

# INSPECTION REPORT

## **ST. BEGH'S R C JUNIOR SCHOOL**

Whitehaven

LEA area: Cumbria

Unique reference number: 112354

Headteacher: Mrs S Shaw

Reporting inspector: G R Alston  
20794

Dates of inspection: 19<sup>th</sup>-20<sup>th</sup> February 2001

Inspection number: 196994

Short inspection carried out under section 10 of the School Inspections Act 1996

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## INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Junior
School category:	Roman Catholic Voluntary Controlled
Age range of pupils:	7 - 11
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Coach Road Whitehaven Cumbria
Postcode:	CA28 7TE
Telephone number:	01946 693015
Fax number:	as above
Appropriate authority:	The governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr J McCoy
Date of previous inspection:	February 1997

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

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

### **INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL**

The school is an above average sized Junior school with 309 pupils ranging from 7 – 11 years in age; there are slightly more boys than there are girls. The school population is mainly white, and the percentage of pupils entitled to free meals is similar to the national average. The proportion of pupils identified as having special educational needs due to learning or behavioural difficulties is below the national average. The school serves a wide range of social groupings, and overall, pupils' attainment on entry to the school is below the expected level for their age. There are five pupils who have a statement of special educational needs. This is a popular school and is over-subscribed in some year groups. Since the last inspection, there has been a new headteacher and deputy headteacher and four new members of staff.

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

This is a very good school where all pupils are greatly valued. It is effective because staff, governors, pupils and parents contribute enthusiastically to the life of the school. The pupils achieve high standards in all aspects of their education. The quality of teaching is very good because enthusiastic, conscientious teachers provide pupils of all abilities with interesting and challenging tasks. The headteacher provides very good leadership and by rigorously monitoring and evaluating the work of the school, ensures the school continues to improve. As a result, the school gives very good value for money.

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

- Attainment in English and mathematics, particularly writing, is high. The most recent test results are well above the national average in English, mathematics and science. Results are much higher than those achieved by pupils from a similar background in other schools.
- Pupils' behaviour is exemplary; they form very good relationships with one another and adults, try hard with their work and accept responsibility very well.
- The quality of teaching is very good. No teaching was unsatisfactory and, in one half of the lessons seen, it was very good. Teachers are enthusiastic, have high expectations and all pupils' efforts and contributions are greatly valued; this enables all pupils to achieve well in lessons.
- Very good provision is made for pupils' personal development, including their spiritual, social, moral and cultural development. The curriculum is enriched by visitors, visits and a very good range of activities provided for pupils outside the school day.
- The headteacher provides very strong leadership and, with the support of a conscientious team of teachers, monitors and evaluates the work of the school successfully in order to continue to improve further the education it offers its pupils.

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

- Pupils' ability to use and apply their mathematical knowledge in practical, everyday situations and their confidence in discussing mental strategies, particularly in lower key stage classes.

*The areas for improvement will form the basis of the governors' action plan.*

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

The school was last inspected in February 1997 and has made very good progress in its planned programme of improvement. All areas identified as needing development in the last report have been significantly improved. The clearly defined and well-organised management structure is very effective in monitoring and evaluating the work of the school and in supporting new developments. The role of co-ordinators has been successfully promoted and their influence in developing their subjects and supporting teachers has had a positive impact. Programmes of in-service training and better resources have improved the teaching of design and technology and information and communication technology (ICT), which in turn have successfully raised standards. Teachers' short-term planning, which was identified as a weakness in the last report, is now a strength of the school. Teachers conscientiously plan together in year groups and what pupils are to learn is clearly identified in the lesson plan. The governing body has developed its role successfully and now strongly supports, and rigorously monitors, the work of the school, the standards achieved and the impact of spending. All

these factors have improved the quality of teaching that, in turn, has maintained the high standards in English, mathematics and science. The priorities it has identified for development, along with its great enthusiasm and commitment to higher achievement, give the school a good capacity for further improvement.

## STANDARDS

The table shows the standards achieved by 11-year-olds based on average point scores in National Curriculum tests.

Performance in:	compared with			
	All schools			Similar schools
	1998	1999	2000	2000
English	A	B	A	A*
Mathematics	A	A	A	A
Science	B	A	A	A

Key	
Well above average	A
above average	B
Average	C
Below average	D
Well below average	E

The information shows that results in English, mathematics and science are well above the national average. Compared to schools which have pupils with a similar background, results are well above average in mathematics and science and in the top five per cent in English. Pupils' attainment on entry to the school is below the expected level in English and mathematics. Pupils achieve well over time and the school is very successful in the proportion of pupils achieving the expected level (Level 4) and above when compared to the national average and does equally as well in pupils achieving the higher level (Level 5). By the time pupils leave the school, the scrutiny of pupils' work and observing pupils in lessons indicate a similar standard of achievement is developing, as test results show. There is no significant difference between the standards that boys achieve in comparison to girls. Results have been consistently above the national average and risen over the past two years in mathematics and science and there was a significant rise in English in 2000. Pupils who have special educational needs are well supported in school and make very good progress towards the targets set in their individual plans. Standards in English and mathematics are sufficiently high. However, pupils' skills in applying their mathematical knowledge in everyday practical situations are not as good as their other numeracy skills, particularly in lower Key Stage 2. In other lessons observed, high standards were achieved in science, ICT and history and evidence from displays indicates pupils achieve well in art and design and technology. The school has already met the high targets it was set in national tests and is on line to achieve future targets.

## PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Very good. Pupils are eager to learn, settle quickly to their tasks and sustain concentration well. They are proud of their school and give of their best at all times.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Very good. Pupils' behaviour is exemplary in all situations. They are courteous and polite to one another and to adults.
Personal development and relationships	Relationships are very good and are built successfully on mutual respect. Pupils are very mature and sensible; they organise themselves purposefully and readily show initiative both in and out of lessons.
Attendance	Satisfactory. Attendance is similar to that found in most schools and pupils enjoy coming to school, often arriving early.

## TEACHING AND LEARNING

<b>Teaching of pupils:</b>	<b>Aged 7-11 years</b>
Lessons seen overall	Very good

*Inspectors make judgements about teaching in the range: excellent; very good; good; satisfactory; unsatisfactory; poor; very poor. 'Satisfactory' means that the teaching is adequate and strengths outweigh weaknesses.*

Overall, the quality of teaching is very good. Teachers successfully meet the needs of all pupils. Across the school, all of the teaching seen was at least satisfactory, and in 50 per cent of the lessons seen was very good. Overall, this shows an improvement since the last inspection when five per cent of the teaching was unsatisfactory and only 11 per cent was very good. Overall, the teaching of English and mathematics is very good and the skills of literacy and numeracy are effectively taught. However, insufficient opportunities are given to developing pupils' skills in using and applying their mathematical knowledge in practical, everyday situations in all classrooms. Pupils are well motivated by the enthusiasm of their teachers and the interesting and challenging tasks teachers prepare. Teachers establish a good relationship with their pupils and have high expectations of pupils' behaviour and the amount and quality of the work they produce. Pupils respond very positively, try hard and successfully reach the high standards they are set. The very good teaching is instrumental in helping pupils make very good progress.

## OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

<b>Aspect</b>	<b>Comment</b>
The quality and range of the curriculum	The curriculum provides a very good range of experiences and caters well for the interests, needs and abilities of all pupils. A good range of out of school activities, trips and visitors greatly enrich pupils' learning.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Very good. Teachers plan valuable tasks and provide well matched activities based on clear targets that enable pupils to learn effectively. Support in lessons both in and out of the classroom is of good quality.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Very good. There are many opportunities in lessons for pupils to show initiative and be responsible for their own learning and also for pupils to contribute in lessons and become confident in themselves. Staff provide very good role models and have very clear expectations of behaviour. Mutual respect between everyone in the school ensures pupils develop a mature understanding of their social and moral responsibilities. Pupils receive a very good range of experiences to develop their spiritual and cultural awareness.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Very good. Pupils are very sensitively looked after in a warm, caring environment. Teachers know pupils well; particularly what pupils need to do to improve. There is good assessment in all subjects that gives a clear picture of what pupils know, understand or of the skills they have.

Parents and the community support the school very well, both in raising funds and by helping pupils at home or in school with their work. The school tries very hard and successfully keeps parents informed about the work of the school and of the children's progress.



## HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Very good. The headteacher provides very effective leadership and her strong commitment ensures she has the respect of the whole school community. There is a very good team approach in decision making and day to day organisation. Co-ordinators conscientiously manage their subjects and are influential in developing and improving the teaching of their subject.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Very good. Governors are very supportive and carry out their duties purposefully. They successfully monitor and analyse the work of the school.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Very good. The school carefully evaluates its performance. Where areas for improvement have been identified the school considers and successfully implements ways to raise standards further.
The strategic use of resources	The money the school receives is used well and resources are effectively deployed. In view of the well above average standards achieved, the average income, very effective teaching, and the high level of achievement by pupils, the school gives very good value for money.

The school considers carefully how it can get best value in purchasing equipment and services.

## PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The quality of teaching and the behaviour of pupils.</li> <li>• The progress pupils make and the standards they achieve.</li> <li>• The management and leadership of the school.</li> <li>• The information the school provides.</li> <li>• The attitudes and values the school promotes.</li> <li>• The amount of homework pupils receive.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• None identified at a significant level of parental concern.</li> </ul>

Parents' views of the school are very good. From the responses made in the questionnaire and from the meeting with inspectors, the vast majority of parents were pleased with all aspects of the school. Inspectors' judgements support these positive views.

## **PART B: COMMENTARY**

### **WHAT THE SCHOOL DOES WELL**

**Attainment in English and mathematics, particularly writing, is high. The most recent test results are well above the national average in English, mathematics and science. Results are much higher than those achieved by pupils from a similar background in other schools.**

1. In the 2000 national tests, the proportion of pupils at the end of Key Stage 2 reaching the expected level (Level 4) was well above the national average in English, mathematics and science. The proportion of pupils reaching the higher level (Level 5) was twice the national average in English, and well above average in mathematics and science; really good results. When compared with schools with pupils of a similar background the school's results are well above average in mathematics and science and in the top five per cent in English. Pupils' attainment on entry to the school is below the expected level in English and mathematics. Pupils achieve well over time. By Year 6, the scrutiny of pupils' work and observing pupils in lessons indicate a similar standard of achievement is developing as test results show. There is no significant difference between the standards that boys achieve in comparison to girls. Results have been consistently above the national average and risen over the past two years in mathematics and science and there was a significant rise in English in 2000. Pupils who have special educational needs are well supported in school and make very good progress towards the targets set in their individual plans. Standards in English and mathematics are high. However, pupils' skills in applying their mathematical knowledge in everyday practical situations are not as good as their other numeracy skills, particularly in lower Key Stage 2.
2. Pupils listen attentively in lessons, both to adults and to each other. They listen to well-read stories and poems with enjoyment. Pupils listen with interest in a variety of situations and follow instructions well. Their communication skills are effectively developed. They are given many opportunities during lessons to express ideas and ask questions, for example, in discussing how they were going to use 'PowerPoint' in Year 3 to make a book for a pupil at the infant school. Pupils were keen to find out about different graphics and font size they could use. Patient teaching encourages answers that are thoughtful and extended and the vocabulary used is appropriate. Teachers and support staff sympathetically build the confidence of pupils, enabling them to speak in front of the class successfully. Consequently, pupils feel valued and they learn to give more extended responses. Older pupils confidently read their own prayers to the whole school in assemblies. Opportunities to participate in drama and role-play are planned and provided. For example, Year 4 pupils have been involved in the recreation of an invasion linked to a history topic when they invaded another class's physical education lesson. Pupils explained how they felt fear and anger when 'their space was invaded'.
3. All pupils show a keen interest in books and pupils are happy to read a story from their reading book to an adult. In Year 3, when reading the story of 'Baira and the Vulture who owned Fire,' many pupils understood the use of different styles and successfully used different voices in their reading, showing good expression. By the time pupils leave the school, they read fluently whether reading stories for pleasure or seeking information, for example when using a CD ROM. Year 6 pupils confidently read Walter de la Mare's poem 'Silver' with words such as 'enchanted' and 'magical'. They recognise 'poetic licence' and offer correct substitutions such as 'motionless' for 'moveless'. They display good skills in reading unfamiliar words and recognise when they have misread a word. When talking about the stories they have read, they identify successfully the main points and express their opinion about ideas. Pupils use the library frequently and have good library skills. They

understand, and confidently use, the index and contents pages to find information from books and read the appropriate text well.

4. Writing skills are well taught across the school. In Year 3, after discussing how authors use language to create a setting, the higher attaining pupils are able to use their understanding of this in their own written work. Pupils express their ideas well in sentences, showing good skills in spelling and in the correct use of grammar. The higher and average attaining pupils plan their stories carefully so that they have a beginning, middle and end, and learn how to improve what they write. They write well imaginatively and select appropriate forms for different purposes. Pupils use their skills well in other subjects, for example when writing about Whitehaven in geography, why their grandparents settled in Whitehaven in history, or highlighting their experiences after a visit to Frizington. By the end of Key Stage 2, most pupils use good expressive language and demonstrate grammatical awareness in a variety of well-structured and planned work that includes letter writing, poems, cartoon jokes, newspaper articles, reports, empathetic writing and descriptive writing. Examples of extended writing include modern myths and their experiences after a visit to Hawesend outdoor education centre. All pupils write for different purposes producing interesting, lively accounts. They use colourful vocabulary well; for example, in a poem using similes a pupil wrote 'A mouse moving as silently as a leaf falling from a tree'. Good examples of pupils writing sensitively were seen in 'Friendship Prayers' when pupils wrote about the qualities of their friends that they thought were important. These prayers were then shared later at a class assembly. Pupils' writing skills are well used in other subjects; for example in mathematics, pupils record their rules for multiplying by 10 using the correct mathematical vocabulary such as 'digit'. In design and technology, pupils write instructions for making slippers and in history, they create 'talking pictures' linked to their work on the Bayeux Tapestry. The standard of presentation of their work and their handwriting skills match the high standards achieved in other aspects of writing.
5. In Year 3, pupils are competent in the addition of two digit numbers and the use of correct mathematical language. They have a good understanding of the place value of tens and units and can competently add three numbers together; good mental skills are evident in higher attaining pupils and they can explain their strategies. For example, a Year 3 pupil explained when adding  $14+6+4$  that he added the 6 and 4 to get 10 and then added 14 to 10 to get 24. Most pupils understand money and can make accurate calculations using halves and quarters. However, pupils' mental skills are not as strong as their other numeracy skills and pupils do not use these skills confidently in problem solving, particularly in the lower key stage. This is because the number of opportunities for pupils to use and apply their knowledge of mathematics in practical, everyday situations is not consistent across the classes. By the end of the key stage, although pupils are competent with mental recall of their tables, it often takes average and lower attaining pupils longer than expected to give the correct answer, similarly their confidence in answering is not as high as in literacy lessons. All pupils add, subtract, multiply and divide large numbers accurately. Higher attaining pupils are developing their own strategies for solving problems and can explain their reasoning. For example, a Year 6 pupil when asked by the teacher 'Can you find the answer to 30 squared after subtracting 24 squared?' enthusiastically explained 'subtract the two numbers to get six, add the two numbers together to get 54 and multiply the two numbers together,  $6 \times 54 = 324$ !' All pupils are able to gather and interpret information from graphs and charts and offer simple explanations. Pupils' knowledge of percentages, shape, and symmetry is good. Overall, pupils have good numeracy skills.
6. In science, in Year 3, pupils are developing a good scientific approach and exhibit sound skills in observation, sorting and classifying. By Year 6, pupils are able to recognise the need for a fair test, and to plan and carry out their own experiments and select relevant equipment. Pupils have a well-developed scientific vocabulary and good investigative skills. They are confident in planning fair tests and understand which variables should be controlled

or changed. For example, in Year 5, pupils examined seeds they had grown at home in a variety of conditions and from their results concluded successfully the best conditions for seeds to germinate. They have a good knowledge of the natural world, materials and their properties and the physical world.

7. The high standards in reading, writing and number contribute significantly to pupils' learning across the curriculum.

**Pupils' behaviour is exemplary; they form very good relationships with one another and adults, try hard with their work and accept responsibility very well.**

8. Pupils' attitudes to learning are very good, their behaviour is exemplary and relationships are of high quality. They work with enthusiasm and are well motivated, exhibiting great interest in all that is around them. In a Year 3 mathematics lesson, pupils were eager to learn and demonstrated a strong capacity to sustain their concentration. Pupils responded well to the 'challenge' they were given in trying to define the properties of as many two dimensional shapes as they could in five minutes and wasted no time, responding positively to competing against the clock. As well as listening attentively to their teachers they take notice of the thoughts and comments of other pupils in the class. This was particularly evident in a Year 5 science lesson as pupils explained what they had found out from their investigations into plant growth. They listened carefully to one another's answers and reflected on the different conclusions other pupils drew from their observations. Very good working habits are formed as they respond positively to the teachers' high expectations of academic achievement, attitudes to work and to positive behaviour. For example, in a Year 6 mathematics lesson, pupils very quickly got into groups, organised themselves and held a very sensible discussion. Pupils develop very good co-operative skills for partnership and group work. They demonstrate a polite helpfulness toward each other as well as to all adults. Pupils are confident enough to try out individual ideas and share their ideas with the rest of the class; for example, in a Year 4 literacy lesson when pupils had been improving a piece for writing by substituting more powerful words. In the plenary session at the end of the lesson, pupils took pride in reading their written accounts to the rest of the class and appreciated the positive comments they received from their classmates.
9. The school's expectations of standards of behaviour are clearly stated in the school prospectus. Pupils understand what is required of them and they strive to achieve these goals. The standard of behaviour in the school is extremely good and makes a strong, beneficial contribution to the quality of education provided by creating an effective environment for pupils to learn. The pupils respond to visitors in a friendly and self-confident manner. They are courteous, both inside and outside the building, to all. They show respect for others as well as property and for each other's opinions. They respond very well to the good adult role models around them. There have been no exclusions in the school in recent years. Parents express great satisfaction with the beliefs and standards promoted by the school.
10. The relationships within the school community are respectful and very supportive and are a strength of the school. Pupils respond extremely well to being valued as individuals. They take responsibilities eagerly. Tasks such as tidying up are completed without fuss from Year 3 upwards. Pupils are appreciative of the teachers' capacity to make learning fun and interesting, responding positively to these qualities. They are keen to come to school and develop into independent learners. Pupils are courteous, trustworthy and respect both property and resources. They hold doors open for visitors and are quick to give way when access in corridors is restricted. There is no evidence of vandalism or graffiti around the school. The school works hard to raise pupils' respect for each other and issues such as caring, friendship and bullying are discussed in circle time. Pupils show respect for all staff. All staff set an excellent example as role models for pupils, with the head teacher and deputy

head providing visible, sensitive pastoral leadership for all staff and pupils which has a positive effect on pupils. Parents are pleased with pupils' behaviour and relationships in the school and expressed this at their meeting with inspectors and in the questionnaire returns.

**The quality of teaching is very good. No teaching was unsatisfactory and in one half of the lessons seen it was very good. Teachers are enthusiastic, have high expectations and all pupils' efforts and contributions are greatly valued; this enables all pupils to achieve well in lessons.**

11. In the previous inspection, the quality of teaching was unsatisfactory in 5 per cent of the lessons seen. Unsatisfactory teaching was linked to a lack of schemes of work and work not sufficiently well matched to pupils' needs. Overall, the quality of teaching has improved and no examples of unsatisfactory teaching were seen. The amount of teaching judged to be very good has increased from 11 per cent to 50 per cent. A number of factors have contributed to the improvement in the overall quality of teaching:
  - a raising of teachers' expectations through target setting;
  - the improvement of teachers' short-term planning;
  - the effective monitoring of teaching;
  - good assessment procedures.
12. There have been a number of teaching staff changes bringing new ideas into the school and staff training has been beneficial in improving the teaching of English, mathematics and ICT. Overall, pupils' numeracy and literacy skills are taught well. Reading skills are taught well and, in all classes, the opportunities pupils have to use and develop their writing and reading skills in other subjects as well as English are good. In mathematics, mental strategies are taught effectively but not all teachers provide pupils with sufficient opportunities to use and apply their knowledge in practical situations in mathematics lessons. Overall, the quality of teaching is very good. Teachers successfully meet the needs of all pupils. Across the school, the teaching was at least satisfactory or better in all of the lessons seen, and in 50 per cent of lessons, it was very good or better.
13. Where teaching is of high quality, careful preparation provides a good range of resources to support pupils' learning and pupils are motivated well by praise and encouragement. The teacher has high expectations of pupils and they respond enthusiastically. Lessons are well planned and organised, providing pupils with challenging tasks. An example of very good teaching was in a Year 6 mathematics lesson when pupils solved problems involving time such as, 'How much television would you watch in your lifetime?'. The pupils responded enthusiastically to the task the teacher had given them and concentrated hard. As a result, they enjoyed the activity and reached a good understanding of the stages in solving problems. Questioning was used effectively to promote and assess understanding and the teacher gave immediate extension or reinforcement as the needs arose. In a good Year 3 literacy lesson, as pupils reflected on the story of 'Baira and the Vultures who owned Fire', the teacher used perceptive questions that focused pupils on the task and valued their contributions to the discussion. The lesson provided pupils with the opportunity to read as if they were the characters in the story and recall their own experiences in relation to the story. In the literacy and numeracy sessions, teachers have established good classroom routines for pupils and there is an industrious working atmosphere. When classroom assistants or other helpers are present they are used purposefully and provide good support for pupils; for example, in a class shared writing session the assistant provided good support to lower attaining pupils with their spellings. Pupils were encouraged and wasted no time in successfully completing the task to the best of their ability.

14. The best lessons are well planned, cater for the needs of all pupils, have a clear purpose, include challenging activities and proceed at a good pace. In a very good Year 5 mathematics lesson, pupils focused on the properties of three-dimensional shapes after carefully studying two-dimensional shapes with the support of the teacher. The teacher used an effective range of teaching strategies and had high expectations of what pupils could achieve and how they should behave. In this lesson, discussion and questions were used well to challenge pupils' thinking, to inspire ideas and to see alternative possibilities. Whole class teaching was effective, but pupils also had the opportunity to work independently or collaboratively, which they did well. This resulted in pupils settling quickly to the task, working at a good pace and quickly developing a good knowledge of the properties and names of a variety of three-dimensional shapes. In a very good Year 5 science lesson, the teacher used her time well in monitoring and supporting pupils as they worked in groups discussing the effect of changing one variable in their investigation into plant growth. She listened carefully to the discussions, and joined in when necessary, ensuring opportunities to extend and clarify pupils' ideas were effectively taken. In other very good lessons, teachers use questions well to check on past and present learning and develop the lesson successfully from pupils' responses. In a very good Year 4 history lesson, pupils explored why their grandparents had settled in Whitehaven. Very good use was made of open-ended tasks and questions for example, 'What do think it would be like ...?' or 'How do you think they felt...?' The pupils responded with great enthusiasm and learnt a great deal from each other about different reasons why people moved and settled in particular places.
15. Teachers have a sound knowledge and understanding of the subjects they teach. In a very good Year 4 ICT lesson, the teacher's expertise and ability to demonstrate how to use a PowerPoint program excited the pupils. The teacher carefully balanced the amount of information she gave to pupils against effective questions to check on pupils' own knowledge. This resulted in pupils gaining a clear understanding of not only how to create, but also the purpose of, PowerPoint. Very good resources supported the pupils' learning well. Teachers' management of pupils is good, ensuring good levels of discipline and creating an industrious working atmosphere. Teachers show great sensitivity towards pupils' needs and, as a result, pupils feel valued and confidently contribute to the lesson. Pupils are eager to learn and when given their task, respond positively by working hard and producing good quality work that is matched to their ability. The very good teaching is instrumental in helping pupils make very good progress.
16. The teaching of pupils who have special educational needs is good and is generally undertaken by the class teachers with the support of the special needs co-ordinator and the learning support assistants. The co-ordinator has a full teaching commitment and works in class alongside class teachers. An advantage of this arrangement is that the special needs co-ordinator works in several classes, which allows her to monitor classroom work and to offer regular informal support to teachers in managing pupils who have special educational needs. Teachers are familiar with the process of identifying pupils who have special educational needs and follow correct procedures. Targets are specific and teaching is appropriately focused. The learning support assistants who work with pupils who have special educational needs have very good relationships with the pupils and teachers. They are able to work in conjunction with the teachers to raise standards and to ensure that all pupils gain full benefit from their lessons.
17. Homework is used to well to support the work in classrooms. The regular use of homework is effective in promoting the development of reading, spelling and mathematics with pupils. Good use is made of the reading diary and has great value as an effective link between home and school. There are good opportunities for pupils to extend the work done in class at home or to carry out research to find information to use in future lessons. For example, in Year 5, pupils took a variety of seeds home to grow over the half-term holiday. The results of their investigation were then used successfully at school to observe the effect of different

conditions on how well the seeds had grown. In Year 4, linked to their history topic, pupils carried out a questionnaire with their grandparents to find out why they had settled in Whitehaven. Homework is consistently given and supports pupils' learning well.

**Very good provision is made for pupils' personal development, particularly for spiritual, social, moral and cultural development. The curriculum is enriched by visitors, visits and a very good range of activities provided for pupils outside the school day.**

18. The school provides a very effective, well-planned pastoral programme that has a very positive impact on pupils' personal development. This was identified as a strength in the school by parents. Pastoral care is at the heart of the school and enables the school to fulfil its mission statement successfully. A strong family ethos is evident in all aspects of school life. In lessons, there are lots of opportunities for pupils to accept responsibility and show sensitivity towards one another. This they do well as pupils work enthusiastically together discussing their ideas sensibly. The school is about to instigate a school's council and ideas put forward by the group will be shared with staff and governors. Lessons are carefully planned with a focus developing responsible attitudes or being sensitive to other pupils' feelings and ideas. For example, pupils have discussed sensitively 'Feelings' and 'What makes a good friend' in circle time sessions. There is also a strong link to health education and pupils discuss sensitive areas such as, 'Me and my relationships', 'The people I love' and 'Growing and changing'. As a result, relationships between pupils and the ability of pupils to accept responsibility are a strength of the school.
19. Provision for pupils' moral development is very good and is successfully promoted by the school code of behaviour and effective teamwork between pupils, all school staff and parents. Effort and achievement are consistently rewarded by an ongoing house point system. Staff make good use of praise and successfully build on positive behaviour. Older pupils' behaviour towards the younger ones actively shows thought and care. Pupils are responsible for their individual class rules and demonstrate a good understanding of right from wrong. Several instances were seen of pupils helping others in difficulty in the teaching areas. Value is placed on every pupil's work and effort. Such recognition is successfully reflected in the attractive displays of their work around the school and in the conversations between teachers and pupils during lessons. The provision for pupils' spiritual development is very good. It is promoted through daily, well-planned and interesting acts of worship and through the curriculum. Pupils show interest, enjoyment and reverence in assemblies and there is very good participation. In one assembly, pupils were urged not to take people for granted but think about what they should be thankful for. In another one, pupils discussed people who help them and reminded themselves that on many occasions they may never meet these people. In a 'Good News' assembly, pupils celebrated their achievements and certificates were presented, many of which were for helpfulness, working hard or being good role models. Pupils sing their hymns melodiously and with enthusiasm. The assemblies ended with a prayer or reflection. Pupils have the opportunity to listen to calming music, often from different cultures, when they enter and leave assembly. There are lots of opportunities for reflection in lessons; for example, in a Year 3 literacy lesson pupils were asked to close their eyes as the teacher read a short description for them to 'see in their heads'. In another lesson, pupils reflected on the true story of how a Polish man had come to settle in Whitehaven during the war. The story was brought in by one of the pupils from home and evoked a great deal of empathy on the part of the pupils.
20. The school's provision for social development is very good. Pupils are encouraged to be self-reliant and to show consideration and concern for others. Pupils are helped to develop an understanding of citizenship; for example a group of pupils took part in a planning exercise to design an area in the local park. The school is involved closely with the community. The Salvation Army and Normandy Veterans' Association offer the pupils the

opportunity to take part in services they organise. The school actively organises a Community Development Centre which many parents take advantage of to develop new skills. Older pupils are given responsibilities in the school. During lunchtime, pupils successfully act as monitors looking after younger pupils; they also act as register monitors and help in preparing for assemblies. They sensibly look after younger pupils at playtimes and at lunch times on the playground. The pupils collect for a variety of charities including 'Jeans for Genes Appeal' and 'Wells for Water Appeal'.

21. The curriculum takes account of the needs of all its pupils and the school provides many of experiences that enrich the curriculum. For example, recently Year 3 has visited Frizington to study different types of settlements linked to their work in history. In discussion with pupils they felt the visit had 'brought the subject to life and made it more interesting'. Year 6 pupils attended a citizenship meeting at Cleator Moor and pupils took part in a 'Garden 2000' competition, working with Sellafield. Over the year, all classes visit places of interest to enrich their work in lessons. Good use is also made of the local community. St. John's Ambulance talked to Year 4 and senior citizens were the providers in a history topic, 'War Years'. The provision for extra-curricular activities is very good, particularly in sport and music. Current clubs include French conversation, art, guitar, photography, music, cricket, rugby, aerobics, football and netball. Extra-curricular lessons are available for a variety of instruments for pupils who are musically talented. An extensive programme of visitors to the school, workshops, competitions, and joint activities with other schools, charitable events and school association activities, enriches the curriculum. There are good links with the local church, charities, the local community and parents. Pupils in Year 6 have the opportunity to participate in residential visits to an Outward Bound centre.

**The headteacher provides very strong leadership, and with the support of a conscientious team of teachers, monitors and evaluates the work of the school successfully in order to continue to further improve the education the pupils receive.**

22. Overall, the leadership and management of the school by the headteacher are very good. The headteacher provides a clear educational direction for the school, which involves building a community in which pupils, staff and others operate through mutual support and respect. She is committed, conscientious and effective and her all round performance over past years means that she has secured the respect of governors, staff, parents and pupils. The deputy supports the headteacher well in analysing pupil data, and is a part of a small, effective senior management team. The headteacher makes sure that the school shares a clear sense of purpose and, by very good management, sees that this is reflected in all parts of the school. Staff are united and committed to creating a supportive community where people are valued as individuals. This is manifest in the everyday activities of pupils. The quality of relationships between all people in the school is very good. The governors' role in shaping the direction of the school is very good. They are very effective in fulfilling their responsibilities. They share a common view of the future of the school and have a clear idea about the strengths and weakness of the school. They monitor the performance of the school effectively and have a good knowledge its workings through visits and direct observations of teaching. The headteacher is a strong leader who has a clear vision of the path the school needs to follow to continue improving. Subject coordinators provide good management, particularly in monitoring and evaluating the development of their subject. The management of the school has been instrumental in bringing about the very good improvement since the last inspection and ensures the school has a good capacity for further improvements to be made.
23. A strength of the school is the great effort it makes in monitoring and evaluating its work and implementing programmes of improvement where needed. The importance the school gives to this is reflected in its staffing. There is a data analysis manager, a monitoring and evaluation manager and a curriculum manager who work closely together with a clear focus on monitoring and evaluating. The curriculum is monitored effectively by the headteacher



and co-ordinators through detailed analysis of teachers' planning and observing the quality of teaching and pupils' learning. The headteacher monitors each class and discusses her findings with the class-teacher. This provides opportunities to exchange thoughts about successes, as well as to discuss areas of improvement to the quality of teaching. Teachers set themselves targets in literacy and numeracy where they have identified areas to further improve the quality of their teaching. Co-ordinators have clear and realistic responsibilities that are laid out in their detailed job descriptions. Relevant targets set for the development of co-ordinators area of responsibility are a feature of the school's development plan. Appropriate structures exist for co-ordinators to monitor teachers' planning, give advice on, and develop their subject. Teachers complete an audit of their subject and produce a written report indicating areas of strength and areas in need of development. From this, an action plan is created indicating how improvements can be made. This information is then shared with colleagues and governors and a review date is set. This has been particularly effective in English and mathematics, where, through classroom observation, areas of development have been identified and are being improved, for example, extended writing and the mental and oral part of mathematics lessons.

24. There are extensive aims, values and policies that successfully guide and support the work of the school. They particularly emphasise a balance between the pursuit of academic excellence and good pastoral care. The school has a very good ethos. It is strongly committed to high academic achievement and its realistic targets for end of key stage tests are in excess of those set by the local authority. Behaviour is very good; pupils readily and confidently take on responsibility and adults and pupils have an obvious mutual respect. The school successfully promotes an equal entitlement for all pupils.
25. Development planning involves the whole staff and governing body in the setting of relevant priorities and targets for the coming year. The format shows good practice. It successfully identifies key areas for development, is carefully costed and has criteria set with which success is carefully judged. Progress on areas of development are evaluated effectively; for example, the headteacher receives reports on the progress made in the priorities identified in the development plan relating to its impact on pupils' performance. Adjustments are then made to the plan in the light of these evaluations where necessary; this creates a working document and an effective management tool. Educational developments are supported well through financial planning; for instance, large amounts of money have been spent on priorities such as literacy, numeracy and ICT. Members of the governing body are appropriately included in consultations and receive regular updates on income and expenditure. The principle of best value is conscientiously applied. For example, as a result of pupils' limited experience of swimming the school subsidises swimming lessons for all Year 3 and 4 pupils. Similarly, the school provides extra teaching for musically talented pupils. The modest surplus has been carefully acquired over several years by careful budgeting and is seen as a necessary security against the need for further improvements. For example, the school has plans to extend the computer suite to benefit the pupils and to provide ICT courses for the community; this is a major priority for the school.

## **WHAT COULD BE IMPROVED**

**Pupils' ability to use and apply their mathematical knowledge in practical, everyday situations and their confidence in discussing mental strategies, particularly in lower key stage classes.**

26. The school has effectively implemented the National Numeracy Strategy and numeracy skills are well taught. Lessons are well planned to take account of the programmes of study and work is well matched to pupils' abilities. Pupils' progress in the knowledge and understanding of number through the key stage is enhanced through regular practice in mental calculation and revision of number facts. Their progress in language and reasoning

skills is good; improved curricular provision is having a positive effect across the key stage. Progress for younger pupils in their ability to explain their thinking and develop their own approaches to overcoming difficulties is not as strong. Similarly, although pupils are showing confidence and independence in their mathematics lessons, progress in using and applying their mathematical knowledge is not as good. Pupils do not benefit from consistency of approach or in the number of opportunities for them to apply their knowledge of mathematical facts and processes to solve practical, everyday problems. The co-ordinator has successfully monitored the oral and mental start to mathematics lessons and instigated a programme for improvement, ensuring consistency in approach. She has similar plans to monitor the delivery of how pupils' mathematical knowledge is used in everyday, practical situations.

### **WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?**

27. *In order to further improve the very good quality of education the school provides and build on the very good improvement made since the last inspection, the governors, headteacher and staff should :*

Further raise standards in mathematics by improving pupils' skills and confidence in using and applying their mathematical knowledge by;

analysing current practice in order to identify the strengths and areas for development in the teaching of pupils' skills in using and applying their mathematical knowledge,  
developing a structure which will support and guide teachers in providing lessons for pupils to use their mathematical knowledge,  
providing pupils, particularly in lower key stage, with more opportunities to use and apply their mathematical skills in everyday, practical, problem-solving situations.

(paragraphs 5, 12, 26)

## PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

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

Number of lessons observed	22
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	20

### Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
0	50	45	5	0	0	0

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

### Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll	Nursery	Y3-Y6
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	0	309
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	0	58

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs	Nursery	Y3 – Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	0	5
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	0	27

English as an additional language	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	0

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	6
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	10

### Attendance

Authorised absence	%
School data	5.5
National comparative data	5.2

Unauthorised absence	%
School data	0.6
National comparative data	0.5

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

### **Attainment at the end of Key Stage 2**

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2000	47	30	77

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	42	40	46
	Girls	27	23	28
	Total	69	63	74
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	90 (82)	82 (86)	96
	National	75 (70)	72 (69)	85 (78)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	38	38	43
	Girls	25	25	26
	Total	63	63	69
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	82 (85)	82 (90)	90 (89)
	National	70 (68)	72 (69)	80 (75)

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

### ***Ethnic background of pupils***

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	0
Black – African heritage	0
Black – other	0
Indian	0
Pakistani	0
Bangladeshi	0
Chinese	0
White	307
Any other minority ethnic group	2

*This table refers to pupils of compulsory school age only.*

### ***Exclusions in the last school year***

	Fixed period	Permanent
Black – Caribbean heritage	0	0
Black – African heritage	0	0
Black – other	0	0
Indian	0	0
Pakistani	0	0
Bangladeshi	0	0
Chinese	0	0
White	0	0
Other minority ethnic groups	0	0

*This table gives the number of exclusions of pupils of compulsory school age, which may be different from the number of pupils excluded.*

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

#### **Qualified teachers and classes: Y3 – Y6**

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	11
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	28
Average class size	31

#### **Education support staff: Y3 – Y6**

Total number of education support staff	2
Total aggregate hours worked per week	61.5

### ***Financial information***

Financial year	1999-2000
	£
Total income	495126
Total expenditure	473833
Expenditure per pupil	1543
Balance brought forward from previous year	4916

## **Results of the survey of parents and carers**

### **Questionnaire return rate**

Number of questionnaires sent out	264
Number of questionnaires returned	157

### **Percentage of responses in each category**

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	59	37	2	1	1
My child is making good progress in school.	55	42	3	0	0
Behaviour in the school is good.	50	43	1	0	6
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	41	48	8	1	2
The teaching is good.	66	32	1	0	1
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	48	41	9	1	1
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	73	25	2	0	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	75	23	1	0	1
The school works closely with parents.	52	39	8	0	1
The school is well led and managed.	76	23	0	0	1
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	62	36	1	0	1
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	66	31	3	0	0