

## INSPECTION REPORT

**ST GREGORY'S & ST PATRICK'S CATHOLIC  
INFANT SCHOOL**

Whitehaven

LEA area: Cumbria

Unique reference number: 112355

Headteacher: Mr A Dwyer

Reporting inspector: Mrs R Rodger  
10347

Dates of inspection: 27<sup>th</sup> – 31<sup>st</sup> January 2003

Inspection number: 247216

Full inspection carried out under Section 10 of the School Inspections Act 1996

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Infant
School category:	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils:	3 to 7 years
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Esk Avenue Whitehaven Cumbria
Postcode:	CA28 8AJ
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Appropriate authority:	The governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Father E Gould
Date of previous inspection:	October 1997

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## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members			Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
10347	R Rodger	Registered inspector	English Information and communication technology Geography History Educational inclusion, including race equality Special educational needs	What sort of school is it? The school's results and pupils' achievements How well are pupils taught? How well is the school led and managed? What should the school do to improve further?
12536	S Bullerwell	Lay inspector		Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development How well does the school care for its pupils? How well does the school work in partnership with parents?
20645	R Webber	Team inspector	Mathematics Physical education Foundation Stage English as an additional language	
30441	M Pritchard	Team inspector	Science Art and design Design and technology Music	How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils?

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

### **INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL**

St Gregory's and St Patrick's Catholic Infant school is situated close to the centre of Whitehaven. There are 226 pupils on roll, 107 boys and 119 girls. Seventy-eight children attend the nursery part-time. About a third of the pupils attending the school come from outside the immediate area. The area around the school is mixed socially and economically. The proportion of pupils entitled to a free school meal is in line with the national average. Twenty per cent of the pupils have special educational needs which is about average. There are six pupils with a statement of special educational need: this is above the national average. Pupils have the following areas of need: communication and interaction; sensory and physical; emotional and behavioural and learning difficulties. All pupils are white British, apart from two bilingual Spanish pupils who have Spanish as their mother tongue. They speak English fluently. The pupils are taught in eight classes, two of which have pupils from two age groups. Attainment on entry to the nursery class is average, but by the time pupils start school in Year 1 attainment is above average in personal, social and emotional development, communication, language and literacy development and creative development. The school has a settled staff. The headteacher has been in post for two terms and there is an acting deputy headteacher. Pupil mobility is low and there are no excluded pupils. The school is fully subscribed with a waiting list for the nursery.

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

This is an improving school that is effective in several aspects of its work. Standards are above average in speaking and listening, writing and science and average in reading and mathematics. Pupils with special educational needs make very good progress. The school has a strong Catholic ethos and effectively promotes the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of its pupils. Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development are very good. The quality of teaching in English and science is good. The quality of teaching in the Foundation Stage<sup>1</sup> is very good and pupils achieve well. The leadership and management of the school are satisfactory, but require some improvement. Improvements to the school since the last inspection have been satisfactory. The school provides satisfactory value for money.

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

- Promotes above average standards in speaking and listening, writing and science by the age of seven.
- Pupils with special educational needs are well provided for: this is a strength of the school.
- The quality of education in the Foundation Stage is very good and a strength of the school.
- The provision for the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of the pupils is very good.
- Out-of-school activities for pupils are very good.
- Parents have a high regard for the school.

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

- Standards in mathematics by the age of seven.
- The challenge for higher attaining pupils in reading.
- Ensure the senior management team represents the full age range of the school.
- The quality of provision and use of information and communication technology in Years 1 and 2.

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

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

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<sup>1</sup> The stage of education for children aged from three to five. The children are taught in the nursery and reception classes.

The school has made satisfactory improvement since it was last inspected in October 1997. Senior staff now have clear roles and responsibilities but they are less well developed in some subjects as they have not been a priority in the school improvement plan. The school improvement plan now includes targets for improvement in relation to the overall school priorities that are displayed for parents to see. Curriculum planning and assessment have improved. Improvements to checking and evaluating the work of the school are in the early stage of development. Provision for special educational needs is now a strength of the school and a whole-school appraisal system in line with national performance management requirements is in place.

## STANDARDS

The table shows the standards achieved by pupils at the end of Year 2 based on National Curriculum test results.

Performance in:	compared with			
	all schools			similar schools
	2000	2001	2002	2002
reading	C	A	C	C
writing	B	A	A	A
mathematics	D	C	C	D

**Key**

well above average    A  
 above average        B  
 average                C  
 below average        D  
 well below average   E

The results of the 2002 national tests showed that standards of attainment remained well above average in writing compared to all schools and similar schools. A well above average proportion of pupils achieved the higher Level 3 in writing. Standards in reading are generally average, but a well below average proportion of pupils achieved the higher Level 3. Pupils with special educational needs made better progress in reading than other pupils as a result of the intensive support they receive. Results in mathematics were below average compared to similar schools. They have remained static for the past few years. The school has identified this as an area for improvement. The results of the teacher assessments in science were above average. Children achieve well throughout the Foundation Stage and start in Year 1 with above average standards in personal, social and emotional development, communication, language and literacy and creative development. The children exceed the early learning goals in all these areas of learning with a significant minority working in the early stages of the National Curriculum. Achievement in Years 1 and 2 is satisfactory overall, with some good achievement in science and writing. Pupils with special educational needs make very good progress. The higher attaining pupils achieve satisfactorily in reading and could do better. Average and lower attaining pupils generally achieve well, especially the pupils with special educational needs who make very good progress in reading. The school is addressing this weakness in reading. Standards of attainment in speaking and listening, writing and science are above average in lessons. They are average in art and design, design and technology, physical education, music, history and geography. Standards are below average in information and communication technology.

## PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Very good. Pupils enjoy lessons and they are keen to come to school. They show very good levels of interest in lessons.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Good. Most pupils behave well in class and around the school. There have been no exclusions.

Personal development and relationships	Personal development is very good. Pupils show care and concern for others less fortunate than themselves. Relationships between staff and pupils are very good. Pupils work well together. The school council is promoting good relationships throughout the school.
Attendance	Satisfactory. The school is trying to improve punctuality for a more settled start to the day.

Children in the Foundation Stage are very keen to explore new activities, for example when they made musical shakers. Pupils settle quickly to work and get on without any fuss. Pupils discuss emotions such as anger and fear in personal, health and social education lessons.

## TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils in:	Nursery and Reception	Years 1 – 2
Quality of teaching	Very good	Satisfactory

*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.*

The quality of teaching overall in the Foundation Stage is very good with one example of excellent teaching. In the 39 lessons observed in Years 1 and 2, teaching is very good in six lessons, good in 15 and satisfactory in 18 lessons. There is no unsatisfactory teaching. The quality of teaching has improved since the last inspection. Teachers use good questioning skills. The teaching of literacy skills is good overall, with strengths in the teaching of writing. As a result, pupils learn to write well-formed letters and present their work well. The teaching of numeracy skills is satisfactory. The expectations of higher attaining pupils are not high enough. Pupils with special educational needs are well supported in lessons and when taught individually they make very good gains in their learning. Pupils learn effectively in many lessons because they concentrate and show good levels of interest. For example, a pupil with special educational needs enjoyed finding out about a lighthouse and then making a model of it in a geography lesson. Pupils make slower gains in their learning when teaching lacks precise objectives and the pace is too slow. At times, work in mathematics is not well enough matched to the needs of all pupils and marking is unsatisfactory. The teaching of information and communication technology is unsatisfactory because many staff lack the confidence and understanding of how to use the subject to teach specific skills or to support learning in other subjects.

## OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Good. There are comprehensive schemes of work in place for all subjects and areas of learning. The school provides a wide range of out-of-school activities and a breakfast club.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Very good. The procedures to identify and support pupils with special educational needs are very good, especially in the Foundation Stage. Targets in individual education plans are appropriate and pupils are very well supported in lessons by learning support assistants and for additional support where required.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Very good. The school has a strong Catholic ethos which permeates all aspects of school life. Pupils have a very good understanding of moral development which is consistently promoted through the code of conduct by all staff. Cultural development is good.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Procedures for the protection of pupils are good. Assessment procedures are satisfactory and have improved since the last inspection.

Parents hold very good views about the school. They are pleased with all aspects of the school's work.

#### HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Leadership and management by the headteacher are satisfactory. The acting deputy headteacher is effective in her role as curriculum manager. The senior management team does not represent the whole age range of the school, comprising only the headteacher and acting deputy headteacher. Almost half of the pupils in school are in the Foundation Stage which is led by a very effective leader who is not currently on the senior management team.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Good. The governors have a clear view of the strengths and weaknesses of the school. They work diligently to support the work of the school. Effective use is made of various committees to do this.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Satisfactory. The school improvement plan does not reflect the main areas of weakness in the school. Arrangements for monitoring and evaluating teaching are underdeveloped but are identified for improvement.
The strategic use of resources	The budget deficit incurred after the previous inspection is showing an acceptable surplus. Governors seek to achieve the best services for the school. The school provides satisfactory value for money.

Accommodation is adequate. There have been several improvements to the school building since the last inspection: new windows; doors and improvements to the headteacher's office. However, there is no library or computer suite and the outdoor area for the Foundation Stage is inadequate. There are appropriate staffing levels; the 12 support staff make a good contribution to pupils' learning. Resources are generally adequate; there is no library and the resources for information and communication technology are not used effectively.

#### 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>• Their children like school.</li> <li>• Behaviour is good in school.</li> <li>• The school expects their children to work hard.</li> <li>• The school helps their children become mature and responsible.</li> <li>• Parents are happy that their concerns are listened to.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A very small number of parents are unhappy their children are taught in mixed age classes.</li> <li>• The amount of work their children have to do at home.</li> </ul>

The inspection team generally agree with the positive comments made by the parents. They feel that parents do not need to be concerned about the teaching in mixed-age classes as the teaching and learning are very clearly matched to the different age range in each class.



## **PART B: COMMENTARY**

### **HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?**

#### **The school's results and pupils' achievements**

1. Attainment on entry to the Foundation Stage is average. By the time the children start in the reception class, attainment is above average in personal, social and emotional development, communication, language and literacy and creative development. The children are on course to achieve the early learning goals in all six areas of learning, and to have exceeded them in aspects of personal, social and emotional development, communication, language and literacy and creative development by the time they start in Year 1. The very good achievement in the Foundation Stage overall is a result of very good teaching and the impact of the co-ordinator's support for planning and assessment arrangements.
2. The results of the 2002 national tests showed that standards of attainment remained well above average in writing compared to all schools and similar schools. A well above average proportion of pupils achieved the higher Level 3 in writing. Standards in reading are generally average, but a well below average proportion of pupils achieved the higher Level 3. Pupils with special educational needs made better progress in reading than other pupils as a result of the intensive support they receive. Results in mathematics were below average compared to similar schools. They have remained static for the past few years. The school has identified this as an area for improvement. The results of the teacher assessments in science were above average. An average proportion of pupils achieved the higher Level 3 in science.
3. At the end of Year 2, current standards of attainment are above average in speaking and listening, writing and science. Pupils generally achieve satisfactorily, with good achievement in writing based on attainment when the pupils started in Year 1. Attainment in mathematics is satisfactory. Higher attaining pupils in mathematics are not achieving as well as they could. Pupils are given too few opportunities to use and apply mathematics to problem-solving activities in some of their numeracy work.
4. Pupils listen attentively. For example, a Year 1 pupil engrossed in a story volunteered unprompted, 'the worm on the page is happy too'. As a result of the teacher's encouragement for pupils to think for themselves they could describe the expected outcome of a science investigation. For example, one boy described how he understood the impact of a striker in a science lesson about sound. Year 2 pupils used correct punctuation in their work as they wrote a poem about a fish. In mathematics, higher attaining pupils are given too few opportunities to record their calculations and the oral and mental sessions are sometimes too short with insufficient involvement of all pupils.
5. Pupils with special educational needs achieve especially well. Lower attaining pupils are provided with additional support through the early literacy support programme. If they make insufficient progress they are supported on an intensive, individual reading intervention programme for a set period of time to help them to catch up in reading and writing. For example, one Year 2 pupil following this programme was observed writing a complete sentence unaided and reading it to the whole class with a great sense of pride and achievement. Excellent support and encouragement are provided by the part-time special educational needs co-ordinator. This leads to a growing sense of self-confidence in the pupils with learning difficulties.

- Standards of attainment in all other subjects are average, apart from information and communication technology where standards are below average. Pupils lack the basic skills to enter, retrieve and save information due to a lack of consistent access to computers in their day-to-day work. Achievement throughout Years 1 and 2 is satisfactory overall, apart from in information and communication technology where it is unsatisfactory.

### **Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development**

- Pupils of all ages show very good attitudes to their work and their life in school. This is an improvement since the previous inspection and is reflected in their enjoyment of lessons and their participation in the many extra-curricular activities available to them. Children in the Foundation Stage are eager to explore new activities and, with the help of staff, plan what they will do, such as making and decorating their own 'shakers' in nursery. Older pupils listen attentively to their teachers and each other. They are keen to answer questions and take part in class discussions, for example in a Year 1 science lesson when pupils were working out how sound is made using different musical instruments.
- The school has been successful in maintaining the same good standards of behaviour seen during the previous inspection. Most pupils behave well in class. They settle quickly and get on with their work without fuss. Pupils with special educational needs related to behavioural problems are helped to play a full part in lessons and they respond well. Outside in the playground, pupils' behaviour is also good. They generally play and get on well together, although sometimes their games become too boisterous. Pupils know what to do if bullying should occur and are happy it is dealt with quickly. There have been no exclusions. Behaviour in the Foundation Stage is very good.
- Pupils' personal development is very good and is a direct response to the very good provision for their spiritual, moral, social and cultural education. Pupils understand the importance of caring for the environment and helped to clean up the cycle track near school and the beach at the north shore after learning about pollution at the Eco club. Pupils think of others around the world less fortunate than themselves, such as when they raised money for street children in Africa by recycling cans and filled 143 shoeboxes for 'Operation Christmas Child'. Many visitors, particularly on 'grounds day', give pupils experience of different cultures. For example, Year 1 pupils were very proud to demonstrate how to perform the Haka (a traditional Maori war dance) taught to them by a New Zealand international rugby player. Personal development is a strength in the Foundation Stage because the children are taught to take responsibility and to be independent in their choice of activities during the sessions.
- Relationships are very good between staff and pupils and among pupils themselves. In lessons, pupils work together in groups and share resources fairly. They show respect for others, as was seen during a personal, social and health education lesson when pupils were discussing feelings of anger and fear. The introduction of the school council is promoting good relationships among all ages as they work together to improve their school community.
- Attendance is broadly in line with the national average. There is no unauthorised absence. Most authorised absence is for medical reasons. Registration is taken promptly both morning and afternoon and this is an improvement since the previous inspection. Most pupils arrive at school on time, although a few families regularly arrive during registration. The school is trying to improve punctuality for a more settled start to the day.

## HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?

12. The quality of teaching is very good in the nursery and reception classes. Specific strengths include high quality questioning to consolidate and extend children's learning. For example, in a reception class literacy session, the learning intentions were explained to the children and then questions checked their understanding. 'Who is the penguin writing to?' checked the teacher as the children were encouraged to think about the content of their letters. Praise is used very effectively to motivate and encourage children to learn. Planning identifies what children are expected to learn in all activities and provides useful guidance for the support staff. Children in the nursery are encouraged to take responsibility for their own learning for part of the day as they select from a range of planned activities, follow through an activity and then review it with their teacher towards the end of the session. A very good balance is achieved between planned activities all children have to complete and those **that** they choose to do. Children with a statement of special educational need are effectively integrated and join in with snack- and group-time. Other children show considerable care and concern for these children.
13. The quality of teaching in Years 1 and 2 is satisfactory overall. Fifty-three per cent of the teaching is good or better which is lower than the national picture. Fifteen per cent of the teaching is very good: this matches the national picture. Where teaching is good, the pupils understand what they are expected to learn as a result of the way the teachers share learning intentions and review them at the end of lessons. Whole- class sessions are productive because the pupils are expected to contribute. Classroom assistants are effectively deployed and help pupils to clarify misunderstandings and encourage them to take part in class discussions. The weaker aspects of satisfactory teaching include: low levels of challenge in some mathematical activities; overuse of worksheets and low expectations of the higher attaining pupils. The use of ongoing assessment to check the progress of pupils in guided reading is not consistently applied. Lessons are all planned to a consistent format and some staff are effective in planning work to meet the needs of all pupils.
14. Pupils with special educational needs are taught very effectively, especially when working individually with a teacher to improve their reading. Praise is used to encourage and motivate the pupils. They learn very well because the challenges they are set are just achievable. For example, a pupil took great care when composing a sentence to describe a character which he was then able to repeat back in class unaided. Useful guidance is provided for staff to provide appropriate support in classrooms.
15. The quality of teaching and learning has improved since the last inspection. There is no unsatisfactory teaching in the school. Pupils' very good attitudes to learning make a good contribution to their achievement in lessons. There are few opportunities for pupils to take responsibility for their own learning in Years 1 and 2, but many in the Foundation Stage.

## HOW GOOD ARE THE CURRICULAR AND OTHER OPPORTUNITIES OFFERED TO PUPILS?

16. The Foundation Stage curriculum is planned very well to take account of needs of the children on the nursery and reception classes, including the reception-aged children in

the mixed-age class. Children are given considerable responsibility for what they choose to do. This is effectively checked and the activities available build effectively on the children's prior learning. A very good level of consistency is achieved in the planning between the classes due to the clear direction provided by the Foundation Stage co-ordinator. This is an improvement since the last inspection.

17. The quality and range of the curriculum for pupils in Years 1 and 2 are mainly satisfactory. The school has responded positively to the two key issues that were raised in the previous inspection in relation to the curriculum. Satisfactory schemes of work are now in place for all subjects of the National Curriculum, and effective planning ensures delivery of the National Curriculum Programmes of Study. These improvements have brought about increased pupil performance and raised standards. The provision for information and communication technology is at present unsatisfactory because the use made of resources throughout the school is inconsistent. The school is aware of this and has plans to address this shortfall in the immediate future. The provision for pupils' personal, social and health education is good, and whilst the school has a satisfactory policy for sex education, they do not have an agreed policy for drugs misuse.
18. The school has effectively implemented the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies. The teaching of literacy skills is good, particularly in writing. The school has structured the teaching of science and geography to ensure that pupils from mixed-age classes are taught in single year groups, thus ensuring that the curriculum for this subject is effectively delivered. Pupils in the mixed-age classes have their needs met effectively through a well-matched curriculum.
19. The overall weekly teaching time is below the 21 hours recommended for infant schools. In some instances, the teaching week is over one hour less than the suggested minimum. Whilst the overall percentage time allocated for each subject area is within government guidelines, this shortened week does restrict the teaching and learning opportunities for the pupils.
20. There is a very good programme of out-of-school activities for pupils in Years 1 and 2 that enriches the curriculum. Clubs include gymnastics, football, dance and a 'cool club'. A breakfast club is held in school every morning and an after-school club runs at a nearby church. Pupils from Year 2 are also given the opportunity to attend a two-day residential activity. The curriculum is further enhanced by regular special events. For example: an arts activity day, a grounds day and an Eco week. These events combine to make the curriculum exciting and stimulating for the pupils and are closely linked to the creative arts development plan.
21. The provision for pupils with special educational needs is very good. Procedures have been changed to comply with the new Code of Practice, and the writing of individual education plans reflects this. The targets on these plans are manageable in number and specific to the individual. They precisely spell out the small steps each pupil needs to take, particularly in literacy, in order to improve their work. All relevant staff contribute to the process of writing and reviewing individual education plans. Pupils progress well through the curriculum towards their own targets, effectively assisted by learning support staff.
22. The school benefits from positive links with the local community. Pupils are actively involved by singing at the local hospital, taking part in National Spring Cleaning 2000, and displaying their art work in local businesses. Constructive relationships exist with

partner institutions including local junior schools, St Benedict's Secondary School and St Martin's College.

### **Provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development**

23. The overall provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development has improved since the last inspection and is now very good. At the time of the last inspection it was reported to be good.
24. The provision for pupils' spiritual development has been maintained since the last inspection and remains good. Spiritual development is promoted well through religious education, daily acts of worship and assemblies, and the school has a strong Christian ethos that is promoted and fostered throughout all aspects of school life. Spiritual development is effectively developed through different subjects such as personal and social education, science, art and design and music. For example, at the beginning of a personal and social education lesson, the teacher played calming music in order to create a sense of reflection and meditation to encourage pupils to reflect on and understand the feelings of others. Specific school-planned projects, such as the creation of a reflective garden in memory of a pupil, provide suitable opportunities for pupils to think and reflect on feelings and stillness. The involvement of pupils in environmental projects such as the Eco project enables pupils to appreciate the beauty of their surroundings and the natural world.
25. The provision for pupils' moral development has improved since the last inspection and is now very good. At the time of the last report it was reported to be good. The school has a clear and effective code of conduct in place that is consistently applied and promoted by all staff. Staff have high expectations of pupils' behaviour and all adults provide good role models for pupils to follow. Moral development is effectively promoted in assemblies and through religious education and personal and social education. Opportunities to discuss moral issues are taken as they arise in the day-to-day work of the school. A special weekly award assembly whereby pupils receive certificates for good work or effort also contributes effectively to pupils' moral development.
26. The provision for pupils' social development has improved since the last inspection and is now very good. At the time of the last report it was reported to be good. The school provides plenty of well-planned opportunities for pupils to develop their social awareness and skills. For example, jobs of responsibility such as taking the register and dinner money to the office and the school council, provide pupils with the opportunity to contribute positively to the life of the school. Involvement in special school projects, such as the Eco project, brings pupils together in order to work towards a common goal. Pupils are encouraged to think about the needs of others as they fundraise for a range of national and international charities. Opportunities to take part in local events, such as the Whitehaven Music Festival and a residential visit to a local outward bound centre for Year 2 pupils, contribute significantly to pupils' social development.
27. The provision for pupils' cultural development has been maintained since the last report and remains good. Good cross-curricular links ensure that cultural development is well promoted in subjects. For example, in physical education, Year 1 pupils learn to perform the Haka dance from New Zealand and, after making a Chinese dragon in design and technology, pupils performed a Chinese traditional dance. In art and design, pupils paint in the style of both western and non-western artists. The pupils get a good sense of other cultures and traditions during a specially organised 'grounds day' in which pupils dress up in traditional costumes from around the world. Through religious

education pupils learn about other world faiths and their traditions. Visitors to the school from different cultures such as theatre groups, a Spanish dancer and Asian drummers contribute to pupils' cultural development well. Visits to local places of interest such as the harbour and local museum ensure that pupils effectively develop an understanding of their own culture as well as others.

## **HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?**

28. The school takes good care of pupils' general welfare. Procedures for child protection are good. The headteacher has overall responsibility for child protection matters and all staff are regularly updated on procedures to be followed. Procedures are in place to look after pupils' particular medical needs and most staff have attended basic first aid training; however, no one holds a current certificate for first aid. Fire drills are done each term. Health and safety procedures during lessons are good, with teachers ensuring pupils are aware of the need to work safely and sensibly, such as during physical education lessons. The local education authority completes risk assessment on the building. Health and safety and risk assessment is done in school by the staff representative and a link governor and regularly reported at governors' meetings; however, there is no person with designated responsibility for maintaining written records. The governing body has been made aware of some health and safety matters noted during the inspection.
29. Class teachers have responsibility for the everyday needs of their pupils and know them very well, enabling them to give good support and guidance to promote pupils' personal development, including their attendance and behaviour. The strength of this support is reflected in pupils' positive attitudes to learning and their good relationships. The school has rightly identified written records to formally monitor pupils' personal development as an area for improvement. Supervision at lunchtime is good. Teachers' good management of pupils, individual class systems of reward and the whole-school use of achievement certificates effectively motivate most pupils to achieve good standards of behaviour, attitude and effort. The education welfare officer works with the school to improve pupils' attendance and rewards any significant improvement with stickers. Pupils value the certificates they receive each term for good attendance.
30. Overall, the school has satisfactory procedures for monitoring pupils' academic performance and personal development. The arrangements to assess children's attainment and progress in the Foundation Stage are very good. Teachers make effective use of the assessments completed when the children enter the nursery to group children. They keep detailed records of children's attainment and progress in all areas of learning and these are used effectively to plan future work.
31. In Years 1 and 2, assessment procedures are satisfactory. English, mathematics and science assessments are completed half-termly against National Curriculum levels. The levels are not broken down into sub-levels in order to be more effective as a tool for tracking pupils' individual progress. Standardised tests in English and mathematics contribute effectively to the school's assessment arrangements. The school is rigorous in analysing its National Curriculum test results in English and mathematics and this has helped the school to set school targets and identify strengths and weaknesses in these subjects. The assessment of reading is satisfactory and could be better. The reading records are no more than a record of books read in some classes and there are missed opportunities to assess pupils' progress in reading during guided reading sessions.

## **HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?**

32. Parents have very good views about the school and feel it does a good job for their children. Through the questionnaire, the pre-inspection meeting and those who expressed an opinion during the inspection, most parents are pleased with all aspects of the school's work. They know their children enjoy school because of the good teaching, high expectations of hard work and good behaviour. Most feel they have a good partnership with teachers, who keep them informed about their children's progress, and are happy to support the aims and values the school promotes. Parents are happy that any concerns they have are generally listened to and dealt with promptly. The range of out-of-school clubs and the opportunity for children to attend the breakfast club are much appreciated by parents and support pupils' personal development. Inspection findings confirm parents' positive views.
33. A minority of parents have concerns or are unsure about homework, the school working closely with them and mixed-age classes. Written comments show some parents think pupils have too much homework, given that it is an infant school; there are no school clubs for children in the Foundation Stage and they worry about progress of pupils in mixed-age classes. Inspection findings show the amount and use of homework are good and extra-curricular activities are very good compared to other infant schools. The partnership with parents is good, overall, but could be better in some areas, such as supplying more information about the curriculum, how parents can help with homework or consulting parents on major changes in school such as mixed-age classes. The progress of pupils is not affected by being taught in a mixed-age class.
34. The school has a good partnership with parents. A very thorough induction process, including a home visit from staff before children start nursery, means parents are very well informed about school procedures and organisation. The nursery notice board gives parents specific information on the six areas of learning in the Foundation Stage and weekly diaries tell them what the children have been doing. The combined school prospectus and governors' annual report to parents meet statutory requirements. Regular letters and newsletters from the headteacher and 'friends of the school' keep parents informed on events in the school calendar. Reports on pupils' progress are good and include what pupils can and cannot do and set targets for improvement, which are discussed with teachers.
35. Parents' contribution to pupils' learning is good, overall. Most parents have agreed to work in partnership with the school to help their children achieve their best and support with homework when they can. Some parents have trained as classroom assistants and a small number help out whenever they can, to support the work of the teacher in class. Attendance at parents' evenings is very good. Most parents give good support to fundraising activities organised by a number of parents through the Friends of St Gregory and St Patrick. Money raised has provided such things as the water feature for the memorial garden, parent notice boards for each class and a selection of musical instruments.

## **HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?**

36. The leadership of the headteacher is satisfactory. He has a clear vision for the future development of the school. Standards of attainment have risen since he became the temporary headteacher 18 months ago. In the few months he has been the substantive headteacher he has created a strong, hardworking team of staff to whom he gives considerable responsibility. The quality of teaching has improved significantly since the

previous inspection and several of the areas for improvement identified at the time of the last inspection have been tackled. Parents are very satisfied with the leadership of the new headteacher.

37. The Catholic ethos is strongly reflected in the friendly, caring environment of the school. It is a strong Christian community with a purposeful working environment that is effectively meeting the physical, emotional, spiritual and intellectual needs of the pupils. All staff work hard and show a very good commitment to their pupils through the wide range of out-of-school activities and visits made to enhance the curriculum.
38. The headteacher is very well supported by his acting deputy. She takes a major responsibility for curricular organisation and development. The roles and responsibilities of some subject co-ordinators are underdeveloped. For example, the very effective Foundation Stage co-ordinator has considerable responsibility, but is not part of the senior management of the school. Co-ordinators have produced policies and schemes of work for their subjects which is an improvement since the last inspection. Only the English, mathematics, science and Foundation Stage co-ordinators have monitored teaching and pupils' work. Further training for staff in this aspect of their work is timetabled later in the term. Monitoring and evaluation are mainly delegated to a few curriculum co-ordinators and the local education authority. The headteacher does very little formal monitoring and evaluation. Where co-ordinators, such as the literacy co-ordinator, have acted upon the outcomes of evaluations of the pupils' work, good progress has been made. This is discussed in the English paragraph. The co-ordinators have action plans indicating that they will monitor and evaluate aspects of their subjects in the near future.
39. The school development plan covers the next three years and includes a comprehensive outline of the targets for the coming year. Targets are prominently displayed for parents and staff in the school and include actions related to all aspects of the school's work: leadership and management; curriculum; staffing; parents and community; buildings, grounds and resources and governors. There are no direct references to improvements in standards, apart from raising standards in creative writing. This is an area in which the school already exceeds national averages by a wide margin. There is, therefore, some doubt as to the use made of the thorough data analysis completed externally for the headteacher as a tool for identifying key areas for improvement, such as mathematics and reading. The headteacher's own self-analysis of the school's strengths and weaknesses, completed in preparation for the inspection, provides a much more rigorous overview of the future development of the school.
40. The management of the school by the headteacher is satisfactory. The sporadic long-term absences of the school's administrative support, the building of new offices and the inexperience of the headteacher mean that some of the day-to-day procedures are underdeveloped. The school's procedures for health and safety and some aspects of financial management that are not the responsibility of the bursar are not up-to-date. Several recommendations of the financial audit completed following the previous inspection have not been implemented and there is no one trained to take responsibility for first aid.
41. Arrangements for performance management are securely in place. The acting deputy headteacher is a team leader and has responsibility for appraising three members of staff. The headteacher was judged to have met his targets last year following his period as acting headteacher.



42. The governing body plays a substantial role in the leadership and management of the school. Governors have an accurate overview of the strengths and weaknesses of the school as a result of the headteacher's termly reports to the governing body. Governors with specific responsibilities work diligently and provide effective support for the headteacher, especially the literacy and finance governors. The chair of the governing body has high expectations of the school and particularly the role it plays in the local community. Governors take positive steps to secure best value in the staff appointments made. This is also the priority given when providing additional support for teachers in every class by the appointment of additional classroom assistants. Arrangements for meetings of the governors are efficient.
43. The management of pupils with special educational needs throughout the school is very good. An enthusiastic, knowledgeable, part-time member of staff leads this aspect of the school's work. She completed a rigorous evaluation of her work last year and set a measurable improvement target for the coming year to increase the percentage of parents involved in review meetings. She has regular telephone liaison with some parents. Individual education plans are in place for all pupils in line with the local education authority policy. Early in the term, all the plans for school action plus pupils were reviewed and a limited number of targets set. All records are immaculately kept and readily accessible to staff. The procedures used to identify and track pupils with special educational needs fully meet the three stages recommended in the Code of Practice. A heavy weighting is given to the Foundation Stage where physical, social, emotional or learning difficulties are identified. The next wave of group intervention in Year 1 is followed by appropriate external support via the special educational needs co-ordinator or an external support service as required. The reading intervention programme is particularly effective in rectifying pupils' literacy difficulties; several pupils have moved from school action plus to school action as a result of the intensive support provided by the special educational needs co-ordinator.
44. The budget deficit incurred after the previous inspection has been reduced and the budget is now showing an acceptable surplus due to the prudence of the finance committee and the stringency with which the bursar carries out her role and responsibilities. At all levels, the governors seek to achieve value for money in securing the best services for the school, not always by securing the cheapest tender. The school generally takes appropriate steps to apply the best value principles in its management and governance. The management of the school generally consults with the governing body before making major decisions. The governors, headteacher and staff do not, however, compare the school's achievements with those of other schools. For example, they were unaware that higher attaining pupils achieved much less favourably than their peers in similar schools in the 2002 national tests in reading. Consultation is satisfactory overall, although there are some decisions taken without consultation, especially with the staff.
45. Accommodation is adequate, as it was during the previous inspection. There have been several improvements to the school building, such as new windows and doors, fencing, a better fire alarm system and additional building to house the school office, headteacher's room and a larger staff room; however, there is no school library or computer room. The outdoor area for the Foundation Stage has been made secure but it is small and the surface is uneven and not easily accessed by children in the reception classes to provide for their physical development.
46. There is an appropriate number of suitably qualified staff to meet the needs of the curriculum. At present, 12 support staff work throughout the school and make a good

contribution to pupils' learning; however, five of these are funded for only two terms and will leave in the summer.

47. The quantity of learning resources is satisfactory for all subjects and they are used well, with the exception of music, where the use is unsatisfactory. Resources for science and design and technology are not easily accessible as they are stored all together and not in classrooms. The school is satisfactorily resourced for information and communication technology but the use of the resources is limited. As there is no room suitable to have a suite for information and communication technology, the school has a trolley containing 18 laptop computers that can be moved from class to class. This is a new resource to the school and, as yet, staff lack the confidence to use it. There is no school library. Classrooms do not always reflect the priority to English in their displays of books and reading areas.

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

48. The headteacher with the support of the staff and the governing body needs to:

- (1) Improve standards in mathematics by:

- providing more challenge for higher attaining pupils;
- involving more pupils in the oral and mental sessions at the beginnings of lessons;
- taking account of the wide range of abilities in each class and matching work appropriately;
- using the plenary session to check pupils' understanding;
- Checking that standards are improving.

(discussed in paragraphs 2, 3, 13, 65, 66, 67, 68)

- (2) Provide more challenge for higher attaining pupils in reading by:

- providing staff with training on how to use the time allocated to guided reading more effectively;
- assessing pupils' reading skills more systematically;
- giving parents more guidance on how they can support reading at home.

(discussed in paragraphs 13, 31)

- (3) Improve the quality and use of information and communication technology in Years 1 and 2 by:

- increasing staff skills and understanding through well-targeted training;
- planning to make consistent use of the subject to support learning in lessons;
- making better use of resources;
- monitoring and evaluating the action plan.

(discussed in paragraphs 6, 17, 47, 64, 70, 73, 77, 81, 86, 90-94, 99)

- (4) Increasing the size of the senior management team so it reflects the full age range of the school.

(discussed in paragraph 38)

### **Other matters for consideration by the school**

The governors and headteacher may wish to include the following minor areas for improvement in their action plan:

- increase the time allocated to the curriculum to bring it in line with the recommended 21 hours 30 minutes;
- improve the provision for outdoor learning in the Foundation Stage as funds allow;
- write and implement a drugs education policy;
- implement all actions recommended in the financial audit completed some time ago;
- improve the impact of curriculum co-ordinators by providing them with training to monitor and evaluate the teaching and standards in their subjects.

## **PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS**

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

Number of lessons observed

57
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Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils

53
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### ***Summary of teaching observed during the inspection***

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Number	1	13	22	20	0	0	0
Percentage	2	23	39	36	0	0	0

The table gives the number and percentage of lessons observed in each of the seven categories used to make judgements about teaching. Care should be taken when interpreting these percentages as each lesson represents almost two percentage points.

### Information about the school's pupils

#### Pupils on the school's roll

	Nursery	YR – Y2
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	39	226
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	N/A	32

FTE means full-time equivalent.

#### Special educational needs

	Nursery	YR – Y2
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	2	5
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	16	39

#### 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	0

### Attendance

#### Authorised absence

	%
School data	5.3
National comparative data	5.4

#### Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.0
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 1 (Year 2)

	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	2002	33	31	64

National Curriculum Test/Task Results	Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Boys	29	31	29

Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Girls	28	31	29
	Total	57	62	58
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	89 (91)	97 (87)	91 (91)
	National	84 (84)	86 (86)	90 (91)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	30	29	31
	Girls	29	30	31
	Total	59	59	62
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	92 (93)	92 (91)	97 (96)
	National	85 (85)	89 (89)	89 (89)

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

### **Ethnic background of pupils**

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

Categories used in the Annual School Census	No of pupils on roll	Number of fixed period exclusions	Number of permanent exclusions
White – British	157	0	0
White – Irish	1	0	0
White – any other White background	0	0	0
Mixed – White and Black Caribbean	0	0	0
Mixed – White and Black African	0	0	0
Mixed – White and Asian	0	0	0
Mixed – any other mixed background	0	0	0
Asian or Asian British – Indian	0	0	0
Asian or Asian British - Pakistani	0	0	0
Asian or Asian British – Bangladeshi	0	0	0
Asian or Asian British – any other Asian background	0	0	0
Black or Black British – Caribbean	0	0	0
Black or Black British – African	0	0	0
Black or Black British – any other Black background	0	0	0
Chinese	0	0	0
Any other ethnic group	2	0	0
No ethnic group recorded	0	0	0

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

### **Teachers and classes**

### **Financial information**

#### **Qualified teachers and classes: YR – Y2**

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	11
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Financial year	2001/2002
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Number of pupils per qualified teacher	30
Average class size	28

**Education support staff: YR – Y2**

Total number of education support staff	10
Total aggregate hours worked per week	208

**Qualified teachers and support staff: nursery**

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	1
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	39
Total number of education support staff	2
Total aggregate hours worked per week	32
Number of pupils per FTE adult	13

*FTE means full-time equivalent.*

**Recruitment of teachers**

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	1
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	1

Total number of vacant teaching posts (FTE)	1
Number of vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of a term or more (FTE)	1
Number of unfilled vacancies or vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of less than one term (FTE)	0

*FTE means full-time equivalent.*

Total income	509,179
Total expenditure	515,906
Expenditure per pupil	2,283
Balance brought forward from previous year	2,558
Balance carried forward to next year	- 4,169

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

### **Questionnaire return rate**

Number of questionnaires sent out	304
Number of questionnaires returned	166

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

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	70	24	2	1	3
My child is making good progress in school.	66	29	2	0	2
Behaviour in the school is good.	55	41	1	1	1
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	38	36	10	1	15
The teaching is good.	74	21	2	1	2
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	46	43	5	4	2
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	61	30	4	3	2
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	70	25	1	1	3
The school works closely with parents.	53	33	9	4	1
The school is well led and managed.	52	37	4	4	3
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	57	37	2	1	2
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	43	33	8	1	18

### **Other issues raised by parents**

Parents are very happy with the school and praised the breakfast club especially.

## **PART D: THE STANDARDS AND QUALITY OF TEACHING IN AREAS OF THE CURRICULUM, SUBJECTS AND COURSES**

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

49. Children who are in the Foundation Stage are taught in the nursery, two reception classes and a mixed-aged reception and Year 1 class. The provision for children in these classes is very good and is a strength of the school. This is an improvement since the last inspection. Children make very good gains in their learning and achieve well in both the nursery and reception because of very good teaching. Joint detailed curriculum planning across classes also ensures that all areas of learning for children of this age are effectively delivered and matches very well the needs of all children, including those with special educational needs. Support staff are very effectively deployed to support group work-activities and they contribute significantly to children's learning. Attainment by the time children enter Year 1 is beyond the early learning goals in personal, social and emotional development, communication, language and literacy and creative development. The children are working towards Level 1 of the National Curriculum. In mathematics, knowledge and understanding of the world and physical development, children have achieved the early learning goals.

#### **Personal, social and emotional development**

50. The children make very good gains in personal, social and emotional development because of very good teaching. All adults provide good role models for children and they use every opportunity through everyday routine activities, such as break-time, and through well-planned tasks to develop children's confidence and independence. For example, in the nursery, children are encouraged to make choices about the activities they want to engage in and then follow them up by recording, through pictorial evidence and talking about what they have achieved, to each other and to reception children. One teacher used story time very skilfully to reinforce 'stranger danger'. Before and after physical activities and at the end of morning and afternoon sessions children are expected to undress and dress themselves independently and tidy up after themselves. Throughout their time in the Foundation Stage children show very good levels of interest and concentration when they take part in activities. The behaviour of the children is consistently very good. Children interact very well with each other, they take turns when playing games and are able to help and support each other when engaged in activities. For example, one child spontaneously passed a pot of pink paint to another when asked where it was. Because of very good relationships and well-established routines, children settle quickly and happily into school life and soon participate in a range of activities with confidence and enjoyment.

#### **Communication, language and literacy**

51. Children make very good gains in their learning in communication, language and literacy because of very good teaching in both the nursery and reception classes and, by the age of five, children's attainment is above average with many children exceeding the early learning goals. Early literacy skills are effectively promoted in the nursery through various well-planned activities. For example, children are encouraged to recognise and say the first letter sound of their first name and soon develop an appreciation of stories and books as they draw and paint pictures of key characters in favourite stories and nursery rhymes. They suggest captions in order to make a class 'big book' with their teacher's support. Through practical activities, such as brush and finger painting, children learn early writing skills as they paint lines from left to right and



from up to down and by the time they leave the nursery almost all children can write their own name. In the reception classes, early literacy skills are well promoted through the delivery of elements of the National Literacy Strategy and through very good cross-curricular links made with other areas of learning. For example, during a shared reading session the teacher consistently developed and reinforced children's knowledge and understanding of spelling patterns and initial letter sounds in simple words. Children across the key stage are confident speakers because teachers encourage children to speak in front of others, develop their own ideas and extend their learning through discussion. Home/school reading diaries that ensure children read regularly at home contribute significantly to the good progress children make in acquiring early reading strategies and, by the age of five, children can read simple sentences well and the attainment of both higher and average attaining children is above average for their age. Least able children also achieve well in relation to their prior attainment and achieve standards in line with age-related expectations. In writing, by the age of five children are able to write most letters of the alphabet with reasonable accuracy and begin to write simple words and sentences independently.

### **Mathematical development**

52. The quality of teaching in mathematics is good and the children are likely to achieve the early learning goals by the time they go into Year 1. Children make good progress in mathematics because teachers skilfully reinforce and develop mathematical concepts and skills not only in mathematics lessons but also through a range of activities across all areas of learning. For example, when children were learning about which animals live in hot and cold places around the world, they were asked to sort animals into two sets and count how many in each. In the nursery, children begin to develop early mathematical skills through well-planned activities such as printing repeated patterns using colour and shape. In the reception classes, children's knowledge and understanding of two-dimensional shapes are effectively reinforced as they create pictures using different cut-out shapes. Teachers promote mathematical language and counting skills well and, by the age of five, children can recognise and name numerals nought to nine, can securely count up to 20 and begin to understand and use language of shape and measure such as 'circle', 'triangle', 'big' and 'small'.

### **Knowledge and understanding of the world**

53. The children are likely to achieve the early learning goals in this area of learning by the time they start in Year 1. Teaching is good and the children achieve well. Teachers use every opportunity to develop children's interest in the world around them. For example, children are encouraged to observe the features of the weather as they change a daily weather chart and are asked to make detailed observational drawings of autumn berries and fruits. Children are taken out into their local environment in order for them to observe seasonal changes and gain a better understanding of the natural world and the place in which they live. For example, they visit the local park in order to collect autumn leaves and conkers. In reception, children obtain a sense of how places around the world can be different as they look at pictures and books to find out and identify features and animals that live in hot and cold places. Children get a sound sense of old and new as they look at and handle toys to compare old and new ones. The teaching of computer skills is effective in the Foundation Stage and children show good mouse control for their age in order to play simple mathematical and language games such as 'dress the teddy'. Children in the reception use the computer successfully, with support, to write simple sentences about the pictures of snowmen they have painted. In design and making skills, children are given plenty of opportunity to use construction kits and simple tools to shape, assemble and join materials they are using. For

example, children in the reception classes show that they know how to join materials in different ways using glue, clips, staples and Sellotape when making different things, such as a snowman with moving arms.

### **Physical development**

54. The children are likely to achieve the early learning goals in this area of learning by the time they leave the reception class. They make good progress in their learning. The quality of teaching is good. However, the development of children's gross motor skills through outdoor activity is restricted because of limited space, apparatus and equipment such as wheeled vehicles and climbing frames. Teachers are aware of this and use the hall effectively to develop early games and gymnastic skills. In the reception class, children show a good sense of spatial awareness for their age as they move around the hall, and early games skills of throwing and catching are well developed as teachers provide children with suitable opportunity to play ball games. In both the nursery and reception classes, children's fine motor skills are well developed through a range of well-planned activities. Children are required to manipulate and use a variety of tools, such as scissors, brushes and glue sticks, in order to cut out and apply glue and paint while making different things. Teachers provide children with plenty of opportunity to paint, make marks on paper and to write. As a result, children develop their brush and pencil control skills well.

### **Creative development**

55. The quality of teaching is very good in this area of learning and children are exceeding the early learning goals. The children make very good progress. Teachers provide good opportunities for children to develop their creativity through art, design and making activities. Teachers encourage children to develop their own ideas, and their painting skills are well developed for their age. In their paintings and collage pictures children show a good sense of pattern, texture, colour and shape and are able to apply paint with a brush skilfully to paint recognisable features in their paintings. In the reception class, children show they can play non-tuned instruments well in order to follow a simple beat and rhythm. They can distinguish between loud and soft sounds and are able to sing from memory a range of familiar songs and nursery rhymes. Through role-play children develop their creativity and imagination and show enjoyment when playing in theme corners.

### **ENGLISH**

56. Standards of attainment are above average in speaking and listening and writing and average in reading. Pupils' achievement is satisfactory. The 2002 national tests for pupils aged seven showed that standards were average in reading with a well below average proportion of pupils achieving the higher Level 3. Standards in writing were well above average with a well above average proportion of pupils achieving the higher Level 3. Compared to the above average attainment on entry to Year 1, the pupils have achieved less satisfactorily in reading than in writing. Pupils with special educational needs make very good progress as a result of additional support from the early literacy support programme in Year 1 and an individual reading programme in Year 2 for pupils with greater learning difficulties. A low proportion of pupils achieve the lower levels in the national tests as a result of this well-targeted support. This is a good improvement since the last inspection.
57. Inspection evidence indicates that standards in reading are average with a higher proportion of pupils achieving the higher Level 3 than last year. Scrutiny of Year 2

workbooks shows that writing standards continue to be above average as a result of consistently good teaching and the high priority given to teaching writing in the Year 2 classes. Standards have risen since the last inspection.

58. Standards in speaking and listening are good. Pupils listen attentively in discussions, give well thought out answers to questions and give good explanations in science lessons. For example, in a very good Year 2 lesson, lower attaining pupils listened carefully to instructions and followed the commands accurately and there was very good inclusion of a special educational needs pupil when he explained what he had been writing to the whole class and then read out the sentence he had written.
59. Standards in reading are satisfactory. Pupils read fluently, but with little expression. They have the necessary skills to sound out unfamiliar words but do not always understand what such words mean which makes comprehension difficult. Higher attainers are well motivated and described the reading challenge set by their teacher enthusiastically. Pupils were encouraged to read a favourite story and retell it to the class to try and encourage more pupils to read stories at home. Other higher attaining pupils make use of the text to explain their ideas. Pupils are generally less confident in talking about characters in information books.
60. Standards in writing are above average. Work in books indicates that pupils form their letters correctly in Year 1, words are distinguished correctly and high attaining pupils begin to use capital letters and full stops. By Year 2, a high proportion of pupils begin to use descriptive language in their writing. For example, a pupil wrote 'his scales glimmer in the water like crystal' and 'as shiny as a necklace' to describe the Rainbow Fish. In other writing, they show a good understanding of a range of story openers, such as 'long ago in a big castle', and write well-presented work with accurate use of the apostrophe by higher attaining pupils and neat, accurately formed and orientated handwriting.
61. Achievement is satisfactory based on the above average attainment on entry to Year 1, with some strengths in writing and speaking and listening. Pupils are interested, listen attentively and are keen to learn. Lessons are generally well paced and appropriate progress is made through the year.
62. The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory overall, with some very good teaching in Year 2. The strengths of teaching include: effective instruction and high expectations of all pupils, including those with special educational needs; sharing and reviewing learning objectives; very good management in lessons and the effective deployment of support staff in group activities. As a result, pupils in these lessons learned well. A brisk pace and ongoing questions maintained a high level of motivation and interest. Teachers know their pupils well and know when to intervene to help them make progress. A recently introduced system of target setting for writing helps pupils understand how they can improve their work and, in some cases, set their own targets for improvement. Pupils are fully involved in learning in those lessons and make good progress. There is less rigour in the teaching of reading in some of the planned guided reading sessions. Objectives are rarely identified for the sessions and no expectations that progress is recorded. Opportunities for pupils to read independently are not always provided. While support staff are very effectively deployed in group work, they do not always get involved in the whole-class shared text and word level work. They were rarely seen directing a pupil's attention to features in books under discussion or getting involved with the teacher by using puppets or helping pupils to stay involved by repeating instructions. Too often they are passive in this part of the lesson.

63. Subject leadership is good. The co-ordinator has been in post for several years and very recently became a leading literacy teacher in the county. She has worked with staff to improve the quality of writing with much success. The local education authority literacy consultant has supported her in the checking of pupils' work. The main recommendations of this monitoring have become standard practice throughout the school. For example, the involvement of pupils in setting targets for improvement and providing Year 1 pupils with lined paper. A range of assessment procedures is in place. Two spelling assessments are completed each year to provide detailed information to the next class at the end of the year. A weaker aspect of assessment is the lack of assessment of pupils' reading ability, apart from those pupils who have special educational needs. All teachers keep a record of the books pupils read and provide a home/school reading record for parents to complete. In a few classes, teachers give guidance to parents to help them support their child at home. This useful practice is inconsistent throughout the school. Resources are adequate and much improved for reading. However, the school has no library and some classes do not have a designated, attractive reading area that would encourage pupils to read in class.
64. Information and communication technology is used inconsistently to support pupils' learning. Appropriate use is made of literacy to support learning in other subjects, especially history, where pupils write accounts of life in the past.

## **MATHEMATICS**

65. Standards of attainment have been maintained since the last inspection and remain in line with the national average by the age of seven. The performance of the pupils in the 2002 National Curriculum tests was in line with the national average and below average in comparison with similar schools.
66. The achievement made by most pupils is satisfactory. The progress made by pupils with special educational needs is very good because of well-targeted extra support given to them during lessons, particularly during group work. The progress and achievement made by higher attaining pupils are restricted and could be better because teachers do not always plan and set tasks that are sufficiently challenging for this group of pupils.
67. The school successfully follows the National Numeracy Strategy and planning in the subject is satisfactory. All aspects of the subject are sufficiently covered, although opportunity for pupils to develop data handling skills is not so well developed as the other aspects of the subject and this restricts the rate of progress pupils make in this area of learning. Also, teachers' delivery of the mental agility session at the start of the numeracy hour is not brisk enough to develop pupils' ability to calculate quickly in their heads and this aspect of teaching could be improved.
68. Across the school, pupils develop sound mathematical strategies for working out calculations in different ways because teachers effectively promote problem-solving skills during lessons. For example, in a Year 2 lesson, pupils were asked to find and explain different ways of finding answers on a number square and in Year 1, the teacher suitably challenged pupils to say how they made specific calculations in their heads. Pupils' attainment in number is in line with age-related expectations and, by the age of seven, pupils can order numbers to 100, can recognise a sequence of numbers, including odd and even and can understand simple addition and subtraction to 20. In shape, space and measure, pupils can recognise and name a range of two- and three-dimensional shapes and identify some of their properties, such as the number of edges, corners and sides by the age of seven. Although evidence of data

handling skills was limited during the inspection, this aspect of mathematics is sometimes effectively developed in other subjects across the curriculum. For example, in a Year 2 science lesson, pupils were encouraged to record their results on a bar chart.

69. The overall quality of teaching is satisfactory. Often it is good. When teaching is most effective, tasks are well planned to match pupils' abilities, teachers demonstrate effectively to support pupils' understanding, questioning is skilful and is at an appropriate level to extend the thinking of pupils regardless of their different ability. Teachers have secure subject knowledge that enables them to give clear explanations and consistently promote proper mathematical vocabulary during lessons. Where there are shortcomings in teaching, higher attaining pupils are not challenged enough, more use of demonstration is needed to support pupils' understanding and learning, marking is insufficiently evaluative and does not indicate what pupils might do to improve, the plenary session at the end of the mathematics lesson is too short and pupils' learning is not sufficiently consolidated.
70. The co-ordination of the subject is satisfactory. The substantive co-ordinator is absent from school and temporary responsibility for the subject is taken by the headteacher. The substantive co-ordinator had completed a check of teaching and learning and careful analysis of assessments that has helped to identify aspects that need further development and this is now informing an appropriate action plan for development. There is very little use of information and communication technology to support pupils' learning. Little evidence of the use of the subject to support other subjects is available.

## **SCIENCE**

71. Evidence from the inspection indicates that standards at the end of Year 2 are above the national average. This represents an improvement since the last inspection when standards were judged to be in line with those expected nationally. This improvement in the standards in science is a result of the more effective co-ordination, monitoring and teaching of the subject.
72. By the end of Year 2, most pupils learn good investigation skills. They understand the importance of collecting data to answer questions and can observe and contrast living things. For example, in a lesson to find similarities and differences, pupils studied reference books to find facts about living things and contrasted a slowworm with a swift. Pupils can also build circuits using a battery, and when asked how a bulb could be made to flash, they can suggest a variety of methods including unscrewing the bulb, removing a wire and using a switch. In a Year 1 lesson about sound, pupils were able to use their previous knowledge about how sounds are made to sort instruments into similar groups. All pupils use their good speaking and listening skills during their science lessons and are able to explain clearly the reasons for their conclusions when carrying out investigations. Achievement overall is good. Pupils with special educational needs achieve well. They are well included in lessons, often working with a more able pupil.
73. In the lessons seen, teaching was mostly good. The teachers have a secure knowledge of the subject and use correct scientific vocabulary when explaining tasks to the pupils. Lessons are effectively matched to challenge pupils with different abilities, and the pace of the lessons is lively. Good use is made of support staff when pupils are working in small groups, and the planning shows clear learning objectives for the lesson. Where the teaching is satisfactory, the use of 'closed worksheets' restricts the pupils' investigative skills and too many variables are presented for pupils to carry out a

fair test accurately. All teachers have good classroom control and high expectations of good behaviour. There is little evidence in lessons or in the scrutiny of work that computers are used effectively to support and extend learning in the subject.

74. The planning for the teaching of science is good with opportunities for investigation work clearly identified. Pupils in mixed-age classes are taught science in single year groups and this is effective in ensuring that the programmes of study are delivered to age-appropriate groups. The assessment of pupils' work is generally good. However, where there is an over-emphasis on the use of worksheets, creativity is restricted and the recording of investigations is limited. Here, the poor quality of some of the marking does not provide for challenging targets to be set for individual pupils.
75. The co-ordinator is enthusiastic, manages the subject well and takes a positive role in the monitoring of science throughout the school. Yearly analysis of test results is undertaken and significant outcomes are built into the planning guidance for staff. However, the school does not set effective targets for pupils who may be able to attain the higher Level 3. Assessments are undertaken on the completion of each teaching topic and these are used to inform future planning. Centrally held resources are adequate, but there was no evidence of a range of science resources, for example magnifying glasses, batteries, bulbs and wires, being available for pupils to use in the classroom on a daily basis.

## **ART AND DESIGN**

76. During the week of the inspection there were insufficient opportunities to observe the teaching of art and design. However, evidence gathered from scrutiny of work and teachers' planning, talking to the pupils and from displays around the school shows that by the end of Year 2, pupils attain standards expected for their age. Achievement is satisfactory. This standard has been maintained since the previous inspection.
77. In Years 1 and 2, pupils use a wide range of media appropriately including paint, pencils, fabric and junk materials. They make satisfactory observational drawings and paintings, they print, make patterns and they model. Art and design is effectively used to enhance displays about other curriculum areas. For example, pupils' work on marbling enriches a literacy display about the story 'Bonting' by Shirley Hughes. Also, intricate patterns using a variety of collage media effectively display pupils' work in glove and mitten design. Sketchbooks are used by pupils and show satisfactory development in skills involving fine line patterns in pencil and observational portraits. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress with effective support. There was no evidence of computer technology being used effectively to promote or develop the subject of art and design.
78. Colourful displays around the school reflect a thematic approach to art and design, with the theme of winter being prominent during the inspection. Displays are also used effectively to reflect the spiritual dimension of the school. An 'art activity day' is held each half-term, this provides a good opportunity for art and design to link with design and technology and creative writing, and the work produced is of a high quality.
79. A policy for art and design provides an overview of the aims and scope of the subject, available resources and assessment. The co-ordinator has a good knowledge of skills and techniques required to teach the subject and recognises the need to share these with colleagues who are less confident. Whilst the role of the co-ordinator is clearly defined, the monitoring of the subject is only by examination of the planning and at present there is no formal opportunity for the teaching of the subject to be checked.

## **DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY**

80. Due to timetabling arrangements during the inspection, no lessons in design and technology were observed and so a judgement about teaching cannot be made. However, taking into account all the evidence available, including finished products, teachers' planning, displays and photographs, pupils at the end of Year 2 attain standards expected for their age and achieve satisfactorily. This standard is in line with that found at the previous inspection.
81. Pupils use pictures and words appropriately to show what they want to make, produce finished products and explain how they could be improved. For example, pupils in Year 1 drew plans for the making of a jointed cardboard owl, made the owl with moving wings, and were able to explain successfully that the length of the pivots could be shortened to increase the movement of the wings. Pupils in a Year 2 class use their own ideas well to design models that move, using construction kits. Pupils can also design and make models from real toys. Here, pupils in a Year 1 class were shown a wooden 'pecking hen' and made their own, good quality, adapted cardboard version. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress with effective support. However, there was little evidence to show that computers were being effectively used in the designing process.
82. Good use is made of the school's 'art activity day', where pupils in each class spend the day combining their skills of design and technology, art and design and creative writing, in producing work around a chosen class theme. Photographic displays around the school reflect the good work produced on these days.
83. Co-ordination of this subject is good. The co-ordinator for design and technology has good subject knowledge and monitors the teachers' planning. However, insufficient opportunities exist to monitor the teaching of the subject. A good scheme ensures that key skills are transferred across the year groups, and evaluations, both by the teacher and pupil, are effective. A good portfolio of work is kept that includes plans and photographs of finished products. Resources, centrally stored, are adequate but there are no resources or tools available for everyday use in the classroom.

## **GEOGRAPHY**

84. Standards of attainment are satisfactory, which is much the same as the previous inspection and pupils achieve satisfactorily. However, there is much more evidence of teaching and learning in pupils' books and, during the inspection, where each year group was working through a different unit of work. The quality of teaching is good due to improvements in planning and the use of a wider range of resources to interest the pupils. Leadership and management of the subject are good.
85. By the time pupils are in Year 2, they have studied a contrasting locality and compared physical and human landscapes of two very different environments. They show secure understanding of key terms such as cliff, island, beach and mountain. Pupils show good levels of interest in maps and begin to trace the route from one place to another. The use of illustrations of real places helps pupils learn more about the physical and human characteristics of environments. Year 1 pupils learned that a compass is used to measure direction. Photographs of physical features help pupils learn that environments are different and provide good motivation and points for discussion for some of the special educational needs pupils. For example, a pupil with emotional and behavioural difficulties was engrossed in the discussions about the lighthouse in Whitehaven. His participation in the lesson was very good. There are good

opportunities to apply literacy skills in the subject. For example, pupils' recorded work made use of notes, bulleted lists, headlines and sub-headings. A digital camera ensures that there are good images of places visited by the pupils.

86. The quality of teaching is good overall. Effective teaching makes sure that high quality resources such as slide pictures and maps are used to support teaching and learning. Objectives for learning are taken from the subject programme of study and questions direct pupils to explore physical and human features of environments. In the otherwise satisfactory teaching, links with subjects such as mathematics led to some confusion for Year 1 pupils as they struggled to measure the distance from one point to another on a story map. At other times, instructions and explanations did not distinguish between physical and human features or provide the pupils with a clear enough explanation as to the differences. There is very limited use of information and communication technology.
87. The co-ordinator has a good overview of the subject, although she teaches in the Foundation Stage. Unit plans to support teaching and learning are meticulously kept. The co-ordinator takes positive action to provide resources to reflect cultural diversity in the study of contrasting localities. The school has a link with a small rural school that helps pupils learn about conditions in a different area and to help bring alive the comparative study of the Isle of Struay, which is a fictional island. Visitors are used to enhance pupils' awareness of the wide range of cultures in the world. The co-ordinator has reviewed the curriculum plans and made sure that the resources are easily accessible and in good condition. There is a lack of some basic resources such as aerial photographs and large maps of the United Kingdom. Geography and history are taught in half-termly blocks.

## **HISTORY**

88. Evidence of standards of attainment is in pupils' books as there were no lessons observed during the inspection. Standards of attainment are satisfactory overall in Year 2. Pupils are encouraged to answer questions about the past. For example, as part of the school's Remembrance Sunday service, pupils sought the views of their grandparents about World War Two. A detailed study of the work of Florence Nightingale helps pupils compare conditions in hospitals in the nineteenth century with those of hospitals today. Pupils' learning was extended further by discussions with a nurse who outlined her roles and responsibilities. Higher attaining pupils wrote about the feelings of Florence Nightingale when she arrived at Scutari, with good use of descriptive language.
89. There are good opportunities to promote literacy skills in the subject. Worksheets are used judiciously and generally provide a framework to help pupils sequence the recounts and descriptions they record. At times the subject is combined with geography. For example, pupils tracked the journey to Scutari on an outline map and recorded some locations. Appropriate methods are used to help pupils understand chronology. For example, pupils tracked changes through the seasons of the year and drew people of different ages from childhood through to old age.
90. The quality of teaching, based on the work in pupils' books, is satisfactory. Staff show appropriate levels of subject knowledge in the coverage of units of work. No planning was seen, although schemes of work indicated what had been taught earlier in the year and what pupils will do next. Presentation of pupils' work is good. Pupils write using a well-formed handwriting style. The co-ordinator has been in place for several years. In that time the subject has not been a priority in the school. As a result, there has been



very limited opportunity to check the quality of teaching and the work of pupils. Co-ordination of the subject is satisfactory. The absence of such monitoring and evaluation is evident in the small amount of work available from some classes. There is limited use of information and communication technology to support learning. Steady progress has been maintained since the last inspection.

## **INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY**

91. Standards in information and communication technology are below average by the age of seven and pupils' achievement is unsatisfactory, including pupils with special educational needs. Insufficient use is made of information and communication technology to support learning in other subjects or to systematically teach pupils the basic skills of the subject. The co-ordinator is keen and knowledgeable and is encouraging greater use of computers throughout the school. However, many staff lack confidence, despite recent training and do not have the necessary subject knowledge to promote effective learning. There has been unsatisfactory progress since the previous inspection.
92. By the time pupils are in Year 2, they have produced a range of graphic images using programs such as Paintpot. It is difficult to judge how well pupils have achieved this or how much support they were provided with to produce their graphic images. They know that a digital camera provides images that can be stored to record what they have seen. There are opportunities provided for pupils to wordprocess in some classes. The school has a smartboard which is used to enhance storytelling in those classes where staff have the confidence to use the interactive board to retell a story. All classes have a video recorder. Pupils know that information can be located in different forms and understand that images can be kept as photographs and used to record events outside the school. Pupils have limited opportunities to learn the basic skills of entering, saving and retrieving work.
93. The school is in the early stages of increasing the use of computers and other technology to support learning. This is an area for development already identified in the school development plan. The useful smartboard shared between classes is a relatively new acquisition that a few staff have the confidence to use. Resources are adequate. The mobile laptop trolley compensates for the school's lack of a designated computer suite, but it was not in use during the inspection. Staff are very reliant on outside support to use most of the resources. The small amount of teaching observed was unsatisfactory due to lack of subject knowledge.
94. The co-ordinator has a good understanding of the needs of the subject. However, he has no time out of lessons to support colleagues. He has compiled a list of resources with the support of a parent. The assessment of achievement at the end of a unit of work is expected to take place; each pupil is given a certificate to show what they can do. However, there is no systematic recording to show pupils' achievements week by week.

## **MUSIC**

95. As at the last inspection, standards of attainment in music for pupils at the end of Year 2 are in line with national expectations. Achievement is satisfactory. Music is used to enhance pupils' learning in other curriculum areas. For example, in mathematics pupils sing number songs and in physical education pupils move imaginatively and rhythmically to music, responding to mood. Recorded music is used effectively in assemblies and acts of collective worship to add to the spirituality of the occasion.

96. In singing, pupils satisfactorily keep the correct pitch either accompanied or unaccompanied, and although a little quiet, their diction is clear and expressive. Pupils can repeat rhythmic short patterns and choose correct sounds responding to given starting points. For example, pupils in Year 2 were able to repeat sounds depicted diagrammatically on cards, and follow a 'conductor' leading them from one card to another. Some pupils can play untuned percussion instruments, following a pattern, but others show hesitancy in playing the instruments, with poor understanding of the mechanics involved. For example, one pupil tried to play a triangle holding it upside down, and others were unaware of the variety of sounds castanets could make. Pupils with special educational needs have equal access to the music curriculum and many enjoy the subject. They make good progress with effective support.
97. In all the lessons observed, teaching was satisfactory. Teachers prepare their lessons well and make them interesting for the pupils. Previous knowledge is used effectively as a starting point for the lesson. For example, in a lesson about the Chinese New Year, pupils listened to a previously told story and enthusiastically set about making a series of sounds to accompany the narrative. In one lesson the pace was slow. Here, the pupils had to perform individually to the rest of the class who were waiting for their turn. This resulted in the pupils becoming a little restless and disinterested in the sounds being played. During a singing session for all pupils, two-part singing was introduced with an element of success, but other opportunities for learning were missed. For example, singing the same song in different ways using the musical vocabulary of 'tempo' and 'volume'.
98. Music is seen as an important part of the creative curriculum of the school. Pupils sing in the community, visiting hospitals at Christmas, and performing at arts days. The school has a good selection of multicultural percussion instruments for use by other schools, and also has an extensive selection of tuned and untuned percussion instruments of its own. However, sadly, during the inspection there was little evidence of these instruments being used by the pupils to enhance their learning and enjoyment of music. The school is aware of the need to develop opportunities for more practical music to take place.
99. The co-ordinator manages music effectively and provides accompaniments to the singing using both the piano and the guitar. The subject is planned satisfactorily throughout the school and teachers' planning is monitored to ensure adequate delivery of the curriculum. There are few examples of computers supporting work in music successfully and they are not used enough to consolidate and extend learning in the subject.

## **PHYSICAL EDUCATION**

100. Because of the way in which the school plans and organises its physical education curriculum into termly blocks, it was only possible to observe one element of the subject during the inspection, which was dance. Pupils' attainment in this aspect of the subject is in line with national expectations. Further evidence was obtained through photographic evidence, discussion with teachers, the scrutiny of their planning and observing extra-curricular activities. This evidence indicates that standards have been maintained since the last inspection.
101. In all the lessons observed, pupils showed a good sense of spatial awareness as they moved around the hall. Through a range of physical activity pupils show they can balance on different parts of the body and can change speed, direction, level and height

with appropriate balance, co-ordination and control. All pupils, including those with special educational needs, achieve satisfactorily.

102. In dance, pupils learn how to interpret music and move in an appropriate style and manner. For example, in Year 1 pupils effectively interpret the physical and emotional attributes of 'Mr Men' characters to music as they make wide, confident stretching movements to represent 'Mr Strong'. Pupils in both Years 1 and 2 show they are able to remember and perform a sequence of movements well in order to perform a specific dance such as the Haka from New Zealand.
103. The very good extra-curricular activities that the school offers its pupils make a significant contribution to pupils' learning in physical education. For example, enthusiastic and skilful coaching in football skills ensures pupils make good gains in their learning.
104. The quality of teaching is satisfactory. When teaching is most successful, teachers have good relationships with pupils and they manage and control them well. They give clear instructions to pupils which enables lessons to run smoothly and they use demonstration techniques effectively to develop pupils' understanding and skills. An effective feature of teaching is the good links teachers make with other subjects such as literacy. For example, in the same dance lesson about 'Mr Men' characters, the teacher very effectively reinforced and consolidated specific vocabulary and language previously learnt in English.
105. When there are shortcomings in teaching, teachers do not evaluate pupils' performance sufficiently in order to improve their skills. The co-ordination of the subject is satisfactory. Appropriate curriculum guidelines ensure all aspects of the curriculum are covered and have been successfully implemented since the last inspection. However, there is insufficient opportunity for the co-ordinator to monitor standards, teaching and learning in the subject across the school.