils. However too few pupils reach higher levels of performance in Years 1 and 2 and in Years 3 to 6 some middle and lower attaining pupils do not achieve as well as they might. Very little monitoring of teaching and learning occurs and what does occur relies too heavily on informal discussions between staff. Not enough has been done to diagnose the success of the school's approach to writing and to delve into the reasons for variations in pupils' achievement. There are several interrelated reasons for this.

- Although teachers have endeavoured to put into practice approaches recommended in the national strategy for literacy, some shortcomings in how teachers demonstrate writing and an over concentration on basic skills mean that the teaching of writing rarely rises above satisfactory. For example, although there has been a recent increase in the amount of personal writing for pupils in Years 1 and 2 there is scope to increase this further. At present high attaining pupils do not do enough imaginative writing and this holds back their achievement. Pupils in Years 3 and 4 study aspects of the craft of writing but do not always apply learning to their own writing. For example, lessons spent studying texts to see how an author uses characterisation were wasted as no opportunities were given for pupils to write for themselves. There are more opportunities in Years 5 and 6 than elsewhere in the school for creative writing. Here pupils, with confidence and underlying ability do well. However less confident pupils, whose writing is flawed, do less well. This is because demonstrations of what pupils are to do are sometimes rushed. On the whole teachers do not model writing clearly enough, so that when pupils come to write by themselves they do not have a good enough model to draw upon. For example in a lesson in Years 5 and 6 a well chosen poem on what is kept in an attic sparked pupils' interest to write their own poems. However, teaching concentrated on listing pupils' ideas and did not show them clearly how to package these using the devices evident in the original poem. Higher attaining pupils were able to keep up with the teacher, but the rushed and rather superficial teaching of poetic devices left less able pupils behind and as a result their poems lacked conviction.
- The assessment of writing is unsatisfactory. Marking does not give pupils a clear enough idea of what they need to do to improve, while teachers do not assess work with sufficient rigour to be sure themselves of what pupils need to do next. Targets generated from assessment are often too general and refer to the secretarial aspects of writing, such as handwriting, rather than the sophistication of language and the quality of pupils' ideas. Such superficial assessment is not a good basis for pinpointing areas of weaknesses. The personal targets for pupils who have special educational needs are better but relate too much to areas such as spelling and handwriting. While these pupils progress in these areas, too little is done to ensure that skills are put into practice in everyday writing. Pupils' achievements are not tracked closely enough so the school is not able to detect whether or not individual pupils are making sufficient progress. This undermines the effectiveness of assessment as a management tool and so reasons for the long standing issue of

weaker results in writing at the end of Year 2 and wide variations in performance from one year to next have not been fully investigated.

- Too little has been done to adapt the National Literacy Strategy to the needs of the school and this also affects provision for writing. Group reading sessions that form part of many literacy lessons get in the way of pupils' writing. While the teacher works with the reading group those writing independently can be left to their own devices and writing is not as successful as it might be. In addition, the group who are reading have no chance in the lesson to follow up from writing points made at the beginning of the lesson. Teachers have not been wholly successful in overcoming the problem faced by teaching mixed aged classes. They tend to view each year group separately. In a lesson in Years 1 and 2 for example, the teacher tried to teach writing using different texts for pupils in Years 1 and 2, rather than one text that pupils of differing abilities could respond to in differing degrees of challenge. This made teaching unnecessarily complicated and left no common ground for teaching the class as a whole.

Language and literacy across the curriculum

47 Pupils are given good opportunities to apply their reading skills in other subjects and use a range of books and computers to find things out. However, writing is not as well served and presents a mixed picture. The overuse of worksheets, a weakness noted in the last inspection, limits the decisions pupils have to make and the scope of their writing. In some instances, as is the case in science in Years 5 and 6, pupils copy factual work. Visits are used to help pupils write in non narrative forms. For example, pupils in Years 3 and 4 looked at recount writing when they described experiences on a recent trip to Tatton Park, while some research at Year 5 and 6 has led to very good poems and a brochure about the local village. However, an overemphasis on factual writing means pupils have fewer opportunities to write in imaginative ways, for example, in history, by writing from the point of view of an historical character.

MATHEMATICS

Provision in mathematics is **satisfactory**

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The very good relationships between teachers and pupils ensure that pupils behave very well and work hard.
- Good teaching in Years 3 to 6 helps pupils achieve well.
- Work is not always matched to pupils' ability, especially in Years 1 and 2.
- Not enough attention is given to marking and assessment to set targets for future learning.
- Monitoring is too informally based.

Commentary

48 The very good relationships enjoyed between teachers and pupils create very good conditions for learning. Teachers are positive about pupils' abilities and are quick to praise their efforts, this raises pupils' self-esteem and drives them on to try even harder.

Teaching in Years 3 to 6 consistently builds on this solid base and, because of this, pupils achieve well with current standards being above average. This is the same as at the time of the last inspection. Teaching is marked by clear explanations, opportunities for pupils to take part in practical activities and discussions, and the choice of resources. For example, pupils in the Years 5 and 6 class worked with a partner to find as many patterns as possible in the sequence of square roots. As they explained their thinking and listened to the explanations of others, they built up their own range of strategies for problem-solving activities.

49 For the current Year 2 pupils standards are as expected for their age and achievement is satisfactory. Standards remain the same as they were at the time of the last inspection. While explanations here are also clear and relationships equally as strong, there are times, as often seen in pupils' books, when the starting point is the same for all pupils regardless of ability. For example, pupils in Year 2 complete work books at the same page for all pupils. This means that more able pupils complete work they are already secure about while less able pupils make too many errors because the work is beyond their present ability.

50 Teachers are not using their marking consistently to reinforce points made in lessons and pupils do not have specific targets to aim for to improve their rate of achievement in mathematics. Pupils therefore do not have a clear idea of how to improve their work.

51 Leadership and management is satisfactory overall. The co-ordinator also has responsibility for English, science and religious education which means his expertise is spread thinly across the subjects. His teaching provides a good model for others and he has some understanding of the current position in mathematics through informal monitoring and this is the principle reason why provision remains much the same as at the time of the last inspection.

Mathematics across the curriculum

52 Pupils have satisfactory opportunities to practise their mathematical skills in other subjects, notably science, ICT, history and geography. For example, pupils in the Year 5 and 6 class, used a line graph to show changes in the population of Barrow over the years.

SCIENCE

Provision in science is **satisfactory**

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Improvements in the organisation of science are undermined by weakness in management.
- Assessment is not used well enough to plan the next stages of learning.
- Limited opportunities and insecure teaching restricts pupils' abilities to carry out investigations.
- The emphasis on vocabulary and research develop pupils' factual knowledge of science.

Commentary

53 Although there have been improvements to curriculum organisation standards are not as high as they were at the time of the last inspection. Since the last inspection the school has put in place a progressive scheme of work that helps the school plan for the acquisition of skills. However, not enough has been done to ensure that planned units are well enough taught. Too little monitoring has taken place so that, although teaching is satisfactory and pupils' achievements are satisfactory, some shortcomings exist.

54 One of the principal shortcomings is the way teachers assess pupils. At present too little is done to track how much progress pupils are making. Teachers have a good idea of how knowledgeable pupils are. However, assessment about pupils' ability to act as scientists to, for example, control variables when planning experiments is much weaker. Marking lacks detail and on occasion refers to aspects of literacy such as spellings rather than science. The upshot of this is that teachers do not pitch work at the right level and in particular how to plan for the acquisition of the skills needed to plan, carry out and reflect upon experiments.

55 It is in the teaching of investigational science that weaknesses in teaching are most keenly felt and because of this pupils knowledge of science is in advance of their ability to pose scientific hypotheses, suggest ways of testing hypotheses and work systematically in investigating them. On the whole pupils are not given enough opportunities to carry out investigations. Teaching tends to view these as events that happen every now and again rather than as a part of everyday science lessons. In Year 1 and 2 for example, nearly all pupils' work to date has been carried out on worksheets and there have been very limited opportunities for 'hands on work.' The bulk of pupils' work last year in Years 5 and 6 is the same. Work is copied and diagrams photocopied for pupils to colour and label. Such work is not challenging or thought provoking enough. A change of emphasis can be seen this year with more practically based activities evident in Years 5 and 6. Pupils have noticed the difference and talk in positive terms about being able to investigate more. However, teachers lack confidence in teaching this element of science and do not always do so successfully. In an unsatisfactory lesson in Years 3 and 4, for example, pupils enjoyed seeing how balls of various sizes and weights made different sized holes in sand, but learnt little about the importance of planning and systematic work. Here, lack of purpose led to random working. On other occasions too much structure is given, with pupils having too little say in how experiments are to be conducted.

56 Teaching about the factual nature of science is much more securely based. Teachers ensure that pupils use the correct scientific vocabulary and question and answer sessions often give pupils some opportunities to explain scientific concepts. This helps develop understanding, so that in the main pupils are able to talk well about what they know about science. Year 6 pupils for instance were able to explain why parallel circuits are an efficient way of conducting electricity. Good opportunities are also presented for pupils to look in books and use computers to research into scientific facts. However, these are undermined by the filling in of worksheets which denies pupils the chance to decide for themselves how best to set out work and write about science.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

Provision in information and communication technology (ICT) is **satisfactory**

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The co-ordinator has ensured that there have been good improvements since the last inspection
- Links with the secondary school add to the curriculum.
- A good start has been made towards using ICT to support teaching in other subjects.

Commentary

57 Improvements in provision since the last inspection have resulted in pupils in Years 2 and 6 reaching the standards expected for their age. Improvements include an increase in resources and training for all staff, which has boosted their confidence in what they teach. This means that pupils have more opportunities to practise and extend their skills of using software to support their learning in other subjects. All aspects of the ICT curriculum are now covered. The co-ordinator has put together a scheme of work which gives clear guidance about the building of skills sequentially over time. This is a strong factor in helping pupils to reach national benchmarks. Improvements to provision are on-going and include the introduction of assessment procedures and the launching of the school's web site. Resources continue to improve and two interactive whiteboards are on order. There are no opportunities as yet for the co-ordinator to monitor the quality of teaching and learning which undermines the base from which future plans are written. Therefore at present leadership and management are satisfactory.

58 Too little teaching was observed during the inspection to make a judgement about its overall quality so the statement of strengths and weaknesses arises from an examination of work to date, including discussions with teachers, pupils and the co-ordinator, and a scrutiny of planning. Teachers do well to overcome the lack of a computer suite and teach new skills to groups of pupils or to the class as a whole. They are helped in this by the small number of pupils in each class. Pupils then practice the skills they have been shown when working on computers in other lessons. A good example of this was seen in Years 3 and 4 where the teacher, having previously show pupils how to change the size, colour and type of font, set up a task in literacy in which pupils had to use these. She was able to keep an eye on how well pupils were doing with this and was on hand to help any who were having difficulty.

59 Good links have been made with a local high school, particularly in terms of sharing expertise and resources. Pupils in the Year 5 and 6 class recalled, with accuracy, working with sensing equipment to measure the cooling rate of water. This adds to pupils' experiences and helps the school teach the full range of the curriculum.

Information and communication technology across the curriculum

60 Following the improvements to provision, teachers have begun to use ICT in other subjects although this is dependent on individual class teachers and there is scope for

improvement. Computers are used regularly during literacy and numeracy lessons and at times to support work in science, history and geography.

HUMANITIES

61 During the inspection it was not possible to make a secure judgement about provision in history or geography. Planning documents indicate that there is a satisfactory curriculum in each subject. The curriculum is enhanced by visits to places such as the Grosvenor Museum and Burwardsley Outdoor Education Centre.

62 In **history**, Year 2 pupils have some understanding of significant historical events such as the Crimean War and the part played by Florence Nightingale in caring for the wounded. In Year 6 pupils have a good knowledge of Barrow Village and its changes over time to stimulate study. They make effective use of their literacy skills when, for example, they write a poem about their house and design and make a tourist brochure to promote the village. Some of the work is of a very high standard indeed. Their skills are not used well, however, when, as also happens, they all copy the same factual evidence. All Year 6 pupils have demonstrated their enthusiasm for history by producing beautifully presented project books.

63 There is not as much recorded work in **geography** and pupils say they do not spend as much time on this subject as they do on history. Year 2 pupils follow Barrow Bear's journey around the world and use photographs to help them to understand the difference between their own immediate locality and the places he visits. Pupils in Year 6 have a sound understanding of the features of a river, and its causes and effects, and make accurate comparisons between life in India and their own lifestyle in Barrow. Through fieldwork at the Outdoor Education Centre they learn to reinforce and extend their mapping skills.

Religious Education

Provision in Religious Education is **satisfactory**

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Concentration on Christian festivals and links with the local church ensure pupils have good knowledge of Christianity.
- There are insufficient opportunities for pupils to consider how religious belief affects thinking and guides actions.
- Management practices have missed inconsistencies in the implementation of the scheme of work.

Commentary

64 The main strength of provision in religious education is the emphasis the school puts on celebrating the major Christian festivals. These are given a high profile and ensure that the school joins well with the local church in helping pupils learn about and celebrate high points in the church year. Teachers use these times well to ensure that pupils explore the meaning of these events. Work in books also shows a concentration on events and characters of the Bible. Pupils have a good factual knowledge of these and older pupils have some understanding of the significance of events and the importance of characters. The school ensures that it fulfils the requirements of the locally agreed syllabus by extending study to other world religions and, in the main, pupils' achievements are satisfactory and meet expectations in Year 2 and Year 6.

65 However, pupils' knowledge of other faiths, of similarities between faiths, of symbolism and the importance of religion in people's lives is weaker than their knowledge of Christianity. While assemblies are used to good effect for spiritual development the same cannot be said for religious education lessons. In general not enough is done to exploit the potential of religious education for developing deeper thought. Satisfactory

teaching puts too much emphasis on the retelling of stories and too little on the deeper meaning of beliefs. Teachers establish very good relationships with pupils so that the conditions for exploring meaning are strong. A good lesson in Years 5 and 6 highlighted what can be achieved when teaching is more ambitious. Here pupils considered important events in their early life as a way of considering events that were influential in the early life of Moses. Teaching which gave good opportunities for speaking and listening delved into the motives behind the characters Moses encountered. This was combined well with research using Bibles and written work which gave pupils scope to shape their own thoughts. Pupils rose well to the challenge this work presented and worked with enthusiasm and care. In contrast, much of the work older pupils did last year consisted of photocopied quizzes and word searches on Biblical characters and events. Such mundane work does not reflect pupils' abilities and fails to use religious education in an interesting and challenging enough way.

66 Management systems have not been robust enough to detect some inconsistencies in the way the locally agreed syllabus is implemented, for example, much of the work pupils did in Years 3 and 4 last year was compressed into one term and not all the curriculum was covered. For example, almost all the work pupils did last year in Years 1 and 2 comprised of filling and colouring worksheets. There have been signs of improvements this year, with pupils having more opportunity to write for themselves but there is still a tendency to rely on worksheets. This does little to foster productive links with literacy.

CREATIVE, AESTHETIC, PRACTICAL AND PHYSICAL SUBJECTS

67 No lessons were seen in **art and design** and so no overall judgment about provision can be made. The observational drawing of trees carried out by Years 5 and 6 pupils showed the use of differing shading techniques for texture, shade and tone. In Years 3 and 4 the regular study of the work of other artists helps extend pupils' appreciation of art and the repertoire of techniques available to them. For example, study of the work of David White led to pupils using acrylic paint to produce detailed and abstract images of shoes.

68 No lessons were seen in **design and technology** and so no judgement about overall provision can be made. Discussions were held with pupils and work examined. Pupils' experiences of design and technology are linked to themes pupils study in history and geography and teachers meet with mixed success in maintaining the subject's own identity. There are examples of pupils designing. For example in Years 3 and 4 pupils have designed Viking helmets. These show a degree of originality. However, this is not always the case and much of the work pupils do in Years 5 and 6 is overly concerned with making models that pupils have little say in designing. For example, pupils are in the process of making Viking boats; these are all the same and follow a set template. The best work occurs in connection with some visiting engineers in when pupils have design problem to solve using construction kits.

69 No lessons were observed in **music** although the whole school was heard singing during assembly time. Singing was tuneful and all pupils joined in with enthusiasm. The school continues to benefit from the voluntary services of a qualified music specialist to teach music. Pupils say they gain a great deal of enjoyment from this subject. The achievements of pupils who are learning to play woodwind or brass instruments are celebrated in school. Planning indicates that all strands of the music curriculum are covered.

70 No lessons were observed in **physical education**. Despite strenuous efforts by the school and governing body, the limitations to the accommodation at the time of the last inspection still apply, notably the lack of a hall. Although the school does the best it can in the circumstances and uses the nearby village hall for small apparatus work, the pupils continue to miss out on much of the gymnastics strand of the curriculum. Swimming takes place on a regular basis and records show that by the end of Year 6 most pupils are able to swim at least the required 25 metres. The curriculum for Years 3 to 6 is supplemented by the school's involvement in sports competitions for small schools. Football and netball clubs are available after school to extend the curriculum further.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP

71 It was not possible to make an overall judgement about provision for pupils' personal, social and health education. The quality of relationships in the school helps create circumstances in which pupils and teachers can talk openly about various issues. Teachers look for opportunities as they arise when studying other subjects to aid learning. The school has a programme for both drugs education and sex and relationships education.

PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

<i>Inspection judgement</i>	<i>Grade</i>
The overall effectiveness of the school	4
How inclusive the school is	4
How the school's effectiveness has changed since its last inspection	4
Value for money provided by the school	4
Overall standards achieved	4
Pupils' achievement	4
Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities	2
Attendance	3
Attitudes	2
Behaviour, including the extent of exclusions	2
Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	3
The quality of education provided by the school	4
The quality of teaching	4
How well pupils learn	4
The quality of assessment	5
How well the curriculum meets pupils needs	4
Enrichment of the curriculum, including out-of-school activities	3
Accommodation and resources	5
Pupils' care, welfare, health and safety	3
Support, advice and guidance for pupils	4
How well the school seeks and acts on pupils' views	4
The effectiveness of the school's links with parents	3
The quality of the school's links with the community	3
The school's links with other schools and colleges	3
The leadership and management of the school	4
The governance of the school	4
The leadership of the headteacher	3
The leadership of other key staff	4
The effectiveness of management	5

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