

INSPECTION REPORT

ST GREGORY'S CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL

Workington

LEA area: Cumbria

Unique reference number: 112339

Headteacher: Mr M J Myers

Lead inspector: Mr G Yates

Dates of inspection: 20 – 22 June 2005

Inspection number: 267787

Inspection carried out under section 10 of the School Inspections Act 1996

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school: Primary
School category: Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils: 3 to 11
Gender of pupils: Mixed
Number on roll: 215.5

School address: Furness Road
Westfield
Workington
Cumbria
Postcode: CA14 3PD

Telephone number: 01900 325248
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Appropriate authority: Governing body
Name of chair of Mrs V Morgan
governors:

Date of previous inspection: 8 February 1999

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

St Gregory's Catholic Primary School is the same size as most other primary schools with 183 pupils aged 4 to 11 years and the full-time equivalent of 21 children in the nursery. The proportion of pupils in receipt of free school meals is above that found in most other schools. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs is average and there are no pupils with a formal statement of need. The school has no pupils for whom English is not the mother tongue and the proportion of pupils from ethnic groups is very low. Mobility of pupils in and out of the school other than at the normal time of admission is average. The socio-economic circumstances of the school are below average. The overall attainment of pupils on entry to the school is well below average. The school received the Activemark award and a Healthy School award in 2004.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
2465	Mr G Yates	Lead inspector	Mathematics Music Physical education
9884	Mrs M Roscoe	Lay inspector	
32263	Mrs C O'Neill	Team inspector	English Science Geography History Special educational needs English as an additional language
19709	Mrs J Fisher	Team inspector	Information and communication technology Art and design Design and technology Areas of learning in the Foundation Stage

The inspection contractor was:

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

OVERALL EVALUATION

This is an effective school. The teaching is good and pupils achieve well. Overall standards are average. Pupils' personal qualities are well developed and pupils benefit greatly from the school's Christian ethos and from the very good links the school has with the community and local schools. Parents have positive opinions of the school. The school is well led and managed by the headteacher. The school provides good value for money.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- The teaching is good and enables pupils to achieve well.
- The headteacher leads the school well.
- Pupils have good attitudes to school.
- Pupils' spiritual, social, moral and cultural development is good.
- Curriculum coordinators are not fully effective in the management of their subjects.
- The care and guidance provided for pupils are of a high quality.
- Standards in Years 1 and 2 are below average in mathematics and pupils in Years 3 to 6 do not apply their mental arithmetic skills sufficiently to solve mathematical problems.
- Assessment is not always used effectively enough to ensure that work is matched to pupils' ability.
- Opportunities for pupils to take part in sporting activities out of school are very good.

The school has made satisfactory improvements since the previous inspection. The quality of teaching has improved. The accommodation is much improved and the school's outside facilities are better. Teachers' planning of lessons has improved. The school now meets all its legal requirements.

STANDARDS ACHIEVED

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

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

The 2004 Year 6 test results were lower than those of previous years, mainly because there was a much higher than usual proportion of pupils with special educational needs.

Pupils achieve well. By the time pupils leave school, overall standards are average. They are currently above average in English and average in mathematics, science and ICT. Pupils' literacy skills are above average. Mathematical skills are average overall but pupils' problem solving skills could be improved. In Year 2, standards are average in English, science and ICT but below average in mathematics and higher attainers are not always sufficiently challenged. In the Foundation Stage standards have improved. The children make good progress from a well below average start and reach the expected standards for their age in most areas of learning by the time they enter Year 1. However, despite good teaching, many children are unlikely to reach expected standards in language and their mathematical development.

Pupils' personal qualities, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, are good. Pupils have a very good understanding of right and wrong and are sensitive to the needs of others. Pupils have a good understanding of racial and ethnic diversity. Their attitudes to work are good and they mostly behave well in and around school. Attendance has improved and is now average overall.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION

The quality of education provided by the school is good. The quality of teaching and learning is good. Teaching assistants provide very valuable support for pupils' learning, especially in ICT. Throughout the school, the teaching of reading and writing is thorough but pupils need more opportunities to use their mental arithmetic skills in problem solving. The curriculum is satisfactory. Assessment of pupils' work and progress is satisfactory overall but is not always used well enough to plan work for pupils of different ability. This means that, in particular, the more able pupils do not always reach their potential.

The school's partnership with parents is satisfactory and very strong links have been established with the local community and with other schools. The school provides a good level of care for its pupils.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Leadership and management are satisfactory, overall. The headteacher provides good leadership but most subject coordinators do not manage their subjects well enough. The governance of the school is good. The governing body fulfils its legal responsibilities conscientiously and makes a good contribution to management and decision making. Financial management is very effective.

PARENTS' AND PUPILS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

Most parents hold positive views of the school. The majority of children feel they receive the help and support they need.

IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

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

- raise standards in mathematics in Years 1 and 2 to equal those in English;
- provide more opportunities for pupils in the juniors to use and develop their skills of mental arithmetic to solve problems;
- enable the curriculum coordinators to manage their subjects more effectively;
- ensure that the work set for all pupils matches their abilities, in particular the most able ones.

PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS

STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

Standards achieved in areas of learning, subjects and courses

Pupils' achievement is good overall. Standards are well below average when the children start school; they are below average by the end of the Foundation Stage and average in Year 2 and in Year 6. Pupils with special educational needs achieve well.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards in English are above average in Year 6.
- Standards in mathematics in Year 2 are below average and below those in English and science.
- In Years 3 to 6, pupils' basic numeracy skills are not applied well enough in solving problems.
- The more able pupils could achieve higher standards.
- Pupils have very good basic skills in sporting activities and benefit greatly from extra-curricular provision.

Commentary

1. Children in the Foundation Stage make good overall progress from their well below average starting points although by the time they begin Year 1 their overall standards are below average. They make particularly good progress in their personal social and emotional development and exceed the standards expected for children of their age in this area of learning. The children reach expected standards in their knowledge and understanding of the world and in their creative and physical development, but many will not reach the levels expected for children of their age in literacy and mathematical skills.

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
Reading	16.1 (16.4)	15.8 (15.7)
Writing	15.4 (15.2)	14.6 (14.6)
Mathematics	15.9 (15.6)	16.2 (16.3)

There were 28 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year

2. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 achieve well in reading, writing and science. As a result, standards overall are average. Standards are average in English and science but below average in mathematics. The 2004 Year 2 national test results were above average in writing, average in reading and below average in mathematics. The school's results are rising faster than the national trend. Teachers and support staff have worked hard and effectively to sustain this upwards trend. Standards in ICT are average.

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
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English	27.0 (27.4)	26.9 (26.8)
Mathematics	26.3 (27.0)	27.0 (26.8)
Science	28.3 (28.6)	28.6 (28.6)

There were 32 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year

3. In Years 3 to 6, pupils achieve well overall, and in English, mathematics and science. Boys and girls achieve equally. However, pupils' speed and accuracy in using their basic number skills to solve problems are again not as good as they should be. In Year 6, because of the good quality teaching, standards this year in English are above average, and in mathematics, science and ICT they are average. The 2004 national test results in English were average, but below average in mathematics and science. The trend in the school's results is below the national trend, and the results have fallen over recent years.
4. It was only possible to see a few lessons in other subjects, but achievement in most of these lessons was generally good.
5. The pupils' basic skills of literacy are above average and their skills are average in mathematics and ICT. Basic skills are applied effectively in other subjects.
6. The school rightly prides itself on being inclusive and provides a nurturing environment for all pupils. The very few pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds achieve as well as other pupils in their age groups. Higher attaining pupils do not always reach their potential, especially in English, because the work set for them sometimes lacks challenge. Pupils who have special educational needs achieve well because teachers know their pupils well and provide suitable work for them.

Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities

Pupils' attitudes and behaviour are good. Attendance and punctuality levels are satisfactory. Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good overall.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Throughout the school, pupils respond well to the school's friendly ethos, behave well and confidently tackle their work.
- Relationships are very good and pupils are safe from all forms of harassment.
- Attendance this year has improved.

Commentary

7. When the children first come to school they find a welcoming atmosphere. Staff do a good job to establish routines and high expectations; consequently, the children settle in quickly, and respond well to adults and other children. Their personal, social and emotional development is above average for their age by the time they leave reception.
8. All pupils behave well because teachers and supervisory staff expect them to do so, taking time to explain why a particular action is unkind or wrong. Consequently most pupils understand the implications of their actions showing self-control and empathy in their approach to others. Exclusions are rare and there has only been one instance this academic year. The Year 6 pupils' questionnaire indicated positive attitudes to school and this was found to be typical of all age-groups.
9. Very positive relationships are at the heart of all that the school does. Personal interactions are characterised by mutual respect, and pupils copy the very good example set by all staff. Because they are so careful of others' feelings, pupils get along well with one another and collaborate easily in joint activities. Of particular note

is the consideration shown towards younger pupils or those with special educational needs. Pupils confirm that they do not suffer any form of abuse or harassment at school because other children are friendly and kind.

10. Because the school fosters pupils' personal development successfully, they achieve well in their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Spiritual awareness is positively developed in lessons and assemblies. There are satisfactory opportunities for older pupils to accept responsibility for their own actions or to take initiative when, for example, participating in the school council. Clear moral values underpin all aspects of the life and work of the school. Pupils are socially aware, following codes of conduct and acting on a common understanding of what is right and wrong. Above all, they enjoy the strong community feeling that the school provides and a sense of belonging; for example, a pupil new to the school said that it took her just a day to 'feel right at home.' Improved facilities for outdoor play enable pupils to share social activities in attractive outdoor settings, and to run about free and safe at playtimes.
11. Pupils' cultural awareness is developed through personal, social and health education which serves to strengthen their awareness of citizenship through links with a school in Zambia. A very good range of sporting activities stimulate pupils' interest in exercise and healthy competition.

Attendance in the latest complete reporting year (94.3%)

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
School data	5.6	School data	0.1
National data	5.1	National data	0.4

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

12. Attendance has improved this year and is now satisfactory overall. At the time of the previous inspection, attendance levels were above the national average although threatened by frequent, term-time holidays.

Exclusions

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	219	1	0
Mixed – White and Asian	3	0	0
Any other ethnic group	9	0	0
No ethnic group recorded	5	0	0

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

QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

The school provides a good quality of education. The quality of teaching and learning is good. The curriculum is satisfactory and the school provides good care and support for pupils. Links with parents are satisfactory and very good with the community.

Teaching and learning

Teaching and learning are good overall. Assessment is satisfactory.

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 35 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
0 (0%)	5 (14%)	23 (66%)	6 (17%)	1 (3%)	0	0

The table gives the number of lessons observed in each of the seven categories used to make judgements about lessons; figures in brackets show percentages where 30 or more lessons are seen.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching is good overall and teaching assistants are effective, especially in ICT.
- Teachers do not place sufficient emphasis in numeracy lessons on the use of mental mathematical skills to solve problems, especially in Years 3 to 6.
- Pupils make good use of their writing, mathematical and ICT skills in other subjects.
- Assessment information is not always used effectively to plan work for pupils of different abilities.

Commentary

13. As at the time of the previous inspection, the quality of teaching is good overall. Teaching is rarely less than satisfactory. The weaknesses identified in the previous report have been rectified. The combination of good teaching and care for pupils provides a good environment for learning to which pupils respond well.
14. The children are making good overall progress in the Foundation Stage because of good teaching. Work is closely matched to the children's needs and teaching staff make very good use of the outside areas to help the children to develop their skills.
15. Observation of lessons and examination of pupils' written work show that teaching and learning are good overall in Years 1 to 6. Lessons are well prepared and most teachers expect pupils to do their best. As a result, pupils respond well to the challenges set. However, pupils take too long to work out the correct answers to problems of mental arithmetic and teachers are not doing enough to improve this. The school has already identified this aspect of teaching as an area for development.
16. Teaching staff provide good opportunities for pupils to use their literacy, mathematical and ICT skills in other subjects.
17. The teaching of pupils with special educational needs is good because teachers plan activities well and ensure that they are matched to pupils' needs and abilities. Very good relationships and an inclusive ethos ensure that these pupils are well integrated into classes and receive good support from teaching assistants.
18. In contrast to the provision for the pupils with special educational needs, the teachers are not using their assessment information well enough to set work for other pupils of differing abilities. As a result, the more able pupils, in particular, lack challenge and could achieve higher standards.
19. The system of assessing pupils' progress is satisfactory, overall, and it is good in the Foundation Stage. In English, mathematics and science, teachers regularly use a range of assessments, including external tests and optional National Curriculum tests. The assessment information is analysed to identify strengths and weaknesses, to

guide teachers' planning and to set targets for pupils' attainment. This is done well in the Foundation Stage,

but in the rest of the school pupils' individual targets are not clear enough. In science, the teachers' statutory assessment of Year 2 pupils is inaccurate. The marking of pupils' written work often gives pupils clear pointers to improve their work but this is not the case in all classes. In English, for example, marking does not always pick up pupils' spelling mistakes.

The curriculum

The curriculum provides satisfactorily for pupils' needs and meets statutory requirements. The curriculum is enriched by a good range of additional activities, especially sport and team games. Resources and accommodation are satisfactory.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The curriculum is enriched by a good range of additional activities.
- The outdoor learning environment and its resources are very good.
- Pupils take part in a very good range of out of school activities, including sport.

Commentary

20. The curriculum is satisfactory overall. It meets the needs of all pupils, who experience a range of worthwhile activities in all subjects. At the time of the previous inspection, the governors had not made a decision regarding the teaching of sex education and did not therefore meet statutory requirements in this area. The school has made good progress with this issue and now does meet statutory requirements with regard to sex education. Although no lessons could be seen, the planning for personal, social and health education is good.
21. Overall, the curriculum helps the school to achieve its stated aims. It is successful in providing the opportunities and learning environment for pupils to develop into well-rounded individuals who contribute to and benefit from their local community, whilst becoming increasingly aware of the world around them.
22. Provision for special educational needs is good because of its relevance, and because of the inclusion of these pupils in the life of the school. Pupils receive specific help with literacy and numeracy. Good individual education plans for pupils are used well in most classes to plan support from the teaching assistants. The individual plans have clear, short-term and achievable targets which are reviewed regularly to ensure that they are appropriate to pupils' current needs.
23. The extra-curricular activities are good overall and very good in relation to sport. Pupils have opportunities to pursue a range of sporting activities, for example, netball, football, cricket, rugby and athletics. Through these activities, pupils from Years 2 to 6 achieve very high standards in competitive sports in which the school is very successful at all levels.
24. The match of teachers to the demands of the curriculum is good. Teachers are suitably qualified and experienced and are particularly effective when supporting pupils with special educational needs. The skills and expertise of individual teaching assistants are also used effectively to support the subjects of the curriculum, particularly ICT.

25. Accommodation is satisfactory overall and the outdoor learning environment is excellent. Some classrooms are cramped and this restricts pupils' movement. The school building is kept very clean. Displays in classrooms, although attractive, do not show the pupils' work or celebrate their achievements. Part of the school is used as a training facility for adults participating in community learning programmes and this helps to develop community links.

26. Educational resources, with the exception of resources for history, are satisfactory overall. They are good in the nursery and reception classes and in physical education. Provision for the teaching of ICT has improved since the last inspection and is now good. This improved provision has led to higher standards but computers are not consistently used in classrooms to support learning in other subjects of the curriculum.

Care, guidance and support

The school takes good care of its pupils and ensures their well-being. Support and guidance are satisfactory, as is the involvement of pupils in the school's development.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Adults ensure that pupils feel important and safe.
- Good personal support is provided for pupils from their earliest days in school.
- Whilst child protection and other safety procedures are robust, some mandatory aspects are not explained to parents.
- Pupils' progress is carefully tracked and the information arising is used to identify pupils' difficulties in different subjects but not well enough to set targets for them.
- Absences are not rigorously followed up on a daily basis.
- Pupils in Years 3 to 6 are encouraged to voice their opinions formally.

Commentary

27. Teachers and support staff know pupils well and take time to understand their interests and ambitions. In turn, this allows pupils to approach all adults in school for advice or just for a chat because they feel secure and appreciated. The very happy and busy atmosphere in the school is conducive to learning. Arrangements for the induction of the youngest children to full-time school are well planned, effective and highly rated by parents who agree that their children are well cared for.
28. Legal requirements for health, safety and child protection are met. A good balance between a secure site and welcoming all parents and visitors has been achieved because of thoughtful improvements to the school building. Staff are well aware of child protection issues because training is thorough and up-to-date. However, the school does not publish its policy for referral of cases to other agencies.
29. Arrangements for monitoring and supporting pupils' academic progress are satisfactory, because their work in main subjects is consistently tracked using assessments and performance data. From this evidence teachers can see where progress has slowed for some pupils. However, individual pupils do not always receive enough guidance because their targets are not clear or specific enough to help the pupils to make the necessary improvement, nor are they shared with parents.
30. Overall, attendance is satisfactory. Pastoral guidance is good. Annual awards for good attendance are helping pupils appreciate the value of it.
31. The school re-affirms its commitment to developing self-esteem by giving pupils some opportunities to have their say and to be involved in some aspects of the decision-making process. The headteacher acts on pupils' suggestions whenever possible. The school council role is well promoted by staff and appreciated by junior pupils as a successful platform for their views. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 are currently unrepresented in this forum.

Partnership with parents, other schools and the community

Links with parents are satisfactory. The school has very effective links with the community and with other schools.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Many parents are happy with the school and the way it honestly responds to their concerns.
- The amount of information provided is satisfactory but does not always interest parents or engage their enthusiasm.
- Mutually beneficial relationships are in place with other schools, establishments and the community.

Commentary

32. Parents express satisfaction with many aspects of the school. They value highly the way children are introduced to school life and the help they receive to become independent and mature. In return, many parents positively support their children's learning by ensuring they attend regularly. They confidently approach the staff with questions, attend open meetings and value the opportunity provided to hear about their children's progress at the end of the summer term.
33. The school has addressed issues raised by the previous inspection, with the result that the range of information for parents has improved. The prospectus and governors' annual report are combined and contain all details required by law. This document is, however, too complicated for its intended readership. It does however provide an accurate picture of what the school sets out to achieve it.
34. Parents are not routinely consulted about aspects of the school's work that affects them directly, such as the policy for behaviour. The school does not consult parents to ask them how they could be included more fully as partners in their children's education. Because of this, the school's partnership with parents in the work of the school is only satisfactory.
35. Friendly newsletters of a general nature help to maintain parental confidence in the school. The staff work very hard to maintain an open-door relationship with parents. This has proved so successful that some parents now feel, for example, that they could support their pupils' homework if it were provided on a more structured basis. Some parents feel they are prevented from making an effective contribution to their children's learning because they do not know the targets their children are aiming at, or enough about the work their children do in class. This means that the school is not cashing-in on parents' willingness to help.
36. Links with the community very effectively contribute to pupils' learning in the classroom and to their all-round personal development, for example, strong links with the church and a primary school in Zambia. As a result, pupils have a better knowledge of the daily life of their African pen-pals. A member of the community has provided unstinting help over the years to ensure that pupils have very good opportunities to take part in sporting activities. His efforts have been recognized at a national level by his award of the MBE.

37. Parents take part in adult education courses in literacy, numeracy and ICT. These have been enjoyed and have impacted positively on the ICT standards that pupils achieve.
38. Links with local schools are very productive and support joint projects connected, for example, with literacy and the provision for more able pupils. French lessons are provided for Year 6 by secondary school staff and there are good links with the school to which most pupils transfer at age 11. The contribution of NVQ students, the police, road safety officers, Red Cross staff and sporting associations contribute well to pupils' moral, social and cultural development.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

The leadership and management of the school are satisfactory, overall. The leadership of the headteacher is good. Governance of the school is good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The headteacher has high aspirations for the school.
- Curriculum coordinators are not managing their subjects effectively.
- Commitment to the principles of inclusive education for each individual child lies at the heart of the school's success.
- The governing body is effective.
- Financial management is very good.

Commentary

39. The headteacher sets the tone of the school by his drive, energy and vision. With the efficient support of the deputy headteacher, the headteacher provides good leadership and knows the needs of the pupils very well. The ethos of the school is good and firmly grounded on Christian principles. At the heart of all the school does are the needs of the individual child. Boys and girls of all backgrounds are involved fully in all aspects of school life.
40. Overall leadership and management are satisfactory. However, subject coordinators rely too much on the headteacher for the evaluation of standards in their subjects and do not have an accurate view of what needs to be improved. Day-to-day running of the school is good.
41. The school monitors its own performance through analysis of data from external tests, monitoring of pupils' progress, the quality of teaching and the standard of pupils' work. The school has made a satisfactory improvement since the previous inspection.
42. The provision for pupils with special educational needs is well managed and its quality has been sustained since the time of the previous inspection. The coordinator is aware of pupils' needs and fully involves teachers, parents and pupils in the drawing up of individual pupils' learning programmes. Detailed analysis of pupils' learning needs gives priority to basic skills, such as social and emotional development and early literacy and numeracy skills. Good attention is also given to subsequent planning for these pupils and a very well-kept recording system is readily available to all staff. Liaison with the high school is effective and is strengthened by initiatives, such as shared reading. There is a strong emphasis on school development using the expertise of the staff and the local education authority.
43. Governance of the school is good. Governors are led well by the chair of governors who is a frequent visitor to the school. The governing body is strongly committed to the school's success, share a common vision and support the headteacher and staff very well. They are very aware of the school's strengths and weaknesses and are developing their role as critical friends. The school development plan provides a detailed set of well-considered priorities and has been approved by the governing body.

Financial information for the year April 2003 to March 2004

Income and expenditure (£)	
Total income	510,253
Total expenditure	513,486
Expenditure per pupil	2,262

Balances (£)	
Balance from previous year	10,374
Balance carried forward to the next	7,141

44. The governing body takes great care to get best value from spending decisions. The school manages its finances very well and makes very good use of any additional grants. Given the quality of its provision, its efficiency and the good achievement of its pupils, the school provides good value for money.

PART C: THE QUALITY OF EDUCATION IN AREAS OF LEARNING, SUBJECTS AND COURSES

AREAS OF LEARNING IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

Provision in the Foundation Stage is good and has improved well since the previous inspection because planning now covers all areas of learning purposefully. The children's attainment is well below average for their age when they start the nursery class. Pupils make good progress and, although many do not reach early learning goals in communication, language and literacy, or in mathematics by the time they join Year 1, their achievement is good. Teaching is good and the leadership and management of the Foundation Stage are effective. Major strengths in the teaching are the very good planning, the encouragement and support all children receive from the teachers and the support staff, and the caring, learning environment which enables all children to be well motivated, to have positive attitudes and behave and achieve well. Nursery provision, including the accommodation and the very good resources for outside play, has been extended, enriched and the outside area made secure. Induction procedures are good overall, but the information booklet for parents does not contain detailed curriculum information.

When children enter the school, there are good procedures to assess their level of attainment, and the recently introduced ongoing assessment procedures help to ensure that activities are realistically challenging for each child. Relevant targets are displayed on the walls in both the nursery and the reception classes, but staff do not refer to them frequently and so do not raise children's awareness of the targets.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Nursery and reception children benefit from good teaching, well organised daily routines and the high expectations set by staff.
- Staff provide very good opportunities for children to develop this area of learning.
- Very good relationships between children and adults have been established so that children feel confident and happy and they enjoy coming to school.
- Snack times are effective social occasions, but adults miss opportunities to extend children's speaking and listening skills informally.

Commentary

45. This area of learning is central to the work in the nursery and reception class and contributes very effectively to the children's achievements in other areas. Nursery children settle into school well and good teaching promotes independence and co-operation. Staff clearly explain the need for good behaviour, courtesy and collaboration and require children to show these qualities at all times. Children are supported very well in a safe, secure environment where they gain increasing confidence in exploring new and exciting activities. Children in the reception class show good self-esteem and confidence. They already know the class routines well, settle to tasks with a minimum of fuss and behave sensibly. The provision leads to good achievement in emotional and social development, independence and behaviour. Although teaching is good, there are missed opportunities for children to

develop their language skills through social interaction at snack time. Children are likely to exceed the expected goals by the end of the Foundation Stage.

COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- There are good opportunities for children to become competent in key skills of speaking, listening and writing, but staff miss opportunities during independent and role-play activities.
- The level of support from the teaching assistants is very good.

Commentary

46. Children's achievement is good because of good teaching and learning, good resources and very good teaching assistant support. Although the majority of children make good progress, many will not attain the expected level because they start school with difficulties in speaking and understanding language. Many children in the nursery are at a very early stage in their language development and need considerable support to communicate. Nursery and reception staff are skilled at encouraging all children to speak by skilful questioning and sensitive listening. However, opportunities are sometimes missed to extend the children's speech and understanding because of lack of time at the end of a lesson or the lack of adult help in sand and water activities. Reception staff continue to place considerable emphasis on the recognition of sounds to help children learn to read and write. No computer work was seen, but in the nursery children appreciated listening independently to recorded stories.

MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision in mathematical development is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Very skilful planning and organisation give very good opportunities for all children to develop their basic skills.
- Staff provide a wide range of practical activities to support learning, which helps the children to achieve well.
- Staff reinforce mathematical vocabulary well but it is not used naturally and spontaneously by children.

Commentary

47. Teaching and learning are good in both the nursery and the reception class and all children achieve well. However, many of the children will not achieve the expected level despite the good resources, teaching and support because of the low level at which they start school. Staff plan a range of interesting activities, which successfully promote children's mathematical understanding. In the nursery and the reception class, children are encouraged to count in a variety of different situations. They are taught and encouraged to use mathematical language in all their activities. Staff make learning fun by the use of singing number songs and games which reinforces counting skills and enhances children's personal and social skills. Little use of mathematical vocabulary by the reception children was heard although staff take every opportunity to reinforce this in formal and informal activities.

KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE WORLD

Provision in knowledge and understanding of the world is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Staff use a good range of interesting activities to stimulate children's curiosity and enhance their understanding.
- Effective links are made between all other areas of learning.

Commentary

48. Teaching and learning are good in the nursery and reception class. Children achieve well because they are constantly encouraged to describe their experiences and observations, which means teachers can check if children understand what they are doing. The majority of children are on line to attain the expected level by the end of the reception year. This area is successfully promoted through well-planned themes and interesting activities that help to develop children's understanding of the world around them. Nursery children are skilfully encouraged to remember and talk about their experiences although this is difficult for many children because of their poor language skills. Work is linked successfully with other areas, such as role-play, painting and reading and writing activities. No computer work was observed. However, planning indicates there are good opportunities for nursery and reception children to use computers and the listening centre.

PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision in physical development is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Nursery and reception children have easy access to a secure, well-equipped outdoor area, which means they have very good opportunities to develop their physical skills.
- Outdoor resources are very good and enhance certain aspects of children's physical development.

Commentary

49. Teaching and learning are good and all children achieve well because of effective adult support and very good outdoor resources. Children's physical development meets expectations for their age and they are on course to meet the expected goals by the end of the reception year. Nursery children are gaining confidence and becoming increasingly well co-ordinated. There are very good opportunities for all children, not only to practise foot and eye coordination, but also to try out their physical skills on large-sized equipment, such as a climbing frame. Speech between children is not common when they are playing, so interactive skills are weak. No physical education session was seen in the reception class, but children move with increasing control and co-ordination in the classroom and playground. Most children in the nursery are learning to manipulate tools and small equipment, such as pencils, crayons and scissors, satisfactorily. Reception class children show increasing confidence and dexterity.

CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT

Provision in creative development is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Good opportunities are provided for children to use their imagination in role-play and stories.
- Role-play stimulates the imagination very well, but at times lacks purposeful adult intervention to encourage language development and extend learning.

Commentary

50. Good teaching, a wide range of resources and very effective adult support help the children to achieve well. They are on course to attain the expected goals by the end of the reception year. In the nursery and the reception class, role-play is carefully planned. Staff provide a wide range of art activities. Displays provide a bright, attractive backcloth to the classrooms, reflect the topics being studied and show that children explore and experiment using colour, texture, shape, form and space in their two- and three-dimensional artwork. Planning shows that there are very good opportunities for children to take part in informal and planned music sessions and to build up a repertoire of favourite songs and rhymes. The role-play areas are used well for imaginative play and are well linked to other areas of learning, for example, in the reception class *Pet Shop* where children can sell and buy pets and other goods to a value up to 12p. These activities develop their language through interaction with others and also extend their learning in mathematics. Staff are good at intervening in the children's play to encourage interactions.

SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 1 and 2

ENGLISH

Provision in English is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- As a result of good teaching standards in Year 6 are above average.
- Pupils' achievement in speaking and listening, reading and writing is good throughout the school.
- Good opportunities are provided for pupils to write in other subjects of the curriculum, particularly science and history.
- The work set for pupils does not always match the needs of different abilities; consequently, the more able pupils do not always reach the standards of which they are capable.
- Curriculum leadership is not well developed.

Commentary

51. Standards in reading, writing and speaking are above average in Year 6. This is because pupils benefit from good teaching, work hard and want to learn. Girls and boys make similar progress. Pupils achieve well during their time at St Gregory's. Since the previous inspection, standards have been sustained. Pupils with special educational needs also make good overall progress. Teaching assistants make a valuable contribution to pupils' achievements.
52. In Year 2, standards are average in speaking and listening, reading and writing. Teachers insist on attentive listening during their explanations and when pupils answer questions. When reading, pupils show a good knowledge of letter sounds and recognition of simple words. When reading new stories, the majority use the pictures to help them to guess at the meaning of the text. The higher attaining pupils confidently predict what might happen next whilst reading a story. Most pupils achieve well in their writing skills in Years 1 and 2 because the teachers' planning focuses on key skills with plenty of repetition, especially in Year 2.

53. Year 6 pupils are confident speakers and sustain a lively pace in lessons, for example, when they have a timed discussion about the persuasive language in an advertisement for a museum. Pupils develop good concentration when listening, and the promptness and quality of their answers demonstrates how well they have listened; for example, when they made suggestions for ten ideas to illustrate how a story can be told other than in a book. The

school has made good improvement in this area of English through its networking with other schools. Most pupils read fluently and expressively. Pupils show good library skills. Most pupils can name their favourite authors and can talk articulately about the books they have read. Year 6 pupils can write for a range of purposes and a variety of audiences, for example, writing letters to pupils in the school with which they are twinned in Zambia. Their writing shows a growing maturity and most pupils have developed a fluent, legible, joined style in Year 6. Most can write in a variety of forms using good sentence structure and largely correct spelling.

54. The quality of teaching and learning is good. Teachers of younger pupils place a good emphasis on teaching letter sounds and spelling strategies in order to improve pupils' writing. This has resulted in standards of spelling which have risen to average in Year 2. The outcomes of assessment are not always used well enough to enable the teachers to plan activities and tasks which challenge the higher attaining pupils sufficiently which results in this group of pupils making insufficient progress. For example, a learning outcome of a lesson observed in Year 1 during the inspection, was for pupils to be able to write sentences using capital letters and full stops, which the higher attaining pupils were already able to do this at the start of year.
55. Leadership and management in English are satisfactory. Whole-school strategies provide opportunities for speaking and listening; however, they are not enough, on their own, to raise standards further. For example, the marking of pupils' written work is inconsistent and spelling mistakes are not always picked up and dealt with. In some classes marking clearly shows pupils how to improve their writing; however, in other classes, teachers' marking is often not even linked to the purpose of the lesson which leads to pupils being unclear about their own progress.

Language and literacy across the curriculum

56. Pupils' language and literacy skills are above average overall. The school applies these skills well in other subjects and has a well-written policy for this. Pupils have many opportunities to use their skills in speaking, reading and writing in subjects such as religious education, history or science. Pupils also have good opportunities to practise reading skills and spelling when using the computer.

MATHEMATICS

Provision in mathematics is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching is of a good quality and as a result pupils achieve well by the time they leave.
- Pupils lack speed and accuracy in using their mental arithmetic skills in solving problems.
- Curriculum leadership is not well developed.
- Standards are below those in English in Years 1 and 2.

Commentary

57. Standards in Year 6 have risen from the previous year and are now in line with those found in most schools by the end of Year 6. Achievement is good by the time pupils leave, bearing in mind that pupils enter Year 1 with below average skills. The school's

very good analysis of external tests results has rightly highlighted the need to improve pupils' skills in applying their mental arithmetic skills. There is no significant difference between the performance of boys and girls. Pupils with special educational needs are integrated well into lessons through effective use of teaching assistants.

58. In the current Year 2 overall standards are below those found in most schools and below those in English. Pupils have satisfactory basic skills. They can accurately use the correct notation to interpret and solve story problems using numbers to 20 but take too long to carry out the calculations. Some of the work set is not challenging to higher attainers. In Year 6, pupils have a sound command of the four rules of number. However, many pupils lack the necessary speed in carrying out mental calculations correctly. For example, when asked to work out the sale price of items where there was a percentage discount most arrive at the correct answer but take too long to do it.
59. The quality of teaching and learning is good overall. Teachers plan work well and make sure that pupils know what they are expected to learn in any particular lesson. In most lessons there is a growing emphasis on asking pupils to explain how they have arrived at a particular answer. In a very good lesson in Year 6 pupils made full use of the outside area to put together a mathematics trail for younger pupils. Discussions held with pupils demonstrate that they like mathematics lessons and that they really enjoy being challenged to use their numeracy skills.
60. Leadership and management of the subject is satisfactory overall. The subject leaders are experienced teachers but do not have a comprehensive over-view of standards. They have been given some time to evaluate teaching and learning in lessons. The school has plans to address the issue concerning the role of the co-ordinator. The headteacher ensures that assessment information is of a good quality but the information gathered is not always used well enough to set both whole year group and individual targets.

Mathematics across the curriculum

Pupils' mathematical skills are average. The school, in its policy documents, emphasizes the use of mathematics across the curriculum well. Other subjects contribute well to pupils' learning and skills in using mathematics. For example, in ICT, older pupils use data they have collected accurately to construct spreadsheets on the computer, while other pupils use their findings effectively to display them using different types of graphical representation.

SCIENCE

Provision in science is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils achieve well in the subject.
- Proper emphasis is placed on practical activities and developing scientific vocabulary.
- Good opportunities are provided for pupils to develop their writing skills when recording in science.
- The coordinator's monitoring of teaching and learning is not rigorous enough.
- The teachers' assessment of standards in Year 2 in 2004 are inaccurate.

Commentary

61. Standards in Years 2 and 6 are average and pupils of all attainment levels achieve well. The improvement since the last inspection is satisfactory, with better use being made of ICT in the subject. There is no significant difference in achievement between boys and girls.

62. A good feature of the subject, especially in Year 2, is pupils' application of their writing skills. Pupils write increasingly detailed joint accounts of scientific experiments, applying their developing writing skills effectively to record experiments and investigations. Recorded work in Year 6 shows that pupils have good data handling skills.

63. The quality of teaching and learning is good overall. Teachers emphasise the development of pupils' skills of scientific enquiry and their acquisition of scientific vocabulary. Pupils discuss scientific problems, such as which variables they would control in order to create a fair test. This approach is successful. Occasionally science lessons for younger pupils are not planned well enough for pupils to know what they were expected to learn and, as a result, they make unsatisfactory progress. Pupils enjoyed practical work and experimenting, for example, to find the most effective way to separate materials. Teachers' statutory assessment of the standards reached in Year 2 in 2004 is inaccurate. The school has already identified these inaccuracies and plans to address the issue next year.
64. Leadership and management are satisfactory. The coordinator is well qualified and is aware of what needs to be done to raise standards in science further. The school has rightly identified the need to make the monitoring of teaching and learning more rigorous. The scrutiny of pupils' work indicates better coverage of the study of life and living processes and physical aspects of science than materials and their properties.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

Provision in information and communication technology (ICT) is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils achieve well throughout the school.
- Subject leaders have a clear over view of what the strengths and areas for development are in the subject.
- The teaching assistant makes a valuable contribution to the quality of teaching and learning in ICT.
- Teachers' confidence and subject knowledge have improved well by targeted training, good planning and resources.
- Computers are now used more effectively in other subjects.

Commentary

65. Most pupils come to school with limited experience of ICT. They make good progress and achieve well. Standards in Year 2 and Year 6 are average and similar to those found in the previous inspection. The school has taken substantial steps to improve the provision in order to keep abreast of the increasing demands of new technology.
66. All aspects of ICT are covered well and visits to a local high school effectively enhance pupils' work and develop their skills in control and modelling. ICT skills are taught as separate lessons and also are now used in the context of other subjects in the curriculum. Pupils with special educational need benefit from the good support and the effective individual help which enables them to tackle work similar to other pupils. This gives them confidence and raises their self-esteem.
67. In Years 1 and Year 2, skills are satisfactory. Some pupils use the mouse and keyboard confidently, change the font with ease and capably amend and save their work, but others need and receive good support from the very competent teaching assistant. They show information by using text tables and pictures. Pupils are highly motivated and work collaboratively and support each other well.

68. Year 6 pupils use spreadsheets competently, develop and interpret databases, compile multi-media presentations, and use CD-ROMs and the Internet effectively. Most pupils open and close programs accurately and save their work in personal folders, only younger pupils and

less able pupils need support. However, in some lessons seen, the programs are ready and open and there are missed opportunities for pupils to reinforce essential understanding and skills such as logging on, locating and opening programs or selecting and navigating through various levels.

69. The quality of teaching and learning is good. Very effective use of the teaching assistant enhances pupils' learning so that procedures are well explained to pupils. Teachers are well organised; they plan interesting and purposeful activities linked well to other subjects. They manage pupils well because they make learning interesting. They are clear in their explanations of what is to be done and monitor pupils' work. Pupils respond well and show positive attitudes towards their work, and work sensibly and collaboratively in pairs. They enjoy ICT and are confident and well motivated.
70. The two coordinators have a clear overview of the subject and lead and manage it well. Monitoring of teaching and learning has shown how to make improvements and effective action has been taken to do so. Pupils' progress is tracked well to enable teachers to know what they need to do next to improve and their work is analysed effectively to highlight strengths and weaknesses. Resources are good and now allow pupils greater access to ICT facilities in order to practise their skills. Computer clubs for pupils take place and the take- up is high. An adult club is well established which any parent can attend.

Information and communication technology across the curriculum

71. Pupils' ICT skills are average and are used well in other subjects, for example, to support and consolidate learning in literacy through reading and spelling games and to produce original stories, poems and booklets. Multi-media presentations, such as *Nursery Rhymes*, given by Year 6 pupils for the younger pupils, extend language skills well. Pupils competently interrogate databases in mathematics to extract information and use art and design software to enhance pupils' art such as vivid Mondrian style pictures. The Internet is searched to find information in subjects such as history and geography to research the Second World War and give a cultural insight into school life in Zambia.

HUMANITIES

72. Insufficient evidence was available during the time of the inspection to make secure judgements about the quality of provision for history and geography. The issue with regard to a whole school approach to assessment information in both subjects has still not been dealt with successfully. Religious education was not inspected and will form part of a separate Diocesan inspection.
73. In **history**, judging by the limited evidence available, pupils' knowledge and understanding are average in both Years 2 and 6. Younger pupils recognise some differences between the past and the present and can give examples of how things have changed over time. They know, for example, that the toys they play with are different from those played with by their parents. In Years 1 and 2 pupils learn about important events in history, such as the Great Fire of London and how it was started. By Year 6, pupils have a sound knowledge of different eras in history. Although standards in their knowledge and understanding are average overall, the pupils' enquiry skills are weak because they do not have the resources or sufficient opportunities to undertake research and work independently. Both lessons seen during the inspection were good. In a Year 2 lesson, good teaching led to pupils' good

achievement. In a Year 4 lesson, the teacher had prepared well in arranging a visitor from the museum service in Carlisle to explain about and demonstrate artefacts from World War 11. The pupils enjoyed handling the artefacts and, as a result, learned more about life in war-time Britain.

74. In **geography**, Year 6 pupils have a sound knowledge of places in other countries but their understanding of maps and how to represent features on them is less well-developed. The geography curriculum is enriched well by visits to places and features of the local environment. The very good links with the school in Zambia help pupils to develop their understanding of contrasting localities and provide a very good opportunity for extended written work.

CREATIVE, AESTHETIC, PRACTICAL AND PHYSICAL SUBJECTS

75. It was not possible to make overall judgments about provision in any subject in this area. However, from the evidence available it is very clear that pupils have good opportunities to use their skills. As a result, in some parts of the school there are some good displays of work reflecting, for example, pupils' design and technology skills in making their drums.
76. The teachers' planning in **art and design** shows that they provide good opportunities for all pupils to use a range of techniques, and to explore and investigate their feelings through the use of different media. Observational drawings of objects indicate a satisfactory progression in the use of pencil control to show line, shape, texture, pattern and the developing use of perspective. Pupils recall with enjoyment their work, for example, in *pointillism* when they re-created scenes in the style of Seurat.
77. In **design technology**, pupils' knowledge and skills are built upon systematically through an effective scheme of work, which gives detailed guidance for lesson planning. Analysis of teachers' plans indicates that all pupils gain experience of using a range of materials and techniques and develop the expected skills as a result of designing and making a variety of products, such as money containers, textile puppets, and appetising sandwich snacks.
78. Resources for both art and design and design technology are good and ICT is used regularly in both subjects. The displays round the school create a bright attractive environment, such as a large colourful frieze of Noah's Ark, attractive landscapes and camouflage paintings using photographs and different tints, tones and shades. Pupils' creativity is fostered through the use of a rich provision of resources and regular opportunities to use them, but is restricted at times by too much teacher direction and input.
79. In **music** the standard of singing in acts of worship is satisfactory and pupils demonstrate a good sense of beat and dynamics. In one lesson seen, very good opportunities were provided for pupils to develop their skills in composing their own accompaniments with slow and fast tempos identified. Pupils have no opportunities to learn to play instruments or to join a choir. In acts of worship, opportunities are missed for pupils to listen to music on entry and when they leave. Very good links were made between history and French in one assembly when pupils performed a French song very well.
80. During the inspection, few lessons were observed in **physical education**. However, it is very clear that pupils of all ages develop very good basic games skills. The success in this aspect of the subject is due in no small measure to the skill and dedication shown by a member of the community who works with pupils after school to develop their skills. As a result both boys and girls are very successful in competitive sport with the school winning or coming very close to winning a wide range of sporting competitions against other schools. Resources and equipment are of a very good

quality. Of particular note is the 'huff and puff' equipment that is used during playtimes to further encourage pupils to take part in healthy pursuits. The school is rightly proud of its sporting achievement award.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP

81. No lessons were seen during the inspection. However, pupils' personal and social skills, as well as their understanding of citizenship, are developed well. For example, during the week of the inspection a member of the Red Cross explained to pupils in Year 5 how they could help someone who was in distress through injury. The school provides an effective curriculum for all aspects of personal, social and health education and citizenship, through separate specialist lessons as well as through the subjects of the National Curriculum, assemblies and class discussions. The issue from the previous inspection with regard to sex education has been addressed and this aspect is now included in the curriculum. The subject provides very good opportunities for pupils to develop confidence, a sense of responsibility and respect for the differences between people.

PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

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

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