

# INSPECTION REPORT

## **GREAT ORTON PRIMARY SCHOOL**

Great Orton, Carlisle

LEA area: Cumbria

Unique reference number: 112110

Headteacher: Mrs Dianne Gray

Lead inspector: C Kessell

Dates of inspection: 18<sup>th</sup> - 19<sup>th</sup> October 2004

Inspection number: 266917

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 to 11 years
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
Number on roll:	22
School address:	Great Orton Carlisle Cumbria
Postcode:	CA5 6NA
Telephone number:	01228 607800
Fax number:	01228 607800
Appropriate authority:	The governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr R Heaton
Date of previous inspection:	8 <sup>th</sup> January 1999

## CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

Great Orton Primary School is much smaller than other primary schools, and serves the Cumbrian village of Great Orton and the surrounding area. Pupils are taught in two mixed age classes. The village is situated about five miles to the west of Carlisle and is a mixed rural community of private and rented accommodation. The 2001 foot and mouth disease outbreak had a devastating impact on the local community. A number of pupils were unable to come to school because of the restrictions. There have also been recent staff changes. All of the pupils come from white ethnic backgrounds. The school has not received any travellers, refugees or asylum seekers. A number of parents from outside the school's catchment area choose to send their children to the school. Private pre-school provision is available on the school site. At ten per cent, the proportion of pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals is below average. The number of pupils who either leave or join the school was above average during the last academic year, with more pupils leaving the school than joining. Eighteen per cent of pupils are assessed as having SEN; this is about average. There are no pupils with a statement of special educational need. Children start full-time education with attainment that is similar to that expected for their age. In 2003 and 2004 respectively, the school was presented with a *Schools Achievement Award*, and the *Cumbria Kitemark for the Foundation Stage*.

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
20695	Mr C Kessell	<i>Lead inspector</i>	Mathematics Science Information and communication technology Geography History Religious education
13762	Mr N Shelley	<i>Lay inspector</i>	
18709	Ms N Bee	<i>Team inspector</i>	English Art and design Design and technology Music Physical education The Foundation Stage curriculum Special educational needs Personal, social and health education

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## PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

### OVERALL EVALUATION

**This is a good school** and it provides good value for money. Because of the very small year groups, year-on-year National Curriculum test results vary and care has to be taken when interpreting the school's national test results. However, pupils generally achieve well in relation to their prior attainment, particularly in the core subjects of English, mathematics and science. Teaching and learning are good. The leadership and management of the headteacher and staff are good. Very good care is taken of the pupils by the teaching and non-teaching staff. The pupils' personal development is good.

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

- The majority of pupils make good progress in their work, particularly in English, mathematics and science. Occasionally, progress can vary between different groups in the mixed age classes.
- Overall, teaching and learning are good. Classroom relationships are very good and the pupils are enthusiastic about their lessons.
- The headteacher provides good leadership. All staff work well together as a team and are committed to providing a good quality education for the pupils.
- The school and governors are very effective in ensuring that the pupils work and play in a safe and healthy environment.
- All pupils are very well behaved and have very positive attitudes to learning. They are keen to come to school and enjoy the responsibilities they are given.
- There are some inconsistencies in the quality of marking of pupils' work, especially in English, mathematics and science.

Improvement since the school's previous inspection five years ago has been good. All of the strengths identified previously have been maintained, such as the development of the pupils' personal qualities and the care and guidance provided by the school. The key issues identified in the previous inspection report have been, for the most, successfully addressed. Higher attaining pupils are challenged appropriately and the presentation of pupils' written work is generally satisfactory, although one or two pupils could still improve. The rate of pupils' progress is better and there have been significant developments in the Foundation Stage<sup>1</sup> provision. The school curriculum now develops more progressively and the school's provision for information and communication technology (ICT) has improved well, particularly since the arrival of the current headteacher.

### STANDARDS ACHIEVED

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

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

<sup>1</sup> The Foundation Stage caters for children from the age of three to the end of the Reception Year. Key Stage 1 represents Years 1 and 2 and is sometimes referred to as the 'infants'. Key Stage 2 represents Years 3 to 6 and is often referred to as the 'juniors'.

**Pupils achieve well as they move through the school.** The table above shows that, in the national tests in 2004 for Year 6 pupils, standards in English and science were above average. Standards in mathematics were well above average. The pupils made good progress overall, against their prior attainment in Year 2. The pupils currently in Years 2 and 6 are also achieving well. Recent national test results for Year 6 show that girls outperform boys more than found nationally, but this may be the result of having very small year groups, which makes any statistical analysis unreliable. Children in Reception are on course to achieve or exceed expected standards by the time they start Year 1.

**Pupils' personal qualities, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, are very good overall.** Relationships through the school are very good, and the pupils' very high standards of behaviour and enthusiasm for learning contribute effectively to their good achievement. Pupils' attendance and punctuality are very good.

## **QUALITY OF EDUCATION**

**The quality of education provided by the school is good. Teaching and learning are good overall.** Lessons are well planned and managed, and the pupils are enthusiastic learners. Teachers insist on very high standards of behaviour and the pupils work well together or independently. However, on occasions, too much time can be spent focusing on a particular year or ability group which can slow the progress of other groups of pupils. There are some inconsistencies in the quality of teachers' marking. The teaching and non-teaching staff know the pupils well and, because of the very good adult/pupil ratio found at the school, many pupils receive good individual attention. This contributes well to the quality of learning and the good progress the pupils generally make.

The curriculum provided by the school is good. Out-of-class activities, such as extra-curricular clubs and visits, enrich the curriculum well. Very good care is provided for the pupils and the school's partnership with parents is good.

## **LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT**

**Leadership and management are good.** The teaching and non-teaching staff work effectively as a team for the benefit of all the pupils. Adults in the school are good role models and the headteacher provides a good sense of direction for the school. The school's educational priorities are appropriately focused on improving standards and the quality of education. The work of the governors is good and the school fulfils its statutory requirements.

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

Parents are very satisfied with the work of the school. They feel that their children make good progress and are well taught. Parents are happy with the standards of behaviour, and acknowledge that there is a good range of activities and trips outside school to support the curriculum. They like the fact that the school is small and their children are well cared for.

The pupils enjoy coming to school, believe that they have to work hard and find their classmates friendly. They know they are trusted with responsibilities and recognise that there is an adult they can go to if they are worried.

The inspection team fully supports the parents' and pupils' views.

## **IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED**

**The most important thing the school should do to improve is:**

- Monitor the quality of teaching and learning to ensure that all groups of pupils make good progress all of the time and in all areas of the curriculum.
- Develop strategies to ensure consistency in the marking of pupils' work, especially in English, mathematics and science.

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

### **STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS**

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

Pupils' achievements are good overall, but small year groups can lead to quite significant year-on-year variation in standards.

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

- Pupils, including those with special educational needs (SEN), achieve well in English, mathematics and science in relation to their prior attainment.
- On occasions, some groups of pupils do not make the same progress as their classmates.
- Pupils now make better progress in ICT than they did at the time of the previous inspection. Standards have improved.

#### **Commentary**

1. The results of the parents' questionnaire, and the views expressed by parents at the pre-inspection meeting, supported the view that pupils made good progress in the school and were learning as well as they could. The inspection team would generally support these opinions. Parents were also very aware that small year groups could lead to significant differences in the National Curriculum test results, and the inspection evidence found this to be the case. Year groups can double or halve in size from one year to the next, and pupils with SEN can often represent up to 50 per cent of a cohort. The inspection team found it necessary to focus very carefully on the progress of individual pupils rather than specific year groups.

2. The current children entered Reception with average standards. By the time they start in Year 1, most children at least reach the expected levels, with some easily exceeding them. They achieve well and work very confidently alongside the older pupils in Years 1 and 2. This is because they are given a curriculum which is accurately matched to their individual needs.

3. National test results for pupils in Year 2 in 2004 indicated that, when compared to all schools, standards were above average in reading and mathematics and average in writing. When compared to similar schools (as defined by the proportion of pupils having free school meals), standards were well above average for reading, average for writing and above average for mathematics. Current standards in Year 2 are average, but the pupils have achieved well in relation to their prior attainment.

4. The 2004 national test results for the pupils in Year 6 showed standards in English and science to be above average. Standards in mathematics were well above average. When compared to similar schools, standards were well above average in English and mathematics, and above average in science. School data also indicated that the pupils made good progress against their prior attainment in Year 2. The current Year 6 has only two pupils, compared to five last year. Although, when compared to all schools, standards might not be so high, the pupils are currently achieving well.

5. National data suggests that the gap in performance between boys and girls is wider than found nationally at the end of Key Stage 2. Girls have performed better than boys in English, mathematics and science to a greater extent than that found nationally. However, there was no evidence of this during the inspection but, with very small year groups, fluctuations in performance can be more pronounced.

6. Pupils who have SEN achieve well. This is because all the adults are aware of the difficulties which they have and generally adapt the curriculum to meet their needs.

7. However, on some occasions, groups of pupils do not always make the same good progress as their classmates. This can occur for a number of reasons. Because of the wide age ranges found in both classes, there is sometimes a tendency for teachers to focus too much attention on one age range at the expense of another. On other occasions, the work provided for pupils is inappropriate for their needs. It is either too difficult or too easy. Conversely, there are times when pupils practically get one-to-one support, either from their class teacher or a teaching assistant. Pupils can often make very good progress at these times.

8. Pupils now make better progress in ICT than they did at the time of the previous inspection. In Year 2 and Year 6, standards are at the expected levels. It is also the same for religious education. Other subjects were not part of the inspection focus.

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

Pupils' attitudes and behaviour are very good. Their personal development is good.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Pupils' attitudes towards school and their lessons are very good.
- Pupils behave responsibly, contributing very well to the quality of learning.
- Pupils are keen to take on responsibility; this includes responsibility for their own community.

### **Commentary**

9. Pupils are very happy in school. They enjoy their lessons and other activities. They do their best and co-operate very well with their teachers. They have a sense of belonging, respect their teachers and respond to them very positively.

10. After only a short time in school, the Reception children show very positive attitudes to learning. Induction procedures are good and, as a result, the children quickly settle into school. Personal and social skills are developed well and, by the time they enter Year 1, the children work well together and develop very good relationships with each other and the adults who help them.

11. Behaviour of the Key Stage 1 and 2 pupils is good, or very good, in most lessons and teaching and learning proceed without disruption. On the very few occasions when behaviour is less than good, it is because the teaching or activities are insufficiently stimulating. Behaviour other than in lessons is very good. Bullying is a comparatively rare occurrence and is effectively dealt with. Relationships between pupils are extremely tolerant and mutually supportive, in and out of the classroom, and regardless of age and gender. There were no exclusions last year.

12. Pupils are very willing to take on responsibilities. They organise their own learning resources and move classroom furniture around very capably and without close direction. They propose initiatives and, when approved, organise change. They planned the improvement of the village playground and raised funds to achieve it, co-opting parental support accordingly.

13. Pupils with SEN respond positively in all lessons, behave very well and show very good attitudes to learning. They respond particularly well when they receive individual support to work on targets on their individual education plans.

14. Attendance is well above the average for primary schools and all pupils arrive on time. Parents want their children to be in school and the pupils want to attend. The school does not especially promote attendance because it does not have to. It offers the best incentive, which is to provide lessons that are well taught and enjoyable.

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

<b>Authorised absence</b>	
School data	3.5
National data	5.4

<b>Unauthorised absence</b>	
School data	0.2
National data	0.4

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

15. Assemblies and inputs by local clergy contribute well to pupils' spiritual development. Studies in art and music add further spiritual dimensions. Pupils experience pride in achievement, value friendship and show concern for others.

16. Pupils' recognition of right and wrong is well demonstrated by their conduct. They take part in drawing up the school's rules and they abide by them. The programme for personal, social and health education contributes well to their understanding. Moral issues of the day are explored and discussed.

17. The school offers pupils many experiences that promote their personal development, including out of school trips. They develop very socially responsible attitudes, for example, towards others, their school and the immediate community. They recognise the needs of others and organize charitable support. The school is in the process of starting a school council as part of its development of the programme for citizenship.

18. Pupils become well aware of their native heritage through subjects such as history and geography and related field trips. The arts contribute other perspectives, and religious education, which includes visits to places of worship, widens pupils' awareness of other faiths and lifestyles. Pupils' awareness of the implications of living in a multi-cultural society is less well developed.

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

The school provides a good education for its pupils. Teaching and learning are good, as is the curriculum. The pupils are very well cared for. There are strong links with parents and the community.

#### **Teaching and learning**

Teaching and learning are good. Assessment procedures, and the use of assessment, are satisfactory.

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

- Teachers have a good understanding of the subjects they teach, and engage the pupils well.
- Pupils are enthusiastic about learning, and work hard.
- Classroom relationships are very good. Pupils are able to work successfully together as well as independently.
- On occasions, there is too much focus on specific groups of pupils at the expense of others.

#### **Commentary**

19. Teaching and learning are generally effective, and make a good contribution to pupils' learning. Parents agree that teaching is good and that the staff expect their children to work hard. At the pre-inspection meeting, parents also stated that pupils' individual needs are well catered for and that homework is adequate. The inspection team supports most of the parents' views. However, on occasions, too much time can be given to a particular group of pupils whilst other groups are not being challenged as effectively. This can happen when a teacher introduces an activity focusing on a particular year group, or when work is not matched as well as it could be to a

particular group of pupils. However, the reverse can often occur. Class teachers' interactions with pupils, supported by the teaching assistants, can be so dynamic that many of the pupils receive one-to-one teaching during the course of a lesson. In these situations, teaching and learning are often very good with pupils achieving very well.

20. The Reception children are taught well. The teacher and the teaching assistant form very good relationships with the children and support them well. Information collected on children is used well to plan activities which suit their individual needs. Learning is good because adults generally have high expectations that the children will listen carefully and behave well both inside and outside the classroom. As a result, they quickly develop positive attitudes to learning and work with great enthusiasm and enjoyment. They concentrate well as they work on activities they are offered. When the children are given a range of activities to choose from, they confidently work independently or in small groups. Clear profiles are developed on all children that clearly track their progress through all areas of learning in the Foundation Stage.

**Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 9 lessons**

<b>Excellent</b>	<b>Very good</b>	<b>Good</b>	<b>Satisfactory</b>	<b>Unsatisfactory</b>	<b>Poor</b>	<b>Very poor</b>
0	2	5	2	0	0	0

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

21. Classroom relationships are very strong, and make a significant contribution to the quality of teaching and pupils' learning and progress in other age groups. The pupils are very well behaved in lessons and have very positive attitudes to learning. Consequently, they apply themselves well for most of the time and work productively. They are very respectful of all of the adults who work at the school and are well motivated, even when they are offered work that could be more challenging. Pupils have a good understanding of what they are going to learn because teachers inform them of the lesson objectives. They talk confidently about their current work and are enthusiastic about subjects and topics they have covered in the past. The skills of speaking and listening are promoted well by the teachers. In lesson introductions, or class discussions, they try to ensure that all pupils are involved and given the opportunity to present their views or show their understanding. The pupils listen to their teachers and each other attentively and politely. Because of the mixed age classes and different ability groups, there are times when pupils are expected to work by themselves or in groups, without adult guidance. They do this successfully and show good levels of maturity as they sensibly discuss their lesson activities.

22. Pupils with SEN are generally taught well. Information collected on individual pupils is used well to develop detailed individual education plans for all pupils with SEN. However, occasionally, teachers do not use this information effectively enough when they plan lessons, in particular when pupils have difficulty acquiring basic reading skills. As a result, work is sometimes too difficult for pupils to read. However, the high adult/pupil ratio in many lessons generally enables these pupils to receive extra adult support so that they can then complete the planned activities.

23. The school's sound assessment procedures allow teachers to track the progress of the pupils, particularly in English and mathematics. Using this information, the headteacher has a good overview of all pupils' progress and can identify those who need additional support or guidance. National test results are also analysed so that the teachers can identify weaknesses in specific elements of a subject and re-focus some of their teaching. This information also contributes to the school development plan. The pupils' work is marked regularly but marking varies in quality and usefulness for the pupils. In the best examples, it informs the pupils clearly how they are doing but, too often, pupils are given insufficient information on how to improve, particularly in the development of written work. The pupils talk confidently about their personal academic targets and they understand that these are changed once they have been achieved. However, there is too little reference to these in teachers' marking.



## **The curriculum**

The school provides a rich curriculum, which contains a good range of activities to support pupils' learning outside the school day. In addition, visits out of school and visitors invited into school enhance the curriculum further. Provision for the pupils' personal, social and health education (PSHE) is good. Pupils with SEN are well catered for. All statutory requirements are met.

## **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The curriculum benefits from well organised visits which reinforce many subject areas.
- Pupils have good opportunities to take part in activities outside the school day.

## **Commentary**

24. The school provides a well planned and balanced curriculum, which embraces all subjects of the National Curriculum and religious education. At the parents' meeting, all parents agreed that their children found the activities enjoyable and interesting. Curriculum planning caters effectively for the different age groups in mixed age classes. It has improved significantly since the time of the previous inspection when it was regarded as a weakness. For example, pupils now have appropriate opportunities to develop ICT skills. Clear plans are in place to ensure that ICT skills are developed as pupils move through the school. Planning for a few curriculum areas, such as art and design, design and technology and religious education, has recently been identified for review. A recent review of the PSHE provision has resulted in an effective programme being followed by all pupils.

25. Visitors are invited into school to talk to the pupils or work with them, and they support the curriculum well. In addition, most areas of the curriculum are enriched by well planned visits to places of interest in the local community. Last term, pupils in Key Stage 2 visited Borrowdale in the Lake District and pupils in Key Stage 1 went to a local animal sanctuary. All pupils in Years 4 to 6 have the opportunity to take part in a residential weekend in an Outdoor Education Centre. As well as reinforcing and developing skills and knowledge taught in geography and science, visits such as these greatly enhance pupils' personal and social development. At the parents' meeting, it was clear that the parents were very impressed by the number of school trips provided to enrich the curriculum.

26. The school has recently consulted the pupils with regard to activities they would like to pursue after school. As a result of this, a programme of activities is now on offer. The range of activities is good and includes clubs for art and design, science, physical education, music, food technology, the use of computers and developing a second language. This is a considerable improvement since the previous inspection.

27. The provision for pupils with SEN is good. The adults support these pupils well and develop individual education plans that clearly identify what they need to do to improve. These plans are reviewed regularly and parents are kept informed.

28. The children in Reception work very well alongside the pupils in Years 1 and 2. Provision for the few children in the Foundation Stage is good. Activities in all areas are interesting and linked to the national guidance. These youngest children in the school receive a good start to their school life. Resources are used well to support all activities. The covered outside area is used satisfactorily to support learning in all areas.

29. There is a good number of teaching and support staff to meet the demands of the curriculum. As the classes are small and the adult/pupil ratio is high, this has a positive impact on pupils' achievement. The accommodation is satisfactory and effective use is made of all available space. Outside there is a large playing field and there are small playground areas. There is no hall, but the pupils walk to the local village hall for physical education lessons. Parents at the pre-inspection

meeting did not see this, or any other aspect of the accommodation, as an issue. There have been recent improvements in the accommodation which have improved facilities for the teaching and non-teaching staff. Resources are satisfactory to support all areas of the curriculum.

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

Pupils are very well cared for. The guidance and support they receive are satisfactory.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Pupils feel valued and secure because of the way teachers treat them.
- Procedures for health and safety are very well implemented.

### **Commentary**

30. The induction process enables the pupils to settle quickly and confidently. Thereafter, close bonds are formed because of the small class sizes, and relationships between teachers, helpers and pupils become very caring and constructive. Teachers know the pupils well and do their best to meet the pupils' needs. Although formal structures, such as a school council, are not yet in place, pupils are given opportunities to express their views and to suggest changes or improvements. Suggestions are often adopted.

31. All children in Reception are very well supported and looked after by the adults who work with them.

32. Health and safety procedures include risk assessments that have been developed extremely well, with valued input from governors. Child protection procedures and those for children in care are in place. Specialist agencies provide relevant services.

33. Extra help is available to pupils, for example, through booster lessons. Peripatetic teachers provide music tuition. However, in-class support does not always meet the needs of pupils, due to the way support staff are deployed. The academic targeting system enables pupils to have a focus for immediate improvement but the information provided by the assessment and tracking of pupils' progress could, on some occasions, be used more effectively to challenge pupils and maximise their progress.

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

The partnership between school and parents is good. Links with the community are good, and with other schools they are satisfactory.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Parents have a high regard for the school.
- Good information is provided for parents.
- The involvement and use of the community supports learning well.

### **Commentary**

34. Parents express considerable confidence in the school and are very pleased with the quality of education and care that is provided. At the meeting for parents, and through questionnaires, parents indicate that they have scarcely any concerns about the school's work or their children's progress. Inspectors agree with parents' views.

35. The school keeps parents well informed through reports, letters and daily contact. Parents are encouraged to become more involved in their children's learning and they receive useful guidance about how to help with homework. Parental attendance at consultation meetings is high. Parents' views are sought and the improved range of extra-curricular activities is a direct result of consultation with them.

36. Parents give good support to the various events that involve their own children and help the school in practical ways, such as with transport. The 'friends of the school' association raises substantial funds to improve resources. Retailers and members of the community support the school.

37. The school works with the other members of its cluster group to enhance the quality of education and to share expertise and costs of joint ventures. Satisfactory arrangements are in place to transfer pupils to secondary schools but curricular links, other than some for physical education, have not been put in place by the secondary schools. Students from secondary schools undertake work experience placements at the school.

## **LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT**

Leadership and management are good overall. Governance of the school is also good. Statutory requirements are met.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Much of the school's success is a result of the headteacher's good leadership.
- All staff work well as a team. This facilitates the smooth day-to-day running of the school.
- The governors have a good understanding of how the school operates and are involved in its future direction.

### **Commentary**

38. The headteacher is a good leader and has the confidence of the parents, who agree that the school is well led and managed. Parents acknowledge that ICT provision has improved since the arrival of the current headteacher and that there have been improvements in the school's accommodation. As with many small schools, the staff, both teaching and non-teaching, work very closely together and there is a very noticeable team approach in all that is done at the school. The governors are also very much part of the team. Communication about important issues is very strong through day-to-day interactions, regular weekly staff meetings and curriculum planning. Good use is made of staff expertise, with part-time staff who have subject specialisms and experience being used to teach music and science. Pupils' achievement is monitored closely, particularly by the headteacher, and the school has a clear 'assessment calendar' to ensure that pupils' progress is regularly monitored.

39. Over the last few years, the school has been confronted with a number of challenges, and has responded to them effectively. The village of Great Orton was badly affected by the foot and mouth disease outbreak and there have been staff absences and a fall in pupil numbers. However, none of these issues are apparent when one visits the school because of its positive atmosphere and the enthusiasm and enjoyment that the pupils show for their learning. With the challenges identified above behind them, the school and governors are looking forward to the school developing further.

40. The management and integration of pupils with SEN are good. All adults who work with these pupils are well aware of the difficulties they have and support them well. This enables them to access all areas of the curriculum. Clear systems have been developed which record how well these pupils are doing.

41. The adults who are involved with the children in Reception work successfully together as a team. This is because all procedures are clear and understood by everyone and the teacher has a secure knowledge of how these young children learn. As a result, these children achieve well.

42. Governance of the school is good, despite the governors' own reservations about their levels of experience. They have a good understanding of how the school runs, through their visits, information provided by the headteacher and monitoring activities. Although a monitoring programme has yet to be formalised, many governors already visit the school, or take part in school activities, to gain a secure understanding of what the school is doing successfully and what needs to improve. The governors are supportive of the headteacher and staff, but also have a good understanding of the need to sometimes challenge what is happening in the school. Their relationships with the school are good and there is an atmosphere of openness. The new chair of governors is well organised and is very keen that the governing body should continue to improve. The governors are particularly aware of the impact that small year groups have on the standards achieved by the school.

43. The governors make appropriate contributions to the school development process, and successfully fulfil their statutory requirements to set and regularly monitor the school budget. The development plan also identifies priorities, such as developing governance and ensuring the school's financial future, as well as continuing to improve standards and the quality of education. There is a good understanding of the need to obtain the best value from the services that the school uses and pays for, and the importance of consulting stakeholders such as the parents and pupils.

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

Income and expenditure (£)		Balances (£)	
Total income	125,220.00	Balance from previous year	7,474.00
Total expenditure	110,905.00	Balance carried forward to the next	14,315.00
Expenditure per pupil	4,821.00		

44. Although the school's expenditure per pupil is above average, it is the inspection team's view that the school provides good value for money. Both the school and governors are aware of the need to increase pupil numbers to the levels they were several years ago, and have encouraged the development of pre-school provision at the school site to potentially improve the number of children joining Reception. The governors are also involved in marketing the school in other communities. Both the school and the governors are pro-active about the future development of the school.

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

### **AREAS OF LEARNING IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE**

45. Provision for children in the Foundation Stage is good. Cohorts vary in size and ability, but are usually small. The current cohort of four Reception children is average in ability, which is similar to the previous inspection. Induction procedures are good and ensure that the children happily settle into school and quickly learn how to work confidently alongside the older pupils in Years 1 and 2. Children generally achieve well during their time in Reception. Activities are well planned to develop learning in all areas. A teaching assistant satisfactorily supports the teacher for part of the week. Both adults develop good relationships with the children. Assessment procedures are satisfactory, and adults collect information on the children and use this when they plan lessons. Individual profiles track how well each child is doing. There are no children identified as having SEN. Resources are used well to support all areas of learning, including a covered area immediately outside the classroom. This is an improvement since the previous inspection. The large school field has climbing apparatus and, although there is no school hall, the school uses the village hall for physical development lessons. The school has recently achieved the 'Cumbria Kite Mark' for improvement in Foundation Stage provision.

### **PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT**

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

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

- Teaching is good. This area is generally well promoted in all activities.
- Adults support learning well, as they interact sensitively with the children when they work in small groups or alone.
- The children develop very positive attitudes to learning, and achieve well.
- Behaviour is very good.

#### **Commentary**

46. The children are on course to at least reach the expected levels by the end of their time in Reception. This is because all adults have very high expectations of children's behaviour, and their abilities to get on with each other and respond appropriately to adults. As a result, behaviour is very good. The children confidently choose activities themselves and have many opportunities to do so. This is an improvement since the previous inspection. In addition, they work happily on activities that have been selected for them. The children get on very well with each other and the adults they come into contact with. Teaching is good. Both adults develop good relationships with the children and plan activities which suit children's individual needs. This results in the children showing very positive attitudes to learning. They are inquisitive and confidently ask questions to find out more. The children work well together in pairs and small groups, and begin to develop the skills necessary to work independently. Personal independence is well developed. For example, during a reading session, Reception children confidently joined groups of older pupils who were sharing books together. Previous planning shows that the children are focusing on how they can express their personal needs and feelings in different ways. In addition, their personal and social skills are promoted well when they are given opportunities to report back in 'review time' at the end of a lesson. Achievement is good.

## **COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY**

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

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Teaching is good. Adults provide good support for the children, enabling them all to achieve well.
- The children respond very positively to lessons.
- Reading is very well promoted.

### **Commentary**

47. The children are on course to reach or exceed the expected levels by the end of their time in Reception. Teaching is good. There are well planned opportunities for children to develop the correct way to write the letters of the alphabet. Children's previous work shows that they have achieved well, in particular with regard to writing. The children confidently develop writing skills as they write their names and shopping lists, and develop their own books. Reading books and reading games are regularly sent home, and parents support learning well in this area. Reading is very well promoted and, during specific reading lessons in the class, the Reception children maturely fit in and take part in the reading activities which are offered. As a result, reading skills are developed well, with the children handling books with confidence and enthusiasm. All children treat books carefully. Most begin to recognise familiar words. The children have many opportunities to develop speaking skills. Adults value what they say, which gives the children confidence to speak out in class discussions. The teacher has very high expectations that children will listen carefully and, as a result, they learn to listen attentively.

## **MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT**

Provision in mathematical development is **good**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Teaching is good.
- The children respond very positively to lessons.

### **Commentary**

48. Teaching is good and the children are on course to at least reach the expected levels by the beginning of Year 1. Most children attempted to count up to ten as they pointed to the ducks on the water in the covered outside area. During this activity, the children received good quality support from the teaching assistant as they learnt about numbers by singing nursery rhymes. However, the activity lasted slightly too long and a few children had difficulty concentrating. Previous work shows that the children have begun to understand basic shapes. Assessments clearly show that most of them can identify and name squares and circles. The children have good opportunities to participate in well planned activities that are based around the classroom shop. Activities such as these enable them to develop their understanding of coins and small amounts of money. Items in the shop are clearly labelled and the children begin to know what the written numbers look like. In addition, as they talk about 'the shop keeper' and the 'customer', the use of

everyday language is developed well. The children achieve well because they work amicably together, concentrate well and listen attentively to instructions from adults.

## **KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE WORLD, PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT AND CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT**

49. There was too little evidence to make judgements about the children's knowledge and understanding of the world, and their physical and creative development. However, activities to support these areas are well planned and regularly include ICT. In one lesson which was observed, children discussed facial expressions and identified similarities and differences amongst themselves. They were well supported by a teaching assistant as they made collage faces of themselves. Tools such as glue sticks and scissors were used confidently and safely. Teaching was good and the children achieved well. Children's previous work shows that they have good opportunities to paint, which promotes their creative development. During the week of the inspection the children used fruit and vegetables for printing. The colourful finished prints showed a good standard of artwork. The children have regular opportunities for physical activities in the village hall and outside in the school grounds. One lesson was observed where the Reception children integrated well with the pupils in Years 1 and 2 as they worked on basic gymnastic skills. The lesson was well planned to include these youngest children in the school. Teaching was judged to be good and the children achieved well. All children have good opportunities to use soft materials to roll, cut and mould.

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

### **ENGLISH**

Provision in English is **satisfactory**.

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

- Standards are above average in reading in Year 6.
- Pupils in Year 2 and Year 6 achieve well.
- Pupils show positive attitudes to the subject.
- Assessment information is not always used well when planning lessons.
- Marking does not consistently inform the pupils what they need to do to improve.

#### **Commentary**

50. In Year 6, standards in speaking and listening, and in writing, are average. Standards in reading are above those found nationally. Achievement is good in relation to the pupils' prior attainment at the end of Key Stage 1. Higher standards in reading are linked to effective tracking procedures and the targeted support that is offered when necessary. Standards in Year 2 are average overall but the pupils have achieved well.

51. Teaching seen during the inspection was satisfactory. The adults have good relationships with the pupils throughout the school. Speaking and listening skills are well promoted and reading skills are very well promoted in lessons. As a result, most pupils speak confidently, listen attentively and volunteer enthusiastically to read. All the adults have very high expectations that pupils will behave well and get on with each other. All pupils respond positively and behaviour is very good. However, information collected on pupils is not always being used effectively when planning lessons. As a result, some pupils did not do as well as they should. In a lesson in Years 1 and 2, although learning was satisfactory it could have been better. Pupils who were writing instructions on how to make a bird cake were very keen to spell the words properly but had been given too little guidance to do this successfully. Opportunities were missed to develop basic dictionary skills. In addition, two other pupils were given a worksheet which they had great difficulty reading. In a lesson in Key Stage 2, a few pupils were given texts that were too difficult for them. For example, although some pupils in Year 5 could read the poem 'In Flanders Fields' by John McCree, they had little idea what it was about, so found it very difficult to answer the questions. Previous work shows

that all pupils have satisfactory opportunities to develop writing skills, and learning is at least satisfactory overall, but at times their achievement is not as good as it could be. This is because marking of work is inconsistent throughout the school. The best examples effectively inform the pupils but too often pupils are given too little guidance to improve. In addition, there is too little reference to any targets that the children have been given. Occasionally adults' handwriting does not provide a good role model for the pupils.

52. Pupils with SEN achieve as well as the other pupils because they are generally supported well, in particular, when they work with a teaching assistant on the targets on their individual education plans. Information and communication technology (ICT) is beginning to be used well to support learning in the subject. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 enthusiastically used a program to read and highlight the key words needed to write instructions on how to make a bird cake. Previous pupils' work showed that older pupils in Key Stage 2 had word-processed 'Story Poems' about animals well.

53. The subject is satisfactorily managed. Assessment arrangements are satisfactory, but better use could sometimes be made of the information collected on pupils to group them and plan activities. Target setting has been introduced and all pupils have individual targets. Pupils in Year 2 were seen enthusiastically reading their targets at the beginning of the lesson.

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

54. There are satisfactory opportunities for pupils to use language and literacy skills across the curriculum. Words illustrating 'time' were satisfactorily promoted as pupils in Years 1 and 2 wrote instructions in English. Literacy skills were used well when a few pupils in Years 1 and 2 filled in words to describe animals as they completed sentences in science. Pupils' previous work shows that some pupils' work could be better presented.

## **MATHEMATICS**

Provision in mathematics is **good**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The pupils achieve well in the subject.
- Teaching and learning are good.
- Non-teaching staff often contribute well to the pupils' good progress.
- Pupils are enthusiastic about the subject and show good attitudes to learning.
- Marking of pupils' work is inconsistent.

### **Commentary**

55. Because of the small year groups, there can often be significant year-on-year variation in the school's national test results. Inspection evidence would suggest that the pupils are currently making good progress against their prior attainment. This was also the case for the Year 6 pupils who undertook their national tests in 2004. The good progress made by the pupils is due to the good teaching and the pupils' enthusiasm for learning. Standards in Years 2 and 6 are average.

56. Teaching and learning are a strength of the subject. The teachers have good subject knowledge and use the national strategy for numeracy well to ensure needs of pupils in mixed age classes are met well. Some of the teaching during the inspection was very good, with pupils making very good progress. This was the result of a very well organised lesson that also successfully involved the expertise of a teaching assistant who taught a group of pupils. All pupils had a good understanding of what they were doing because the lesson's intentions were clearly displayed and thoroughly discussed by the class teacher. The mental mathematics session at the start of the lesson was very good, with both the teacher and teaching assistant using good

questioning to ensure that all pupils were involved. The pupils responded with enthusiasm, with all of them very keen to answer questions. Time was used very precisely, ensuring very good pace. The good adult/pupil ratio and the quality of the adult interactions meant that all pupils were successfully supported or challenged.

57. Some aspects of teaching could improve. Although work is marked regularly and is often helpful to pupils and teachers, it is inconsistent. More challenge could be offered to pupils through marking. This applies particularly to the higher attainers, many of whom are confident to work independently and could move on to the next stages of learning themselves. Pupils' notation is not always as good as it could be and this is not addressed.

58. Overall, the subject is well led and managed. There has been good analysis of recent national test results so that staff can focus their attention on areas of weakness. The pupils have personal targets in mathematics and the older pupils have a good understanding of them. The school's assessment procedures allow staff to track pupils' progress carefully and provide support for those making insufficient progress.

### **Mathematics across the curriculum**

Lessons were observed during the inspection where the skills of mathematics were used well in other subjects of the curriculum. Older pupils calculated the age of an artist they were studying after being provided with the dates of his birth and death. Year 2 pupils successfully undertook data handling work as part of their science work on the similarities and differences between plants, animals and humans. The school attempts to use mathematics across the curriculum when appropriate.

## **SCIENCE**

Provision in science is **good**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The majority of pupils achieve well.
- Teaching and learning are good.
- Pupils enjoy the subject and talk about it confidently.
- Marking of pupils' work could be more consistent.

### **Commentary**

59. The pupils achieve well in science as they move through the school. This is a result of good teaching and learning and the pupils' positive attitudes towards the subject. Pupils undertake a good range of work that includes experiments, investigations and independent research. Discussions with pupils in Year 2 and Year 6 indicate that the pupils can talk confidently and knowledgeably about their current and past work.

60. Teaching and learning are good overall, but some very good teaching was also observed during the inspection that enabled the pupils to make very good progress. Lessons are well planned and organised to ensure that the mixed age classes benefit from an appropriate curriculum. Information and communication technology (ICT) is used well to support learning in science, and mathematical skills are also well promoted. However, the subject could be used more effectively to develop some pupils' writing skills.

61. The pupils show tremendous enthusiasm for the subject and the good pace to lessons holds and encourages this enthusiasm. Previous learning is discussed thoroughly so pupils can place lessons in context, and the aims of lessons are carefully explained and then followed up at the end of a session. Good use is made by teachers of class discussions, with questions being directed carefully to different age and ability groups so that all pupils have an opportunity to contribute. Pupils are encouraged to think like scientists, and language specific to the subject is promoted well.

62. The part-time teacher with responsibility for most of the science teaching was absent at the time of the inspection, but the school has been able to find an effective replacement. Analysis of pupils' work and discussions with pupils indicate that the curriculum is well organised. Teachers know the pupils well and are effective at providing suitable levels of challenge and support. However, in some pupils' books, marking could be more effective. It does not provide sufficient information on how pupils can improve and, in some instances, sets a poor example to pupils in terms of handwriting and punctuation.

## **INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY**

Provision in ICT is **good**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Provision has developed well since the previous inspection.
- Although some of the hardware is old, there is a good computer to pupil ratio in the school.
- Many of the pupils achieve well.
- The subject is well led and managed by the headteacher.

### **Commentary**

63. There have been significant improvements in the ICT provision since the previous inspection. The subject is now organised effectively so that pupils develop their skills and understanding progressively and many make good progress. Much of the credit for this improvement must go to the current headteacher, who has worked hard to improve the provision and is a knowledgeable practitioner. Parents at the pre-inspection meeting acknowledged this.

64. As only one lesson was observed during the inspection, there was too little evidence to make an overall judgement on the quality of teaching and learning. However, pupils talk about the subject enthusiastically and good efforts are made in other lessons to ensure that ICT is used. The lesson observed was good. It was well planned and pupils were given time targets to complete work, which ensured the lesson had pace and learning was good. The lesson also contributed well to the pupils' social development. Resources were used correctly and pupils sensibly discussed the strengths and weaknesses of classmates' work. This was undertaken maturely, and reflected the very good relationships in the class.

65. The headteacher has a clear view of how the subject should continue to develop. She is conscious of the need to purchase new computers, and has adopted the local education authority assessment procedures which provide an accurate independent evaluation of pupils' attainment.

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

66. The school looks to ensure that ICT is used regularly to support other subjects of the curriculum. In many of the lessons observed during the inspection, this was the case. Information and communication technology (ICT) was used successfully to provide support in English, mathematics and science. Pupils also commented about research they had undertaken using the Internet, written work that had been word-processed and maths programs they used to help their mathematical understanding.

## **HUMANITIES**

67. **Geography** and **history** were not part of the inspection focus and no lessons were observed in either of these subjects. Discussions were held with pupils in Year 2 and Year 6, and a limited amount of work in the two subjects was analysed.

68. On the basis of this evidence, the pupils appear to have an appropriate knowledge and understanding for their ages. Pupils in Year 2 were able to answer simple questions about the past and showed a reasonable sense of chronology. In geography, they identified features of their village and made sensible comparisons with the nearby city of Carlisle. They knew the countries 'Barnaby Bear' had visited during the summer holidays and related these to a display in their classroom. Year 6 pupils demonstrated a secure historical factual knowledge through explaining aspects of history as diverse as the Second World War and Tudor times. In geography, the pupils confidently explained their most recent work on environmental protection, and presented good arguments for the use of wind-driven turbines for producing electricity.

69. The school curriculum is organised to ensure correct coverage of history and geography through a rolling programme of topics. This ensures that pupils in the mixed age classes do not repeat work as they move through the school.

### **Religious education**

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

- The subject supports the pupils' social, moral and cultural development.
- Pupils are respectful of others' beliefs.
- The curriculum for the pupils in Key Stage 1 has been disjointed.

#### **Commentary**

70. No lessons were observed in religious education during the inspection, so there is insufficient evidence to make an overall judgement about the school's provision for the subject. Discussions with pupils in Year 2 and Year 6 indicate that their understanding of the subject is similar to that expected for pupils of their age. Year 2, pupils showed a secure understanding of Christianity. They accurately recounted important Christian festivals, such as Christmas and Easter, and were able to provide reasons for these being important to Christians. They enthusiastically described a visit to the local church where they took part in a 'Christening', and maturely explained the relationship between God and Jesus. Year 6 pupils had developed their understanding beyond Christianity and were able to identify places of worship and important aspects of other religions, such as Islam. The pupils were respectful of others' beliefs and understood that they lived in a country that was home to a number of different religions and cultures.

71. Only a limited amount of written work was available for analysis. Although this is not necessarily unusual in religious education, the subject could be used more effectively to promote pupils' literacy skills. Some of the written work by older pupils could be better. The new subject co-ordinator is looking to develop the school's curriculum using guidance from the local education authority. She has recently attended some in-service training to support this. Although the current scheme of work should provide a rolling programme, this has not been used effectively at Key Stage 1 where the curriculum for the younger pupils has become disjointed as a result of staff changes. The school has recognised this shortcoming and is looking to address it.

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

72. Only one lesson was seen in each of **art and design** and **physical education**. No **design and technology** or **music** lessons were observed. These subjects not part of the inspection focus. Extra-curricular activities promote art and design, design and technology, music and physical education well.

73. Pupils in Year 2 spoke about the work of William Morris and the repeating patterns they were working on in art and design lessons. Planning shows that ICT is to be used to support this activity. Older pupils confidently and enthusiastically spoke about making 'fruit faces', correctly naming the artist Guiseppe Arcimboldo, who they were studying. In a well planned lesson, teaching was very good. Relationships between the teacher and the pupils in the Key Stage 2 class were very positive, and the pupils responded very well to the teacher's high expectations. Questioning by the teacher was skilful, and enabled all abilities and ages to be included. While the pupils worked carefully on their paintings, the teacher and the teaching assistant interacted with them very well, reinforcing their learning and developing their painting skills. As a result, learning was very good for pupils of all ages, including those with SEN. Photographic evidence shows that visits to places such as Bitts Park, where the pupils looked at sculptures, promote aspects of the pupils' personal development.

74. The physical education lesson that was observed included the Reception children and pupils in Years 1 and 2. Teaching in this lesson was good. Basic vocabulary, such as 'balance', 'travel' and 'jump', was promoted well and then reinforced to check that all pupils understood what they had to do. There were good opportunities for pupils to work in pairs as they linked movements together, and the teacher interacted well with them. Pupils had good opportunities to demonstrate their movements. Learning was good because clear instructions were given to the pupils. Their positive attitudes to learning enabled them to respond well to the teacher's high expectations that they should listen carefully at all times. In addition, there were good opportunities for them to evaluate what they were doing and improve their movements. Standards at the end of Year 2 were judged to be higher than normally expected.

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

75. Provision for PSHE is good and it promotes speaking and listening skills well. The programme for PSHE has recently been reviewed and linked to relevant curriculum areas. It includes inputs on the importance of developing a healthy lifestyle, sex education and drugs awareness. Although the school council is in its infancy, pupils in Year 6 speak convincingly of how it is going to run. They knowledgeably talk about the role of the 'Secretary', the 'Chair' and 'Vice-chair'. No sessions of PSHE were seen during the inspection, but circle time<sup>2</sup> is planned for both classes each week. Pupils in Year 6, spoke about having to abide by 'certain rules' during circle time as they discussed difficulties pupils were experiencing in the classroom and outside.

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<sup>2</sup> Circle time is a session provided for pupils to discuss certain matters as a class, following strict rules about listening to others and taking turns to speak.

## PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

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