

INSPECTION REPORT

ST JOSEPH'S ROMAN CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL

Frizington

LEA area: Cumbria

Unique reference number: 112350

Headteacher: Mr D Sherwen

Lead inspector: Dr M J Bradshaw

Dates of inspection: 26th - 28th April 2005

Inspection number: 267797

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:	4 – 11
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
Number on roll:	79
School address:	Yeathouse Road Frizington Cumbria
Postcode:	CA26 3PX
Telephone number:	(01946) 810 702
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Appropriate authority:	The governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr J Noake
Date of previous inspection:	19 th – 21 st April 1999

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

The school has 79 full-time pupils from Reception to Year 6. The proportion of boys is 60 per cent. The changes to the school's roll during the school year are quite low. Children usually enter Reception part-time in the September of the year in which they are five years old, and become full-time within a few weeks. When children join the school, they have a low, or very low, base of skills. This is lower than at the time of the last inspection. All pupils are from a white ethnic background. Just over 35 per cent of pupils claim free school meals; this figure has increased sharply since 2001 and is well above average. Almost 17 per cent of pupils in Years 1 to 6 have significant learning needs. This figure is about average and all special educational needs relate to learning difficulties. Two pupils have a statement of special educational needs.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
6169	Dr M J Bradshaw	Lead inspector	Foundation Stage Mathematics Science Art and design Geography Physical education
13450	Mrs J Madden	Lay inspector	
2756	Mr M Barron	Team inspector	English Information and communication technology Design and technology History Music English as an additional language Special educational needs

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

OVERALL EVALUATION

The school gives a **satisfactory** quality of education and, based on pupils' progress in English and mathematics in particular, provides **good** value for money. Standards by Year 2 are below average, but good achievement overall means that standards are about average by Year 6. Pupils' attitudes are good and their behaviour is very good. Leadership and management are satisfactory.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- Pupils achieve well and reach average standards by Year 6. Standards in Year 2 are below average.
- Teaching and learning are good overall and support staff are used well.
- The provision and management for pupils with special educational needs are good.
- Behaviour is very good and pupils' attitudes and personal development are good, although not enough is done to prepare pupils for life in a multicultural society.
- Financial management is very good, but governors' roles are not developed sufficiently.
- Good links exist with the community and other schools.
- The curriculum lacks innovation and balance; in Reception, especially for physical development, it is limited by the outside area.
- Not enough use is made of information about how well pupils are doing to improve standards.
- The school has a good ethos and cares for its pupils very well.
- Attendance rates are unsatisfactory and not enough is done to promote good attendance.

Satisfactory progress has been made since the previous inspection. Pupils' attainment by Year 2 has increased since 2000. Standards in information and communication technology (ICT) have improved. Better planning is in place to meet the needs of different ages in each class, but less progress has been made in meeting the needs of the full ability range. Systems to identify how well pupils are doing are now in place, but the information is not used consistently to plan how to meet individual pupils' needs. Steady progress has been made in improving pupils' skills of investigation, but the progress has not been enough in science. Pupils present their work much better. The school now provides a range of extra-curricular sports activities. There have been improvements in planning design and technology, geography and history, but there is still a lack of breadth and depth in pupils' work. Some progress has been made in improving the management of subjects but further work is required.

STANDARDS ACHIEVED

Pupils' achievement is **good**. Children often begin Reception with well below average skills. They achieve well, especially in the development of their English and mathematics skills. Current Reception children should meet the standards expected, although, because of very low skills when starting school, this was not the case in some previous years. Current pupils in Year 2 have achieved satisfactorily, but standards are below average in reading, writing, speaking and listening, mathematics, science and geography. They are average in ICT.

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

Key: A – very high; A – well above average; B – above average; C – average; D – below average; E – well below average. Similar schools are those whose pupils attained similarly at the end of Year 2.*

Pupils' attainment in Year 6 has varied in recent years owing to the small number of pupils in each year. In 2004, attainment was above average in English, but below average in mathematics and well below average in science. However, the results indicate that pupils made good progress in science, very good progress in mathematics and very high progress in English. Currently, pupils in Year 6 are attaining broadly average standards in English, mathematics, science and ICT. In geography, pupils' standards by Year 6 are similar to those expected, but lack breadth.

Children's personal qualities, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, are **good**. Children have very good relationships with other pupils. Their attitudes are good and their behaviour is very good. Personal development is good, although not enough is done to prepare pupils for a multicultural society. Attendance has declined and is unsatisfactory. Pupils' punctuality is good.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION

The quality of education provided is **satisfactory**. Teaching and learning are **good**. Teachers have high expectations of pupils' behaviour and good support is given to pupils with special educational needs. Teaching assistants are used very well. In satisfactory lessons, not enough attention is given to ensuring able pupils are challenged sufficiently. Pupils' good learning is aided by their positive attitudes. Systems to identify how well pupils are doing are satisfactory in English, mathematics and science, but the information is not used sufficiently to identify the next steps in learning. Marking is completed but does not consistently help pupils to know how they can improve.

The school provides a satisfactory curriculum, but it lacks excitement and innovation. The curriculum is not well balanced, and the range and depth of work in history and geography are not sufficient. Accommodation is satisfactory, although the outside area for Reception children is unsatisfactory. This is a caring school in which the personal needs of pupils are looked after very well. Pupils' education is aided by good links with local schools and the wider community. Links with parents are satisfactory.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Leadership and management of the school are **satisfactory**. The headteacher provides satisfactory leadership. Governance is satisfactory, but governors do not challenge and support the headteacher sufficiently. Statutory requirements are fully met.

PARENTS' AND PUPILS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

Parents are happy with the school. They think that their children like school and, make good progress and that behaviour is good. Pupils like the school and the support they get from teachers and other adults.

IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

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

- Raise pupils' attainment by Year 2 in English, mathematics and science.
- Review the organisation of the curriculum to improve the balance given to subjects, and ensure greater depth and breadth in subjects such as history and geography.
- Continue the improvements in assessing how well pupils are doing and use the information to meet the needs of higher-attaining pupils more consistently.
- Increase the role of governors in supporting and challenging the headteacher.
- Introduce opportunities to raise pupils' cultural, including multicultural, awareness.
- Attempt to raise attendance levels by taking further action to promote good attendance.

PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE MAIN INSPECTION FINDINGS

STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

Standards achieved in areas of learning and subjects

Children in Reception achieve **well** and nearly all will meet the goals expected. Pupils' achievement is generally **good**, although it varies across the school. By Year 6, standards in English, mathematics, science and information and communication technology (ICT) are average.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children in Reception achieve well; they make good progress in English and mathematics.
- Pupils achieve well by Year 6, and standards are about average.
- Standards in Year 2 currently are below average.
- Pupils' science skills are underdeveloped by Year 6 and their geography knowledge lacks breadth.

Commentary

1. The small number of pupils in each year group makes comparisons difficult as average results vary greatly from year to year. Results over the past five years indicate that Year 2 pupils' attainment has increased at a rate greater than that seen nationally. In Year 6, the improvement trend has been very erratic, but over the past five years, attainment has been about average. In 2004, Year 6 pupils achieved particularly well when their attainment in Year 2 is taken into account. This year, attainment is about average in Year 6, and this represents good achievement. In Years 1 and 2, achievement is satisfactory but attainment is below average.

Reception class

2. Children begin Reception with below or well below average skills, although the small numbers mean that this varies from year to year. They achieve well and, by the time they leave Reception, nearly all will be close to reaching the standards expected for their age in all areas of learning. Progress is especially good in English and mathematics. This secure start to their education prepares them well for the National Curriculum.

Years 1 and 2

3. Taking account of the small numbers involved, there is no clear pattern of differences in attainment between boys and girls at the end of Year 2. No significant difference is evident at present and their achievement is similar. Pupils' achievement in Years 1 and 2 is satisfactory but, owing to the characteristics of the group, standards in Year 2 are lower than last year when they were well above average. In English, reading, writing and speaking and listening develop satisfactorily but pupils' standards are below average. In mathematics, standards are below average, particularly in the skills of addition and subtraction. In science, pupils' attainment is below average in both their knowledge and development of practical skills. Although the lower standards reflect the attainment of children when they started school, achievement in the infants is also affected, on occasion, by a lack of challenge for more able pupils. In ICT and geography seen, standards are similar to those expected.

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
English	28.3 (27.0)	26.9 (26.8)
mathematics	26.6 (27.9)	27.0 (26.8)
science	27.4 (29.6)	28.6 (28.6)

There were 14 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year.

4. Taking account of the small numbers involved, there is no clear pattern of differences in attainment between boys and girls at the end of Year 6. No significant difference is evident at present and their achievement is similar. Pupils achieve well to reach average standards in English and mathematics. In English, pupils do better in reading and writing than in speaking and listening. Standards in science are broadly average, although investigative skills are weak. Achievement is affected, on occasion, by a lack of challenge for more able pupils. In ICT and geography, standards are similar to those expected. In geography, however, pupils' knowledge is restricted and lacks depth, except in relation to maps and the environment.
5. The achievement of pupils who have special educational needs is good throughout the school. It matches that of other pupils because of the effective care and support they receive from teachers and teaching assistants. In some lessons, higher ability pupils are not challenged sufficiently and they could achieve more.

Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities

Pupils' behaviour is **very good** and their attitudes **good**. Personal development is **good** due to the good provision for pupils' spiritual, moral and social education. Attendance is **unsatisfactory** but punctuality is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils' behaviour is good.
- Pupils' relationships with others are very good.
- There is good moral development which reflects the ethos of the school.
- Pupils' cultural understanding is not developed sufficiently.
- Attendance is below average; the school is taking insufficient measures to improve attendance.

Commentary

Attendance in the latest complete reporting year (%)

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
School data	5.9	School data	0.0
National data	5.1	National data	0.4

The table gives the percentage of half days (sessions) missed through absence in 2003/4.

6. Attendance has declined since the last inspection. Those pupils who attend regularly arrive happily, on time and ready to start the day. However, some parents allow their children to take time away from school and appear unaware that it is vital for the education of their children that they condone absence only for the most serious reasons. The school has yet to implement the first day follow-up of absences that parents fail to report and is not practising a full range of initiatives available to encourage and improve attendance.

7. Pupils' behaviour in and around the school is very good, based on a clear and detailed document outlining the school's expectation for pupils' behaviour. Pupils work well in those classes where teaching and planning are good, but a small minority of pupils do not remain concentrated and focused because of a lack of stimulation and a slow pace to their learning. The atmosphere in the school is free from bullying and harassment and pupils are helpful and considerate of each other. Playtimes are happy and friendly in spite of the lack of play equipment and organised games. Children in Reception make good progress in their personal development; they behave well and have good attitudes. They do not always have enough opportunities to develop their independence. The school's inclusive ethos ensures that pupils with special educational needs play a full and active part in school life. As a result, they show a willingness to learn and have access to the full range of activities the school provides.
8. The Catholic ethos of the school is reflected in pupils' awareness of moral values and their knowledge of right and wrong and, for example, the respect for feelings during a Reception and Year 1 class 'circle discussion time.' These values are reflected in the behaviour and conduct of the staff.
9. Pupils are beginning to understand the local culture within the village and western Cumbria but have little opportunity to study and observe the wider cultural basis of British life, and the relationships and influences that have shaped it. Similarly, there is little opportunity for pupils to observe the wide diversity of cultures which is an integral part of modern day life. The geographically isolated nature of the school makes this more difficult for the staff and governors to address, but also makes it more important for children to understand the present nature of British culture and its interdependence with others across the world.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

The school provides a **satisfactory** quality of education based on a **sound** curriculum and **good** teaching. The care provided for the pupils is **very good** and the links with the community and other schools are **good**. Links with parents are **satisfactory**.

Teaching and learning

Teaching and learning are **good**; assessment is **unsatisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching is at least satisfactory and usually good in Years 4, 5 and 6.
- Good relationships with pupils and high expectations of good behaviour are features of most lessons.
- Pupils with special educational needs are often supported well but in some lessons, more able pupils are not challenged sufficiently.
- Assessment procedures are improving, but information is not used sufficiently well to ensure all pupils' needs are met. Assessment is good in Reception.

Commentary

10. Teaching and learning are good overall. The small amount of unsatisfactory teaching reported at the time of the previous inspection has been eliminated and there is more good teaching, particularly in Years 4 to 6.

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 17 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very poor
0	0	7	10	0	0	0

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

11. The quality of teaching and learning in Reception is good, especially when additional adult support is available. Planning is good and the teacher and other adults in the class have high expectations of good behaviour which are regularly reinforced and this helps children's personal development. Careful thought is given to meeting the needs of the reception children in the mixed age class. However, not enough opportunities are provided for children to make choices and to be independent in aspects of their learning. Good encouragement is given to help children co-operate and to listen to each other. Each lesson has a clear structure and good attention is given to making sure that the challenges given reflect children's development.
12. Teaching in Years 1 and 2 is satisfactory, and good in Years 3 to 6. Good teaching is most evident in English and in Years 4 to 6. The lack of detailed whole-school curricular plans and the lack of depth and breadth limit the effectiveness of teaching in subjects other than in English and mathematics. This is especially evident in aspects of science, geography and history. Good English teaching reflects careful planning and good attention to the needs of different ages in each class and, on occasions, to the range of abilities. At times, there is a tendency for teachers to talk for too long, and pupils can become restless. Learning in mathematics is aided by the expectation that pupils will complete large volumes of work. It is also helped by clear explanations, but not enough use is made of equipment to aid learning. In science, demonstrations and references to the local area help to make lessons interesting, but there are too few opportunities planned for pupils to develop and use their investigational skills. In all lessons, an important strength is the consistency with which teachers apply their high expectations of good behaviour. This helps concentration and ensures pupils' interest in their learning. In many satisfactory lessons, planning does not take sufficient account of how to challenge and extend the work of more able pupils. Insufficient use is made of pupils' English, mathematical and ICT skills in other subjects.
13. Pupils who have special educational needs receive good support and achieve well. This is because class teachers have developed a good understanding of the learning requirements of this group of pupils and ensure that work is often well related to targets set in individual education plans. In addition, when teaching assistants are present in lessons, they work well with teachers and offer extra support to ensure that the needs of individual pupils are met effectively.
14. Assessment procedures are satisfactory in English and mathematics, but information gained is not always used sufficiently to guide the planning of lessons or to set targets. Marking is completed and the marking of books with pupils during a lesson is particularly helpful in giving pupils an understanding of what they have done well and how they can improve. Some marking in the books is inaccurate and comments do not always give pupils sufficient praise or help them to know how to improve. Assessment in science is not systematic and does not reflect the need to assess carefully pupils' scientific skills. In other subjects, assessment is not yet consistent or systematic. Assessment in Reception is good. It is used well to check how children are doing in all areas of learning and to plan work that matches children's attainment and hence improve their achievement.

The curriculum

The school provides a **satisfactory** curriculum. There are **satisfactory** opportunities for enrichment. Accommodation is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- English and mathematics are well organised.
- There is a lack of balance and innovation in the curriculum and a lack of depth in some subjects.
- Provision for pupils with special educational needs is good.
- Provision for personal, social and health education (PSHE) is good.

- The outside area for Reception children is not developed sufficiently.

Commentary

15. The school provides an adequate curriculum for its pupils and satisfactory progress has been made in improving the curriculum, especially in ICT, which now meets requirements. However, there remains a lack of balance within the curriculum. Whilst statutory requirements are met, the time given to English and mathematics is relatively high and, as a result, the attention given to some other subjects is restricted. This lack of breadth and balance has a negative impact on pupils' progress in subjects such as geography and history. The school is committed to providing equal opportunities for all its pupils, but the needs of more able pupils are not always met.
16. The curricular organisation is most effective for children in Reception and for English and mathematics. The English curriculum provides pupils with a good range of activities. Planning ensures that the needs of the different age groups in each class are met. In science, the curriculum includes the development of good subject knowledge, but insufficient attention is given to developing pupils' investigative skills. The use of literacy, numeracy and ICT skills in other subjects is not sufficiently extensive. The curriculum lacks innovation and links between different subjects are limited, although some good links do occur between science and geography. In Years 1 and 2, pupils have also linked history and art and design by making pictures to illustrate the 'Great Fire of London.' The school provides a good curriculum for PSHE. This includes discussion times which cover a range of personal education issues. In addition, a detailed programme of taught lessons covers many areas related to PSHE. Although a school council has been established, its use to promote aspects of citizenship is underdeveloped. The science curriculum also makes a strong contribution to PSHE.
17. Provision for pupils with special educational needs is good. The school has now developed effective procedures for the early identification and monitoring of pupils with possible learning, emotional, physical or behavioural difficulties. As a result, pupils who are assessed as having special educational needs are provided with individual education plans which detail the support they require. These plans contain specific targets and feature suitably small steps in learning and are well implemented. Consequently, pupils with special educational needs make good progress and achieve well.
18. The range of extra-curricular activities, especially in sport, has improved since the last inspection. Good use is made of aspects of local art and culture, and local visits make the curriculum more interesting. However, few art and cultural aspects from the rest of Britain and the world are evident. The school has a good number of teachers, but the number of support staff is low. Although there is an area for outdoor activities for children in the Reception class, as the school recognises, this still needs further development to provide good opportunities to support all areas of learning.

Care, guidance and support

Provision for pupils' care, welfare and health and safety is **very good**. The support, advice and guidance pupils receive based on monitoring are **satisfactory**. Involvement of pupils through listening to their views is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Health and safety, including child protection, are very carefully monitored and controlled by the school.
- There are good induction arrangements in place for children as they enter the school and for the move to the secondary sector.

Commentary

19. Health and safety have considerably improved since the last inspection, formal risk assessments are now being undertaken and the governors are developing a programme of evaluation and review. Security is considerably improved and much appreciated by parents. Training has been undertaken by the responsible member of staff for health and safety during visits undertaken by the school. The school is now working towards the 'Healthy School Status' and this has increased the opportunities for pupils to learn from such agencies as the Police, Fire Brigade and Road Safety Agency about personal safety. Child protection is well understood by all adults who are vigilant and careful of pupils in the school. There are good partnerships with the relevant agencies in this respect.
20. Good induction methods ensure children entering the school into Reception are well supported. There are close relationships with the village nursery, which most pupils attend. Teachers visit them before they start and children in turn visit the school for playtime and a class session. In September, children begin by attending part-time but the majority soon move to full-time except when this would not be best for the child. Home visits are undertaken by the nursery and these records, as well as all other relevant information about each child, are passed by them to the school. The good links with the Catholic secondary school attended by most pupils ensures that they have been taught by secondary teachers, and undertaken sporting and practical activities with other members of staff. This, and visits to the school, ensure a smooth transition. Procedures for monitoring and supporting the academic progress and personal development of pupils with special educational needs are good. Information about pupils is used effectively to produce detailed individual education plans which cater for the needs of pupils well and are systematically reviewed at regular intervals.

Partnership with parents, other schools and the community

The school works **well** in partnership with other schools and the community, and has **satisfactory** links with parents.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The school has good and supportive links with the community and makes effective use of the locality.
- Good links with other schools enhance the curriculum and support pupils in their move to the secondary school.
- The school is a very open community where parents have confidence in its provision for their children; they can talk to the staff and the headteacher so that any problems are resolved swiftly and effectively.

Commentary

21. The school has productive and supportive relationships with the community, especially through the church, with the school undertaking sacramental preparation and regular celebrations. Senior citizens are regularly invited into the school for special events including Harvest Festival, Christmas and Easter, whilst pupils sing for residents in the local care home. The school makes considerable use of the locality to visit, for example, industry, local towns and museums to enhance the curriculum and broaden pupils' horizons.
22. The school works well with the local nursery to help identify children who may have special educational needs before they start school. The quality of information produced by the school to inform and consult parents about the nature of individual pupils' special educational needs and about their identification, assessment and progress is satisfactory. As part of the local family of schools, pupils benefit from shared resources and visitors to expand their learning. Interschool sports activities include netball, football, rounders, rugby and cross-country running. The sports co-ordinator's programme has added gymnastics and tennis to the areas

of sport from which pupils can benefit in partnership with others. The Catholic secondary school supports the school for mathematics and design and technology as well as in the 'Young Engineers' Competition' where pupils have been particularly successful.

23. Parents are happy with the provision made by the school for their children and have very good relationships with the staff and headteacher. They can talk to staff on a daily basis but know that, for serious discussions, it is best to make an appointment. This ensures that any worries or difficulties can be resolved quickly before they have a chance to develop into difficult situations.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Leadership and management of the school are **satisfactory**. The headteacher provides **satisfactory** leadership. Governance is **satisfactory**, but governors do not challenge and support the headteacher sufficiently. Statutory requirements are fully met.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The headteacher and staff work well as a team.
- The leadership and management of special educational needs are good.
- Governors' roles are not developed sufficiently.
- Financial management is very good.

Commentary

24. The headteacher and staff have worked together for a number of years and have developed into an effective and supportive team. They have a sound understanding of the strengths of the school and together they have ensured that many of the criticisms of the previous inspection have been addressed. They provide good role models to pupils and have ensured that the school has developed and maintained a caring ethos where pupils feel valued and are included in all aspects of school life. Improvements mean that leadership and management of Reception and subjects are satisfactory.
25. The school makes a number of checks on how well it is doing, but does not use the information about how pupils are doing in an effective manner. The information is not used to plan what children will learn next; this results in some lessons where children are given work that is too easy.
26. Provision for pupils with special educational needs is good. The special educational needs co-ordinator has a firm understanding of both the strengths of the school's provision and the areas which require further development. Effective systems have been developed to help in the early identification, assessment and monitoring of pupils with special educational needs. The school has developed good relationships with the parents of pupils with special educational needs, with the local nursery school and also with outside agencies.
27. Although governors have continued to ensure that the school meets all statutory requirements, the governing body has yet to develop fully its role in the school. There is still a need to increase the role of governors in supporting and challenging the headteacher more consistently. At present, the governing body has only a limited understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the curriculum, even though individual governors fulfil their roles well and keep in close contact with the school.

Financial information for the year April 2003 to March 2004

Income and expenditure (£)	
Total income	204,427
Total expenditure	215,007
Expenditure per pupil	2,766

Balances (£)	
Balance from previous year	26,002
Balance carried forward to the next year	15,422

28. Financial management and administration are very effective and the school uses extremely secure financial procedures to monitor income and expenditure. Educational priorities within school improvement planning are very effectively linked to the school's finances and this has helped to ensure that spending has been targeted towards those areas of greatest benefit to the curriculum and to pupils' learning. Overall, the principles of best value are applied very well and are central to the management and use of resources.

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

AREAS OF LEARNING IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

The provision in the Foundation Stage is **good**. Children enter school in the September of the school year in which they are five and usually become full-time within a few weeks. Attainment of children joining the school in Reception varies from year to year, but is usually well below average, although this year it was below average. Good teaching is helping to ensure that children learn well and make good progress. By the time they leave Reception, most will reach the standards expected, especially in English and mathematics. Lessons are well organised to ensure that Reception children receive a relevant curriculum even though they are taught in a mixed age class. A very good working partnership exists between the teacher and her support assistants. The good relationships established between adults and children and the good role models set by staff result in all children being fully included in lessons. Leadership of Reception is satisfactory, and management of English and mathematics good. Good assessment informs planning well and helps the children learn well. Outdoor accommodation requires development to help promote learning in all six areas of learning. Satisfactory improvement has been made since the previous inspection.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching is good and, as a result, the children are settled and happy.
- Relationships between children and adults are good.
- Children behave well and develop positive attitudes to learning.
- Children do not have enough opportunities to become independent.

Commentary

29. Reception children achieve well and all are on course to reach the expected levels in this area of development. The teacher, well supported by other adults, ensures that children quickly learn the correct way to behave. When required, they correct the children firmly but gently, supporting self-esteem. They work together well to provide a well-ordered and secure environment. Adults encourage the development of social skills in a variety of ways, such as asking children to put up their hands if they wish to say something. All staff work hard at promoting good relationships with children and, as a result, all children are happy and relaxed and benefit fully from the range of activities. Children's social skills develop well from working with older pupils, but there are not enough opportunities for them to develop independence and make choices.

COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Lessons promote the development of language and literacy well, especially speaking and listening.
- Teaching and learning are good overall.
- Attitudes to learning are good because of structured teaching and, as a result, achievement is good.

Commentary

30. The quality of teaching is good because the class teacher and teaching assistants work effectively as a team. Several children enter the school's Reception each year with under-developed speaking and listening skills and their overall attainment in English is often well below average. As a result, teaching often focuses on developing language skills and adults talk to children frequently and give them regular opportunities to talk to others in order to develop both their vocabulary and their confidence. This friendly and supportive atmosphere has encouraged children to develop very good attitudes towards learning.
31. Children's knowledge of letter sounds is extended well through stories and pictures. Books are used well to support learning and the knowledge of sounds and the acquisition of new words are encouraged. Children are taught to handle books with care and value them. The more able read simple texts and display developing early writing skills. Adults interact very effectively with children on an individual basis. It was evident during one observed lesson, about comparing different stories, that the teacher and teaching assistants were careful to involve all children in discussions, especially those who were less forthcoming. Children listened to each other well and were consequently full of ideas when they later acted out the story of a 'vet'. They were given good opportunities to work either in pairs or independently and were supported well by adults who kept them focused on the tasks they had to complete. As a result, they all made good progress in learning and achieved well. Nearly all children will meet the expected goals in developing English skills by the end of Reception.

MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision in mathematical development is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children's learning is promoted well by well-organised mathematical activities.

Commentary

32. Teaching of mathematics is good. As a result, children achieve well and nearly all will meet the expected goals by the time they start Year 1. Well-managed introductions to topics and effective adult support help children to order and count numbers. Children use mathematical language, such as 'more' or 'less' correctly and sort objects into sets or order them by size. They recognise a range of flat and solid shapes. The teacher has successfully introduced children to numbers 1 to 20, and the idea of 'one more' or 'one less'. Activities are well planned to reinforce key ideas.

KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE WORLD

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children achieve well in developing knowledge of the world around them.
- Good attention is given to the needs of Reception children.

Commentary

33. Two lessons covering aspects of science and geography were seen. Teaching is good and aided by the effective support of teaching assistants. Children's achievement is good overall. Topics are introduced to Reception and Year 1 children together and then specific tasks are planned for those in Reception. In geography, for instance, the topic of islands resulted in children understanding that islands vary in shape and are surrounded by water. In science,

children show interest in plants and seeds. They know features of animals and plants, and sort objects into living or non-living. They have an awareness that items in the home have changed over time, such as candles giving way to electric lights and describe some electrical appliances in the home. Children identify some features of different house types, such as semi-detached, and name features, such as doors and windows. They enjoy using the computer and control the computer mouse satisfactorily to create pictures using a paint program. By the time children leave Reception; nearly all will meet the expected goals in the range of topics covered.

PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision in physical development is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teachers make the most of the indoor and limited outdoor accommodation to enhance learning opportunities.
- Children display good attitudes to learning.

Commentary

34. There is an emphasis on building up aspects of physical development in most lessons and in outdoor play, even though the outside area is a limiting factor on learning. Children engage well in activities requiring hand/eye co-ordination when, for example, writing or drawing. They develop their manipulative skills by handling, for example, a computer mouse, scissors and construction equipment with increasing dexterity. Several children can use a fine grip when holding pencils. However, some of children's colouring shows that a few do not control their crayons well.
35. The quality of teaching is satisfactory and there is every indication that most children will attain the goals expected in physical development by the end of Reception. During a physical education session in the school hall, children moved freely and with confidence when performing a series of sequenced actions. Most enjoyed taking part in the lesson and many used movement to express feeling. Several children sat, stood and balanced effectively and moved around the hall in a 'movement circus' while showing awareness of space, themselves and other children.

CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT

36. It was not possible to make an overall judgement about provision or standards in children's creative development as no lessons were observed during the inspection. Children satisfactorily colour pictures using crayons and paints. The school's resources are satisfactory and cover all aspects of this area of learning.

SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 1 AND 2

ENGLISH

Provision in English is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The achievement of pupils in Years 3 to 6 is good.
- The quality of teaching is good overall, but varies between classes.
- Assessment information is not used consistently when planning work for pupils.
- The school library is not as stimulating as it might be.

Commentary

37. In Years 1 and 2, pupils make satisfactory progress and sound achievement in learning because of satisfactory teacher support and the use of effective teaching assistants. However, in Year 2 currently, a large majority still attain below average standards in reading, writing, and speaking and listening. In recent years, there has been a generally upward trend in pupils' attainment in reading and writing. However, because of small numbers, attainment varies from year to year. The achievement of a majority of older pupils, including those with special educational needs, is good and by Year 6, pupils attain standards similar to the national average. However, even though attitudes towards learning are good, work in lessons is not always matched to pupils' different ability levels and, as a result, the more able pupils are often unchallenged by the tasks they complete and this has an effect on their achievement.
38. By Year 2, most pupils talk about their work to adults but display a limited vocabulary and a lack of confidence when answering questions. During a year 2 literacy lesson, several pupils mispronounced simple common words and it became evident that many could not enter meaningfully into group discussions. Instead they just talked at each other and failed to listen to other members of the group. This contrasted with the way pupils in Year 6 expressed themselves confidently when discussing their favourite subjects or when explaining how to use a flow diagram to control a set of traffic lights in an ICT lesson. The most able pupils in this year group display well-developed speaking and listening skills and talk with assurance. The majority of pupils talk and listen confidently and develop ideas clearly. They have a good range of vocabulary which they use to good effect.
39. Even though the written work of Year 2 pupils often conveys meaning, it is seldom imaginative. Individual letters are usually clearly shaped and simple words are often spelt correctly. Even so, the use of punctuation in written work is limited to capital letters and full stops and even these are not always present or correct. However, by Year 6, pupils write in a thoughtful manner with a good understanding of composition. Higher-attaining pupils in this age group write in a way that captures and maintains the reader's interest and they vary their style to suit the particular form of composition. In all year groups, written work is usually well presented and marking is nearly always evident, although it is often descriptive or congratulatory and does not always help pupils to improve.
40. Whilst a majority of Year 2 pupils read simple texts with some accuracy and self-correct misread words, only a small number read fluently. Some lower-attaining pupils find difficulty reading without assistance and struggle to explain the meaning of stories. However, pupils in Year 6 use inferences and deduction to explain the meaning of stories. Higher-attaining pupils explain why stories are interesting and identify the crucial features of the characters.
41. Even though attainment in Year 6 is presently in line with the national average, the school has correctly identified the need to continue to improve standards in English, especially reading and speaking and listening, as a continued focus of whole-school improvement planning. The co-ordinator has acted on advice from outside agencies on how to best achieve this and teachers have been encouraged to attend courses on language development in order to increase their expertise. As a result, the quality of teaching of English is good, although there are some inconsistencies between year groups. This was reflected in the teaching observed during the inspection, which ranged from satisfactory to good. In a more successful lesson, the teacher linked work to the various abilities of pupils and used a range of strategies to ensure that pupils were given opportunities to practise and develop their vocabulary and their speaking and listening skills. In addition, pupils with learning difficulties were very effectively supported by a teaching assistant. As a result, all pupils achieved well in building up their knowledge and understanding of the use of prefixes in words.
42. The subject is led and managed in a satisfactory manner by the co-ordinator, who has a firm idea of the strengths and weaknesses of provision and of the need to further improve standards, especially in Years 1 and 2. Procedures to assess how well pupils are developing

are in place but are not yet used effectively or consistently to set targets when planning further work. This has a limiting effect on achievement. The school's resources are satisfactory overall and are used effectively to enhance learning. The library, however, is presently used as a classroom and is small and cramped. As a result, it is underused by pupils. The school is well aware that better use of the library is an area for future development.

Language and literacy across the curriculum

43. The promotion of language and literacy across the curriculum is satisfactory. Links with other subjects, such as ICT and design and technology, provide opportunities for pupils to write in different styles. In history, Year 6 pupils write descriptively and creatively about different aspects of 'The Olympic Games – Ancient and Modern'.

MATHEMATICS

Provision in mathematics is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils achieve well in Years 3 to 6 because teaching is good.
- Pupils usually show positive attitudes and produce large volumes of work; at times, attitudes are less positive.
- The most able pupils are not always challenged sufficiently.

Commentary

44. Results over the past five years indicate that pupils' progress by Years 2 and 6 is good and that their attainment is about average. Over recent years, there has been a strong upward trend in the results by Year 2. In 2004, compared with similar schools, Year 6 pupils achieved very well when their attainment in Year 2 was taken into account, and the few pupils in Year 2 attained high standards. Progress has been satisfactory since the previous inspection; pupils present their work much more neatly and satisfactory opportunities are available for pupils to apply their knowledge. This year, attainment is about average in Year 6, and this represents good achievement. In the infants, achievement is satisfactory but attainment is below average. The differences in attainment in Year 2 this year compared with that of last year reflect the small numbers involved and the wide variations in children's skills when they start school.
45. In most lessons, pupils behaved well and often showed good levels of interest. These positive attitudes generally aided learning, but some more able pupils in Year 2 in particular became bored because work was not demanding enough. Pupils respond well when activities are interesting and this aids learning. By Year 6, pupils have very secure number skills, including the calculation of various percentages of numbers. In Years 3 and 4, pupils successfully use a range of subtraction methods, but in Year 2, pupils' skills of addition and subtraction are below average.
46. Teaching is good overall, especially in Years 3 to 6. Teachers expect large amounts of work to be completed. During the best lessons, for instance in Years 5 and 6, assessment is used well to guide pupils. Although teachers plan carefully to meet the age range in each class, not enough thought is given to how to extend more able pupils' mathematical skills. Good support for pupils with special educational needs helps them to make similar progress to others in their class. In most cases, lessons tend to be longer than the recommended time. ICT is not used sufficiently to enhance learning in mathematics. Although improvements are being made in the use of assessment, not enough use is made of information gained to ensure all pupils are challenged. Some marking of pupils' work in their books is not accurate enough and does not help pupils understand what they need to do to improve. Mathematics is

satisfactorily led and managed, and the co-ordinator understands the subject's current strengths and weaknesses.

Mathematics across the curriculum

47. Mathematical skills are not used sufficiently across the curriculum. Too often, the reliance on worksheets and textbooks means that advantage is not taken of the many opportunities offered to apply mathematics in different situations. The lack of extensive investigational work in science and comparisons of data in geography restrict mathematical use. Good links were made between the use of co-ordinates in mathematics and grid references in geography.

SCIENCE

Provision in science is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils achieve well in Years 3 to 6.
- Pupils demonstrate good scientific knowledge, but their scientific skills are underdeveloped.
- Pupils enjoy science and often demonstrate very good behaviour and good attitudes.

Commentary

48. Results over the past five years indicate that pupils' progress by Year 6 is good and that their attainment is about average. No clear trend is evident in the school's results by Year 6. In 2004, compared with similar schools, Year 6 pupils achieved well when their attainment in Year 2 is taken into account. Improvement has been satisfactory since the previous inspection, although there is still too little emphasis on developing pupils' scientific skills. Current Year 6 pupils are achieving well and reaching average standards. In the infants, current pupils' achievement is satisfactory but attainment is below average. However, attainment by Year 2 varies from year to year because of the small numbers involved and the wide variations in children's skills when they start school.
49. In all lessons, pupils behaved very well and often showed good levels of interest. These positive attitudes aided learning. In a good lesson with Years 4, 5 and 6, pupils enjoyed learning about the way the Earth and moon move in relation to the sun, and why we always see the same side of the moon. The teacher made the lesson interesting by the effective use of ICT. In Year 1, pupils made steady progress in extending their knowledge of plants.
50. Teaching is satisfactory overall; it is not always demanding enough. Considerable use is made of worksheets and these do not always meet pupils' needs. Although examples occur when parts of lessons relate to developing scientific skills, older pupils, in particular, do not have sufficient opportunity to extend their skills, raise questions and plan detailed investigations. As a result, although examples of high attainment in pupils' knowledge are evident, this is lacking in pupils' investigative skills. Good support for pupils with special educational needs helps them make similar progress to others in their class, but challenge for more able pupils is not sufficient. The use of worksheets and limited experimental work mean that insufficient use is made of literacy and numeracy skills. Although improvements are being made in the use of assessment, not enough use is made of information gained to ensure all pupils are challenged. The assessment of pupils' scientific skills is not sufficiently well developed. Science is satisfactorily led and managed.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Older pupils achieve well.
- Pupils' attitudes towards the subject are very good.
- The quality of teaching is good overall, although occasionally lower ability pupils find the work too challenging.

Commentary

51. Standards of attainment in ICT are similar to those expected nationally in Year 6. By Year 6, most pupils, including those with special educational needs, make good progress in learning and achieve well because of recent improvements in resources. Pupils make satisfactory progress in Year 2 and also attain standards similar to those expected for their age. Resources for teaching ICT are satisfactory and are used effectively to aid learning. Even so, the school is still aware of the need to improve resources further if standards are to continue to rise.
52. There has been good improvement in provision since the last inspection, which criticised both provision and resourcing in ICT as well as the standards pupils attained, which were then in line with national expectations in Year 2 but below in Year 6. There has been a conscious decision by the school to focus on improving all aspects of the ICT curriculum since the last inspection. Funding has been used effectively to invest in a part-time specialist ICT teacher and to ensure pupils in all classes have access to a range of modern computers. The school has implemented a scheme of work based on national guidance. Teachers are now more confident when teaching ICT and the quality of teaching of older pupils is now good overall.
53. The school's use of national guidance as the basis for planning has also ensured that pupils have regular opportunities to build up their knowledge, skills and understanding of ICT in all year groups. During discussions, pupils talked about the subject enthusiastically and were keen and interested in all aspects of ICT. This was reflected in the quality of their written work and also in their attitudes to learning in lessons. Younger pupils follow a structured scheme of work in order to develop a range of skills to enable them to use ICT to enhance their learning in other subjects. Older pupils learn to develop their use of ICT for word-processing, spreadsheets, the Internet and data-handling as well as control technology.
54. Whilst standards and provision in ICT have improved since the last inspection, issues concerning the lack of use of assessment information when planning work for different ability groups of pupils are still current. This was evident in a well-taught lesson on control technology to a class containing pupils in Years 4, 5 and 6 when the level of challenge was set at one level and proved to be too difficult for some lower ability pupils. As a result, they made less progress in learning than the rest of the class and this affected their achievement.

Information and communication technology across the curriculum

55. The use of ICT across the curriculum is satisfactory. Computers are situated in all classrooms and pupils are given regular opportunities to use the Internet and to develop and use their ICT skills in other subjects, such as science, mathematics and English, and when looking for primary and secondary sources of information when studying aspects of history.

HUMANITIES

Geography

Provision in geography is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils progress well in developing their mapping skills and show positive attitudes.
- The curriculum lacks depth and breadth.
- Assessment still needs to be developed.

Commentary

56. In the areas of work seen, achievement is satisfactory and, by Years 2 and 6, standards are in line with those expected. Year 1 pupils have a sound understanding of using simple grid references, and those in Years 4, 5 and 6 achieve well and use four- and six-figure grid references with confidence. Three lessons were seen and teaching is satisfactory. Teaching is interesting when it draws on examples from the local area, such as exploring the former iron ore industry and how the changing environment needs to be cared for. Good use of examples and very clear instructions ensured pupils in Years 5 and 6 fully understood grid references. In all lessons, learning was aided by the pupils' good, and sometimes very good, attitudes and behaviour. Satisfactory improvement has been made since the previous inspection in ensuring the curriculum meets requirements. However, limited time is given to the subject, and there is a lack of depth in many topics. These restrictions also limit opportunities to give greater emphasis to the wider cultural issues that can be taught in geography and few examples are evident in the use of pupils' mathematical skills, for instance in comparing data from different locations in Britain or overseas. Assessment remains undeveloped and there are no records in place to track pupils' progress, although good assessment took place when pupils were using four- and six-figure grid references.

History

57. Only one **history** lesson was observed during the inspection. However, the subject was sampled through an examination of work, informal discussions with pupils and also a scrutiny of teachers' planning and resources. The available evidence indicates that the criticisms of the previous inspection regarding planning and the unsatisfactory progress of older pupils have been addressed to some extent. However, whilst in particular topics pupils in Year 6 achieve well and attain standards in line with national expectations, the breadth and range of work undertaken in history by pupils in all age groups is very limited. From a scrutiny of work, it appears that pupils in Years 5 and 6, for example, have only studied one topic, Ancient Greece, during the present school year. A similar lack of breadth of study is evident in the work of pupils in other year groups. Pupils do not have sufficient opportunities to build up their knowledge, skills and understanding of history through learning about a variety of different topics as they progress through the school.

CREATIVE, AESTHETIC, PRACTICAL AND PHYSICAL SUBJECTS

Art and design and Design and technology

58. It was not possible to observe any lessons in **art and design** or in **design and technology** so it is not possible to make overall judgements on the quality of provision or the quality of teaching in these subjects. The school's documentation and evidence of work on display show that the requirements of the National Curriculum in art and design are being met. In art and design, paint is often used well, for instance when creating symmetrical patterns or butterflies. Pupils' work is in line with the standard expected, including the making of papier mâché bowls and paper sculptures. Good use is made of local art, such as sculptures on a

nearby cycle track and in Whitehaven. However, displays and pupils' work do not celebrate the work of famous artists or art from a wide range of countries.

59. An analysis of available documentation confirmed that in design and technology, whilst planning has improved since the last inspection, there is still a lack of breadth to the curriculum. The work of older pupils is based mainly around designing, making and evaluating moving models. There is also evidence of the development of knowledge, skills and understanding about the design-and-make process in the work of younger pupils. However, the amount of work scrutinised from all classes was limited and reflected the limited opportunities available to pupils to learn about the different aspects of design and technology. Even so, resources for teaching design and technology are satisfactory and pupils' attitudes to the subject are good.

Music

60. No **music** lessons were observed during the inspection. It was therefore not possible to form a judgement about standards of attainment or the quality of provision. However, evidence from an examination of school planning, from the standard of singing in assembly and from discussions with teachers confirmed that the requirements of the National Curriculum are taught throughout the school and that music plays an effective part in school life. Resources for teaching the subject are satisfactory.

Physical education

61. **Physical education** was not a major focus during the inspection and it was only possible to observe one lesson. It is not possible, therefore, to make overall judgements on the quality of provision or the quality of teaching. The school's documentation shows that the requirements of the National Curriculum are being met, including regular opportunities for pupils to learn to swim. In the lesson observed, Year 1 pupils demonstrated the expected standard in linking ideas into a sequence and moving at different speeds. Pupils were attentive but some boys did not maintain good behaviour throughout. Since the last inspection, improvements have been made in providing some opportunities to participate in extra-curricular sport.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP

62. **Personal, social and health education and citizenship** (PSHCE) was not a major focus during the inspection. The school provides a good curriculum for PSHCE. 'Circle discussion time' takes place in classes, giving good opportunities for pupils to discuss relevant topics relating to their personal development. The oldest pupils in the juniors experience a detailed and wide-ranging programme of lessons covering many aspects of PSHCE. Sex education, healthy eating, smoking, alcohol and drug misuse are included in the science curriculum, as well as within PSHCE. The opportunities to develop citizenship through the development of the school council have not been fully exploited.

PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

Inspection judgement

Grade

The overall effectiveness of the school	4
How inclusive the school is	3
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	5
Attitudes	3
Behaviour, including the extent of exclusions	2
Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	3

The quality of education provided by the school	4
The quality of teaching	3
How well pupils learn	3
The quality of assessment	5
How well the curriculum meets pupils' needs	4
Enrichment of the curriculum, including out-of-school activities	4
Accommodation and resources	4
Pupils' care, welfare, health and safety	2
Support, advice and guidance for pupils	4
How well the school seeks and acts on pupils' views	4
The effectiveness of the school's links with parents	4
The quality of the school's links with the community	3
The school's links with other schools and colleges	3

The leadership and management of the school	4
The governance of the school	4
The leadership of the headteacher	4
The leadership of other key staff	4
The effectiveness of management	4

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