

# INSPECTION REPORT

## **ST JOSEPH'S CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL**

Wrightington

LEA area: Lancashire

Unique reference number: 119696

Headteacher: Mrs J Keating

Lead inspector: Mrs D Bell

Dates of inspection: 10<sup>th</sup> - 12<sup>th</sup> January 2005

Inspection number: 267835

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: 133  
School address: Mossy Lea Road  
Wrightington  
Wigan  
Lancashire  
Postcode: WN6 9RE  
Telephone number: (01257) 423 092  
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Appropriate authority: The governing body  
Name of chair of governors: Rev Fr K Mulhearn  
Date of previous inspection: June 1999

## **CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL**

With 133 pupils (70 boys and 63 girls), St Joseph's is smaller than most primary schools but the number on roll is rising. It is currently oversubscribed in two years and the Reception class is full. Pupils start school with levels of attainment above those expected for their age. The school serves a very wide geographical area covering Wigan and Lancashire, where socio-economic circumstances are good. Pupils are taught in five classes, four of which cater for two age groups. All but one pupil are of white British origin and there are no pupils for whom English is an additional language. The proportion of pupils in receipt of free school meals is below the national average, and the proportion of pupils with special educational needs is close to the national average. However, the proportion of pupils with statements of special educational need is nearly twice the national average. The proportion of pupils joining the school other than at the normal time is relatively high in Years 5 and 6. The school achieved the Basic Skills Quality Mark in 2003 and is working towards the National Healthy Schools Award. There have been several changes of staff since the last inspection, the most recent being a new headteacher, who took up her post in April 2004.

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
16413	Mrs D Bell	Lead inspector	English Information and communication technology Music Special educational needs
9798	Mrs V Ashworth	Lay inspector	
27677	Mrs D Davenport	Team inspector	Mathematics Art and design Design and technology Physical education
30935	Mrs K McArthur	Team inspector	Foundation Stage Science Geography History

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## **REPORT CONTENTS**

	Page
<b>PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT</b>	<b>4 - 5</b>
<b>PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE MAIN INSPECTION FINDINGS</b>	
<b>STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS</b>	<b>6 - 9</b>
Standards achieved in areas of learning and subjects	
Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities	
<b>QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL</b>	<b>9 - 14</b>
Teaching and learning	
The curriculum	
Care, guidance and support	
Partnership with parents, other schools and the community	
<b>LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT</b>	<b>14 - 15</b>
<b>PART C: THE QUALITY OF EDUCATION IN AREAS OF LEARNING AND SUBJECTS</b>	<b>16 - 26</b>
<b>AREAS OF LEARNING IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE</b>	
<b>SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 1 AND 2</b>	
<b>PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS</b>	<b>27</b>

## PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

### OVERALL EVALUATION

This is a **satisfactory** school that is improving under the very good leadership of its new headteacher. The quality of teaching is satisfactory. The pupils' very good attitudes and behaviour keep them focused on their learning, although their work is not always well enough matched to their individual learning needs. The school provides **satisfactory** value for money.

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

- The headteacher's very good leadership has set the right tone for school improvement.
- Standards in English, mathematics and science are above the national expectation but standards in information and communication technology (ICT) are below.
- Teaching and overall provision are good in the Foundation Stage but unsatisfactory in ICT throughout the school.
- Pupils' attitudes and behaviour, and the provision for their personal, spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, are very good.
- Relationships throughout the school are very good but child protection training is not up to date for all staff.
- Planning, assessment procedures and the use of assessment to inform planning are weak and the learning needs of different groups of pupils are not always met well enough.
- The roles of governors and co-ordinators are underdeveloped but the school has made a good start in addressing this issue.

Important issues such as assessment and its use in planning, and provision and standards in ICT, identified at the last inspection, have not been addressed well enough. Overall, improvement since that time is unsatisfactory. However, library provision is better and the new headteacher has put into place a series of appropriately strong measures to tackle the school's weaknesses and bring about sustainable improvement in all of its work.

### STANDARDS ACHIEVED

**Achievement is satisfactory** and standards in English, mathematics and science are above the national expectation for pupils in Years 2 and 6. Children start school with levels of attainment above those expected for their age. They make good progress in the Foundation Stage and are well on the way to exceeding the goals expected nationally for the end of the reception year in all six areas of learning. In 2004, the results of the national tests for pupils in Year 2 were very high in reading and mathematics and well above the national average in writing. When compared with similar schools, the reading and writing results were well above average and the mathematics results very high. Standards are above the national expectation for pupils currently in Year 2 and Year 6. The results of the national tests for pupils in Year 6 in 2004 are as follows:

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

*Key: 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.*

In both age groups, the overall trend in results is above the national trend. The test results show that, overall, the school adds good value to pupils' learning between Year 2 and Year 6. During the inspection, no differences were noted between the achievement of boys and girls. Pupils with special educational needs make satisfactory progress towards the targets in their individual education plans. However, higher attaining pupils do not always receive the additional challenges they need to perform to the best of their ability. The practice of having all pupils do the same work most of the time means that some lower attaining pupils do not receive the additional support they need either. With a firm steer from the headteacher, the school is working hard to address these issues. Keenly aware of the effect of the high levels of mobility in Year 6, it is working very hard to meet the targets set for 2005. Pupils behave very well. They have very good attitudes to school and to learning. **The provision for their personal, spiritual, moral and social education is very good.** Attendance is well above the national average and punctuality is very good.

## **QUALITY OF EDUCATION**

**The quality of education is satisfactory**, as is the quality of teaching, although teaching is good in the Foundation Stage. English and mathematics are taught satisfactorily. Literacy skills are promoted well in most other subjects, and numeracy skills are promoted satisfactorily. However, not enough is done to promote ICT skills or ICT as a learning tool in other subjects and the teaching of ICT is unsatisfactory. Until recently, the school did not have enough computers to allow pupils regular access to them and it still does not have a good enough scheme of work to support teaching and learning in ICT. Teachers' planning is not well enough focused on the learning needs of individuals or groups of pupils. This means that on occasions, learning is limited as higher attaining pupils mark time in lessons and lower attaining pupils struggle with work that is too hard for them. Although the targets for pupils with special educational needs are satisfactory overall, they do not always identify clearly enough the steps in learning the pupils need to take. Assessment procedures and their use in planning are very underdeveloped. The headteacher and staff have worked very hard on this, and manageable systems are now in place to track pupils' progress in English and mathematics. The curriculum, the care, support and guidance offered to pupils and the school's partnership with parents, other schools and the community are all satisfactory.

## **LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT**

**Leadership and management are satisfactory.** The headteacher provides very good leadership. She has very quickly established a clear direction for the work of the school along with the strategic planning and teamwork necessary to achieve the stated goals. Statutory requirements are met. Governors and key staff fulfil their roles satisfactorily overall, but co-ordinators' roles are still, on the whole, considerably underdeveloped. The headteacher has made a good start in improving them.

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

Parents and pupils have positive views of the school and the school highly values those views. Parents are particularly pleased with the way the new headteacher has introduced change gradually since her appointment, to the benefit of them and their children.

## **IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED**

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

- Improve assessment procedures in all subjects and make effective use of the information in planning and target setting, so that the pupils' different learning needs are fully met.
- Improve provision and standards in ICT.

- Further improve the co-ordinators' expertise in leading, managing and monitoring their subjects.
- Improve the governors' role in managing and monitoring all aspects of the school's work.
- Update child protection training for all staff and continue to press hard for improvements to the accommodation.

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

### **STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS**

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

Achievement is good in the Foundation Stage and satisfactory in the rest of the school. There are no differences between the achievement of boys and girls. Standards are above the national expectation in English, mathematics and science.

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

- Standards are above the national expectation in English, mathematics and science but they are below the national expectation in ICT.
- Achievement is good in the mixed Reception and Year 1 class because teachers' planning takes good account of the children's different levels of capability.
- Although achievement is satisfactory, more able pupils do not always do as well as they can because the lack of challenge in their work prevents them from doing so.
- The targets in the individual education plans for pupils with special educational needs are not always specific or measurable enough.

#### **Commentary**

1. Children start school in the Reception class with levels of attainment above those expected for their age. They make good progress and almost all are well on the way to exceeding the goals expected for the end of the Reception Year (the early learning goals) in all six areas of learning. They are very well prepared for their work in Year 1 and beyond.
2. Year groups are relatively small in this school and all comparisons must be treated with caution because one pupil is a significant percentage. Nevertheless, in 2004, the national test results for pupils in Year 2 were very high in reading and mathematics and well above the national average in writing.

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
reading	18.7 (15.8)	15.8 (15.7)
writing	17.1 (14.3)	14.6 (14.6)
mathematics	19.1 (17.4)	16.2 (16.3)

*There were 15 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year.*

3. When compared with similar schools, the reading and writing results were well above average and the mathematics results very high. The teacher assessments for science showed that standards were also very high in science, though fewer pupils reached the higher level in science than in the other subjects.
4. In English, the test results for pupils in Year 6 in 2004 were above the national average and better than those of similar schools. In mathematics and science, they were well above when compared with all schools and also when compared with pupils' prior attainment when they were in Year 2, showing that the school added good value between Year 2 and Year 6. The trend in the school's results is above the national

trend in both age groups, except in English in Year 6, where there has been an overall decline in standards since 2001. Quickly recognising this, the headteacher engaged the services of the local education authority's literacy consultant. As a result of the hard work and commitment of the English co-ordinator, this has led to improvements in planning that have yet to be fully implemented and monitored.

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
English	27.8 (28.1)	26.9 (26.8)
mathematics	28.9 (28.4)	27.0 (26.8)
science	30.0 (29.7)	28.5 (28.6)

*There were 16 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year*

5. In English, mathematics and science, the standards seen in the work of pupils currently in Year 2 and Year 6 are above the national expectation. Pupils' achievement is satisfactory in these and all other subjects inspected except for ICT. In this subject, standards are below the national expectation in Year 2 and Year 6 and achievement is unsatisfactory. Pupils use their literacy skills well and their mathematical skills satisfactorily in most other subjects. They do not make enough use of their ICT skills because they are not given enough opportunities to do so. Until recently, the school did not have enough computers to give pupils sufficient practice in doing so. Pupils' achievement is also hindered by the absence of a coherent scheme of work, and a lack of recognition that they bring considerable skill and expertise to school with them as a result of using computers at home.
6. Pupils' work shows that in English, all pupils are too often given the same work to do. This inhibits their learning and overall achievement. In reality, it means that higher attaining pupils complete more of the same work instead of doing work that presents greater challenge, and middle and less able pupils complete less and less of the same work without receiving the support that might help them to catch up. The school has started to set targets for English and mathematics, but they and the targets for pupils with special educational needs are not always sufficiently specific and measurable to track the progress of individual pupils well enough. Nevertheless, pupils with special educational needs make satisfactory progress towards their targets because of the good support they receive from the teaching assistants. Under the effective guidance of the headteacher, the outcomes of last year's statutory and optional tests were thoroughly analysed and manageable systems set up to record and track pupils' individual progress and identify those most in need of support. This information has yet to be used effectively in planning. Teachers have had some training on writing specific, measurable and achievable targets but they have some way to go to do this well.
7. In 2004, the school exceeded the target it set for Level 4 in English but missed its Level 4 target for mathematics. At the higher Level 5, it did better in mathematics than it did in English. Taken together, the small sizes of the year groups and the relatively high movement of pupils in and out of the school, especially in Years 5 and 6, mean that standards fluctuate considerably from year to year. Using the assessment information it now holds, and keenly aware of the changes in the year group caused by the relatively high levels of mobility, the school is working very hard to meet the targets set some time ago for 2005.

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

Pupils' attitudes and behaviour are very good, as is their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Attendance and punctuality are also very good.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils have very positive attitudes to school and to their work and behave very well.
- Relationships are very good throughout the school.
- Very good opportunities are provided for pupils to develop their personal qualities and they willingly take on a wide range of responsibilities.
- Personal, social and emotional development in the Foundation Stage is good.

### Commentary

8. The very good standards reported at the last inspection have been maintained. Attendance and punctuality are very good and the school has good systems in place to promote good attendance. Parents and carers are very supportive of the school's work in this area and ensure that pupils attend regularly and arrive at school on time.

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

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
School data	3.1	School data	0.0
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.*

9. Pupils like their school very much and enjoy the sense of belonging it gives to them. They come to school eager to learn and have very positive attitudes to learning. These contribute in great measure to their personal development and to their overall achievement. Pupils with special educational needs have equally good attitudes to learning and contribute well in lessons, ably supported by the teaching and special needs assistants. The provision for personal, social and emotional development is very good in the Foundation Stage. The children quickly settle into school routines and the very good emphasis placed on learning to share, co-operate and relate to others has a positive impact on their personal, social and emotional development. Relationships are very good throughout the school. Pupils work very well together and have a very good level of trust in the adults who work with them. This, together with the school's caring ethos, enables all pupils to feel personally valued and to gain in confidence and self-esteem. As a result, they become caring, mature and confident young people, well prepared for life beyond school. Behaviour in lessons and around school is very good. Parents and pupils are very pleased with the way in which pupils of all ages mix very well together. No oppressive behaviour was observed during the inspection and pupils stated confidently that should any occur, it would be dealt with quickly and effectively. There have been no exclusions.
10. The very strong Christian ethos and the very good opportunities to promote the pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development permeate all aspects of school life. The school warmly welcomes visitors and pupils are very polite, friendly and courteous towards them. Pupils' spiritual awareness is promoted very effectively through the times for prayer and reflection in assemblies, in class worship and in lessons, and pupils are successfully encouraged to consider the feelings, beliefs and customs of others. The school's very clear behaviour guidelines, the teachers' very high

expectations of pupils' conduct and the very good example set by all staff ensure that pupils know the difference between right and wrong. Pupils participate in many fund raising activities for local, national and international charities that develop their understanding of the need to help those less fortunate than themselves, as seen in their efforts to help those affected by the recent tsunami disaster, and their involvement with a local hospital and a children's hospice.

11. Pupils have many opportunities to manage the everyday jobs around school that very effectively develop their sense of social responsibility. From an early age, they willingly take on responsibility by performing small tasks in and around the classroom. These increase as they get older, for example, as they act as team leaders and playground buddies showing due care and consideration for others. Parents are very pleased with these initiatives and with the work of the school council, which they recognise help pupils to develop good levels of respect for each other and for adults. Pupils, too, speak enthusiastically about the school council and readily accept the opportunities it offers them to be fully involved in the life of the school. Councillors take their responsibilities very seriously, knowing that they represent other pupils. They know that their views are listened to, valued and acted upon whenever possible, and are proud of their achievements. Pupils develop their social and collaborative skills very well during and outside the normal school day through shared learning activities, after-school clubs and sporting activities. Cultural development is promoted well through subjects such as art and humanities and through carefully selected texts in literacy lessons. Visits and visitors to the school further extend pupils' knowledge and understanding of local, national and world cultures. The school works hard to foster in its pupils, an understanding of the range and diversity of cultures in Britain today.

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

The quality of education is satisfactory overall. This judgement applies to all aspects ie: teaching and learning, the curriculum, pupils' care, support and guidance, and the school's partnership with parents.

### **Teaching and learning**

The quality of teaching is satisfactory.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The quality of teaching, learning and assessment is good in the Foundation Stage.
- Teaching and learning are satisfactory in Years 1 to 6 but pupils' work is not always well enough matched to their different learning needs.
- Assessment procedures are underdeveloped and assessment information is not put to best use in planning to ensure pupils' best achievement.
- Teachers have high expectations of pupils' behaviour. Pupils respond very well to these and concentrate very well on their work.

### **Commentary**

#### ***Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 19 lessons***

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very poor
0	4	8	5	1	1	0

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

12. Teaching is good in the Foundation Stage. Planning is thorough and the teacher skilfully ensures that the Reception children cover all of the areas of learning well alongside the younger Year 1 pupils who follow the National Curriculum programmes of study laid down for their age. She uses the support staff effectively to bring this about, and they in turn contribute well to the children's learning. No time is wasted in this age group and the strong emphasis on learning through practical activities has a positive effect on the children's achievement, which is good.
13. Teaching is more variable in the rest of the school and overall, it has declined since the previous inspection, especially in the area of assessment, which was a key issue at that time. Teachers' subject knowledge is satisfactory and they use it effectively in lessons to engage pupils in discussion and to build on the pupils' responses. Teachers take good care to involve all pupils in learning during whole class sessions, including boys, a significant proportion of whom are reluctant to answer questions unless asked directly. In these sessions, teachers usually target their questioning well, adapting them to the different levels of capability in the class. However, this good practice, noted particularly in mathematics lessons and in whole class sessions during English lessons, does not always extend to planning activities that are matched to the pupils' different learning needs when they move to group work. Although overall, appropriate tasks were planned for different groups of pupils during the inspection, the analysis of pupils' work showed that too often all pupils have the same work to do and just do more or less of it depending on their level of capability. For example, in English, when learning about verbs, higher attaining pupils had long lists of verbs, while average attaining pupils had shorter lists and lower attaining pupils had only one or two verbs written down. This restricts the rate of progress of all of the pupils.
14. Although planning was mostly adequate in the lessons observed during the inspection, overall, it is weak. The school lacks rigorous assessment procedures. Even where data has been available and analysed, as in literacy and numeracy, little use has been made of the information to plan work that matches the pupils' different needs. However, since last term, and with effective guidance from the headteacher, class teachers have begun to use a nationally recognised system for recording the levels pupils reach in literacy and numeracy. The information has been used appropriately to identify pupils in need of support, and to set up various strategies to provide that support. Staff are working very hard to improve planning and assessment but the recently agreed systems have not been in place long enough to have the desired impact on pupils' achievement. With the exception of geography and history, where assessments against National Curriculum levels are made at the ends of units of work, there are no clear assessment procedures in other subjects.
15. Teachers' marking is very variable. Although the marking policy clearly states that it should identify strengths and weaknesses, this rarely happens. Marking consists mostly of ticks or questions that are not followed up. Where comments are made, they are usually supportive and encouraging but do not show pupils clearly how they might improve their work, and, in English and mathematics, make no reference to the targets set for the class. Pupils are not involved in assessing their work and therefore have a limited understanding of what they need to do to improve.
16. Well-deployed teaching assistants make a good contribution to the progress of pupils with special educational needs, helping them to make satisfactory and sometimes

good progress towards their targets. However, those targets do not always specifically identify the small steps the pupils need to take to catch up on their learning; nor do they provide the teacher with a means of measuring the pupils' rate of progress, however small it might be. Recognising this, the headteacher arranged training for staff, the first session of which took place last term, to improve the writing of targets.

17. Teachers have high expectations of pupils' behaviour and work rate and the very good relationships between teachers and pupils contribute in great measure to the overall ethos of the school. It is to the pupils' credit that they concentrate very well, work hard and remain on task even when they have to share equipment and wait for others to catch up, as happened in an ineffective ICT lesson. Here, valuable learning time was lost as pupils conducted a paper exercise without enough equipment instead of having hands-on experience at the computers to extend their thinking skills and encourage them to take some responsibility for their own learning. Although overall, a good range of homework, regularly given, consolidates work done in school, there are few opportunities for pupils to improve their extended writing skills through their homework.

### **The curriculum**

The school provides pupils with a **satisfactory** curriculum that meets statutory requirements. Opportunities for enrichment are also satisfactory. Staffing and other resources are satisfactory but overall, the accommodation is unsatisfactory.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The Foundation Stage curriculum is well planned to meet the children's specific needs at the start of their education.
- Pupils enjoy the enrichment activities provided through visits, visitors and outside specialists and experts.
- National guidance is now being used to plan a satisfactory curriculum but there is currently little written guidance to ensure that skills are taught in a systematic way in all subjects.
- Some classrooms are too small for the number of pupils and the use of one classroom as a corridor is disruptive to learning.

### **Commentary**

18. The school ensures that through its curricular provision all pupils have an adequately broad and balanced educational experience. Current planning ensures that there is sufficient range and depth of coverage in all subjects to promote at least satisfactory achievement, although in ICT, this is very recent. The statutory curriculum is effectively supplemented by the personal, social and health education programme, which includes citizenship, sex and relationships education, and teaching pupils about the dangers of drug misuse. Overall, however, curricular provision is not as good as was reported at the last inspection.
19. The Foundation Stage curriculum is well planned and skilfully linked activities in all areas of learning meet the children's learning needs well. However, comprehensive and coherent schemes of work that show how skills are to be systematically developed throughout the rest of the school are at an early stage of development in most subjects. Much of that development has been the result of the headteacher's perceptive analysis of strengths and weaknesses in the curriculum and the subsequent provision of release time for co-ordinators to begin to manage their subjects. The length of some lessons has been altered in the past two terms, and a comprehensive and forward-looking strategic plan clearly shows when each subject will

be a priority and therefore at what point the development and update of the schemes of work will take place.

20. The school has only recently begun to adopt national guidance and to adapt it to its needs. It is doing this well, and in accordance with its stated priorities. The schemes of work on which teachers' planning is currently based do not all provide enough guidance as to how skills are to be systematically developed throughout the school. Understandably, the first subjects to be improved using national guidance have been English and mathematics. This has resulted in common formats for planning for literacy and numeracy, which are due to be implemented this term. In other subjects, schemes of work are very variable. There is no scheme of work for ICT, although the nationally recommended units of work have now been checked and annotated with software to enable them to be taught at least satisfactorily. However, there is little guidance for teachers in this subject, to help them develop ICT skills in a systematic way, and there are no formal procedures for assessing or recording pupils' progress. The school is working on this. Although discussions have taken place, no subject yet shows clearly how the needs of different groups of pupils are to be met, or how literacy, numeracy or ICT skills will be promoted in other subjects. The headteacher has started action in all of these areas but the work is at an early stage of development. The innovations that have taken place so far have not yet been in place long enough for the school to evaluate their impact on pupils' achievement.
21. The school pays appropriate attention to promoting equality of opportunity but falls down somewhat in this area because of the inconsistencies in planning. For example, higher attaining pupils are not always given the additional challenge they need to enable them to achieve as well as they can. The provision for pupils with special educational needs is satisfactory. Statutory requirements are met and since taking over as the special educational needs co-ordinator, the headteacher has re-allocated support staff to ensure their best deployment. All pupils have individual education plans but the targets in them do not identify clearly enough the steps in learning required for the pupils to make the best possible progress.
22. Opportunities for enrichment are satisfactory and pupils readily and eagerly participate in what is offered to them. The curriculum is suitably enhanced by visits and visitors. Sports specialists provide coaching in football, cricket and gymnastics. The school participates in local sports, and there are several well attended after-school clubs. French and Spanish clubs, provided by an outside agency, are offered at lunchtimes. Visits to York, Chester and a Safari Park support curriculum studies, and older pupils enjoy their day at an outdoor pursuits centre.
23. Staffing and resources are adequate and support learning satisfactorily in all subjects. The school is bright and attractive, clean and well cared for. The outdoor area for the Reception class has been improved significantly since the last inspection and is used effectively to provide stimulating learning experiences for the children. The accommodation is unsatisfactory. One classroom is too small for the number of children and serves as a thoroughfare to the corridor leading to the library. Pupils in the class too often have to work squashed up together and there is little facility for the teacher to plan effective group work. The presentation of pupils' work suffers because they are constantly bumping into each other, and there is little room for effective practical activities such as art and design, design and technology, or when the pupils are using the laptops for ICT. Another classroom serves as a corridor to two other classes, resulting in continuous disruption for the pupils concerned, although pupils and staff cope with this well. The staffroom is too small and there is limited storage space. The library is well stocked but its position, well away from the classrooms, restricts its use as an effective, easily accessible learning tool. The school has tried

very hard to secure funding for improvements to classroom spaces but so far, it has been unsuccessful.

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

Care, welfare, health and safety are satisfactory. Pastoral care is good but the school does not provide enough academic support and guidance based on the monitoring of pupils' progress. Pupils are effectively involved in the life of the school. Their views are sought and valued.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The children are well cared for in the Foundation Stage and they are provided with good pastoral care and guidance throughout the school.
- The arrangements for health and safety are satisfactory and improving but child protection training is not up to date for all staff.
- The pupils are effectively involved in the life of the school and hold it in high regard.
- The school does not make sufficient use of assessment procedures to provide individual pupil support.

### **Commentary**

24. Pupils' pastoral care and guidance are good and the school satisfactorily ensures their health and safety. However, assessment information is not used well enough to guide pupils academically and the targets for pupils with special educational needs are not specific enough. This means the school does not have a clear picture of whether each pupil is achieving to the best of their capability. Under the guidance of its new headteacher, it has started to address these issues but the changes are very recent and have not yet had time to influence teaching and learning to any great degree. Because of the weaknesses in the use of assessment, a key issue at the last inspection, care, guidance and support, taken together, are not as good as they were at that time.
25. The satisfactory routines for dealing with accidents and health and safety issues in school and on visits out of school are well established. Child protection procedures are satisfactory and the headteacher, who is the designated person for child protection, has received recent updated training from the local authority. However, other members of staff have not had their training updated for some time, and only one member of staff is qualified to deliver first aid. This leaves the school in a vulnerable position should the headteacher or qualified first aider be absent.
26. Before and after school care is very well established and the school is pursuing the Healthy Schools' initiative. Relationships are very good throughout the school and pupils receive good support if they have any difficulties. The good links with external agencies ensure that pupils with statements of special educational needs receive the support and guidance laid down in their statements, and the school support staff assist them well in lessons.
27. Induction procedures are satisfactory. The parents are very satisfied with the school's provision and the children settle well into their new surroundings. The school council provides the pupils with an effective voice in the running of the school. The members readily identify areas for improvement and the school hopes to expand the areas of interest to include suggestions for improving teaching and learning. There are weekly

meetings and, although the pupils do not have overall control of this forum, they do record their own minutes and have a dedicated notice board. The school involves pupils in its life and work through, for example, the school council, and pupils know that their ideas and opinions are valued. However, they are not yet involved well enough in the assessment of their learning. Nevertheless, they and their parents feel that overall, they are very well supported, guided and cared for, and they are proud of their school.

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

The school's partnership with parents is satisfactory. The links with the parish, the community and other schools and colleges are good.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The parents have a high regard for the school.
- Liaison and transfer arrangements with the high school are very good.
- The school has good links with the parish, with a group of local primary schools, and with the local community.

### **Commentary**

28. Those parents who attended the parents' meeting, wrote letters, or returned the questionnaire indicated that that they were mainly happy with the school's provision. They felt that the school's partnership with them is a developing area where communication has sometimes been a problem. In judging it satisfactory, inspectors acknowledge that it is not as good as it was at the time of the last inspection. Nevertheless, parents consider their children to be happy and very well cared for. They agree that school is quick to respond if there is a problem and are pleased with the way the new headteacher is introducing change gradually where this is needed.
29. The quality of information to parents is satisfactory. The prospectus and the governors' annual report to parents now meet requirements. Parents receive good curriculum information from the class teacher each term. There are regular newsletters and appropriate letters home. The pupils' annual reports are satisfactory overall and give sufficient information on progress, although they do not always identify where or how pupils need to improve and so are limited in their usefulness to parents who want to help. The school is considering a more effective way of dealing with parents' evenings with a view to improving communication further. It seeks and values parents' views, although parents have not yet received information about the outcome of or any intended action as a result of the questionnaire they completed at the end of the summer term last year.
30. Parents are suitably involved with their children's learning at school and at home, and most help their children with the good range of homework that they receive. Parents voiced some concerns over inconsistencies in homework but inspectors found a good range of homework was given regularly, except for opportunities for pupils to practise their extended writing skills. Although most parents hear their children read at home and complete their reading records, some find it more difficult to become involved with the reading programme at home. The school supplements the guided reading sessions that take place in school with a suitably challenging range of books for pupils to read at home. A small number of parents voiced concerns that their children were not heard to read every day. Inspectors found that staff hear pupils read regularly, in

guided reading sessions within the literacy hour, and, where there are any difficulties they are heard more frequently, both individually and in small groups.

31. A good number of parent volunteers provide regular help in lessons, in the library, and on school trips, and their contributions are highly valued. Parents are well represented on the governing body. The parent, teachers and friends association is very successful and well supported, raising substantial funds, for which the school is very appreciative.
32. There are very good links with the main high school to which pupils transfer at the end of Year 6. The transition arrangements are very highly praised by parents. The school is also effectively involved in the local cluster of primary schools. It has close relationships with the parish, and the parish priest chairs the governing body and visits the school regularly. The school has also had some good involvement with the local specialist hospital, the local children's hospice and a range of sporting organisations. It is now ready to re-launch its website in an effort to raise its profile and keep parents better informed.

## **LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT**

The headteacher provides very good leadership. Management is satisfactory, as are the leadership of key staff and the governance of the school. Statutory requirements are met.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The headteacher has turned her very clear vision for the school into a rigorous, very well planned improvement programme that is fully supported by staff, governors and parents.
- The Foundation Stage is well led and managed. The deputy headteacher provides good support for this area of the school's work and for the headteacher in bringing about change.
- English and mathematics are led and managed satisfactorily. The leadership and management of other subjects, though developing well, are unsatisfactory.
- Governors are very supportive of the school but do not yet have a secure understanding of how to hold it to account for pupils' achievement.
- Management systems are satisfactory but many policies are out of date and several schemes of work are incomplete.
- The school's performance has until recently not been rigorously enough analysed and it does not have clear evidence of pupils' progress over time.

### **Commentary**

33. In the short time she has been in post, the headteacher has thoroughly analysed the strengths and weaknesses in the school and set a very clear educational direction for its work. This is evident in the detailed school improvement plan that shows clearly what the school hopes to achieve this year, and the longer term, strategic school development plan that sets out the stall for the next three years. Through constant discussion with all parties, she has won the support of pupils, parents and governors in her drive to update the work of the school and ensure that all pupils achieve as well as they can. The intended actions are clearly stated and accurately prioritised and so far have rightly focused on establishing assessment systems in literacy and numeracy, and increasing resources and developing a comprehensive program of work for ICT. Both of these areas still have some way to go but a good start has been made on

improving them. The headteacher's monitoring of teaching is perceptive. Strengths and weaknesses are clearly stated, advice is given to help teachers improve, and this is followed up with support where necessary.

34. The school rightly regards developing the role of the deputy headteacher and the subject co-ordinators as fundamental to the planned improvements. The headteacher has made a good start on this and overall, the leadership of key staff, that is, the deputy headteacher, and the literacy and numeracy co-ordinators, is satisfactory. The leadership and management of the Foundation Stage is good. All co-ordinators have had some non-contact time to analyse the strengths and weaknesses in their subjects. In the case of the deputy headteacher, this also includes additional time for management duties, during which she has provided valuable support for the headteacher in managing change throughout the school.
35. The clarity in the school improvement and development plans means that co-ordinators know when their areas of responsibility will be a focus for in-depth work. Under the sensitive guidance of the headteacher, and supported effectively by the deputy headteacher, the co-ordinators have worked very hard in the past two terms and have successfully begun that process. They have used their non-contact time effectively so far to draw up action plans to show what they intend to do. However, these action plans focus mostly on improving paperwork or identifying what additional resources are needed without showing the intended impact on pupils' achievement. Nevertheless, the carefully planned work that remains to be done on schemes of work and assessment procedures provides a secure basis for further improvement. Co-ordinators still have some way to go to develop the skills and expertise to monitor and evaluate their subjects properly. However, the English, mathematics, science and ICT co-ordinators are helping to provide greater support to other staff, for example, through informal interactions and discussions with them, and by working alongside them.
36. The leadership of special educational needs is satisfactory. Since taking over the role of special needs co-ordinator, the headteacher has ensured that class teachers keep the information on the pupils in files in their class, with the intention that they use this information in planning. In practice, this is not yet the case. However, using her own expertise, the headteacher has deployed the support staff well to help pupils whose need is greatest and she continues to work with staff to improve targets and planning overall.
37. Governance is satisfactory, as is the overall management of the school. Governors are very supportive of the school and the headteacher. They understand their roles and responsibilities but have not played a significant part in determining whether the school gains best value from its spending in terms of ensuring that pupils' achievement is as good as it could be. They have some way to go in, for example, monitoring performance data and taking action to adapt the curriculum to meet the needs of the pupils. Statutory requirements are met. However, several policies are not dated, or have not been re-visited for some time, and it is therefore not clear how the governors have been checking the work of the school. Governors value the process of performance management and recognise the benefits this has brought to the school. The areas in which the performance management objectives have been set are clearly related to the school's current priorities. They contribute effectively to the overall drive for school improvement.

38. Finances are managed satisfactorily. The new headteacher inherited a large budget surplus which, through consultation with governors and senior management, has been used wisely to upgrade the school buildings, provide improved outdoor facilities and resources for the Foundation Stage, and greatly improve the facilities for ICT. What is left is earmarked to support workforce reform, to complete the mains wiring necessary to make full use of all ICT equipment, and to contribute towards the purchase of interactive whiteboards for all classes.

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

Income and expenditure (£)	
Total income	367,008
Total expenditure	346,864
Expenditure per pupil	2,709

Balances (£)	
Balance from previous year	49,064
Balance carried forward to the next year	69,208

39. Children enter the Reception class with good levels of attainment on entry. Standards in Year 6 are above the national expectation and overall, pupils achieve satisfactorily. All of this is achieved within a broadly average expenditure per pupil. The school therefore provides satisfactory value for money.

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

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

The overall quality of provision in the Foundation Stage is **good**.

The first class is a mixed age class, where some younger Year 1 pupils are taught alongside the Reception age children. The mixed ages are managed very well due to the teacher's very good organisation. Well structured planning fully covers the wide range of activities, play and experiences laid down in the Foundation Stage curriculum for Reception children. The majority start school with levels of attainment that are above those expected for their age. They make good progress in all areas and achieve well due to the good teaching, curriculum, care and support they receive. The great majority are on course to exceed the standards expected for the end of Reception (the early learning goals) in all areas of learning.

Well-planned experiences are effectively linked across all areas of learning. Children with special educational needs are well supported and included in all activities so they too achieve well. Satisfactory induction procedures ensure parents are well informed and their children start school happily. The Foundation Stage is well led and managed. Staff have a good knowledge and understanding of how young children learn, and make learning fun, enjoyable and practical for them. They carefully assess and monitor children's progress and review their work in order to plan the next steps in learning. The accommodation is satisfactory. The outside area has been improved so the children can play and learn outside regularly. Good resources, used well in all activities, add to the good quality of provision for the youngest children in school. There has been good improvement since the previous inspection.

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

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

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

- Children are confident, happy and secure.
- The quality of teaching is good and the children achieve well.
- The children behave very well and participate eagerly in all activities.
- Relationships are very good and the children show genuine care and concern for others.

#### **Commentary**

40. The staff team work together closely and create a calm, warm and very caring atmosphere. They are very good role models for the children, all of whom feel confident, happy, secure and valued. The children behave very well. They happily follow the class routines without prompting when changing activities or tidying up. They wait their turn, readily share tools and equipment and relate very well to adults because they are valued and treated with warmth. From this, they develop genuine care and concern for others. When performing the *'Noisy Monkey'* story in the toy theatre, without being asked, several children offered to change with a child who didn't want to hold the hippopotamus puppet. Sensitive teaching encourages children to

think about wider issues, and they wrote simple prayers about how they could care for the world by picking up litter. The children act as monitors, gaining a sense of responsibility when they set out the class altar or deliver the register. The majority of children are already meeting the early learning goals in this area of learning.

## **COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY**

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

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Teaching is good, learning activities are well planned and the children achieve well.
- Children have a good knowledge of letters and sounds.
- Children listen well, have a good vocabulary and speak confidently.

### **Commentary**

41. Good teaching, lots of praise and encouragement and well-planned practical activities make learning fun. In addition, the accurate recording of the children's progress, and the day-to-day use of this in planning, ensures that the children achieve well. They quickly learn letters and sounds and move onto building three letters into words. They use pictures and letter sounds effectively to help them read new words. More able children read simple books confidently. '*The Noisy Monkey*' class story was read aloud with great enthusiasm, and all children particularly enjoyed the repeated phrases. The enthusiasm of the teacher made this great fun, and the children quickly learned that varying their voices and adding expression makes a story more exciting. Most children write their name clearly. They hold pencils correctly, form letters legibly and enjoy using plastic letters in the water tray to build words. More able children quickly move on to writing several sentences independently, but some could be challenged to write at greater length. Only a very small number of children still need to copy or write over the teacher's script. They have a good vocabulary and speak well in sentences, and listen well to what the staff and other pupils have to say. They understand their tasks and work independently or in groups when asked to do so. Several have already reached the early learning goals in this area of learning and the majority are well on course to exceed them by the end of their Reception Year.

## **MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT**

Provision in mathematical development is **good**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Good teaching ensures achievement is good.
- Good resources are used well to investigate mathematical concepts.
- Mathematical activities are carefully incorporated into all activities.

### **Commentary**

42. Good teaching provides activities that meet the learning needs of different groups of children effectively, enabling them to achieve well. All children count accurately to 10 and back, and many go on to 100 and beyond. Mathematics is incorporated seamlessly into class routines. For example, tidying up became a game when groups of children raced to get their rubbish into the bin before the others counted 20. The teacher makes daily registration into a mathematical game. The children know there should be 29 present, and count backwards to calculate how many are absent. Lower ability children were very vague in their estimates of how many models they picked up, but the more able were quite shrewd even when they had 25 or more. Children find it more challenging to count on from a given number but all persevere willingly because they have very good attitudes to learning and enjoy their tasks. Most children quickly learn to recognise and write numerals. Good displays and resources ensure children learn through practical investigations, although there are no numerals displayed to help children who are uncertain check how they are writing them. All children are well on course at least to meet the early learning goals before the end of their Reception Year.

## **KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE WORLD**

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

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Teaching is good and enables the children to achieve well.
- A varied range of interesting activities makes learning interesting and exciting.
- The children have good skills in using computers.
- Children benefit from working outside regularly since the outdoor learning area has been improved.

### **Commentary**

43. Good teaching provides a wide range of interesting, well-planned learning experiences that excite the children and broaden their good knowledge of the world around them. Most are well on course to exceed the expected standard by the end of their Reception Year. They become skilled on the computer through regular practice. They control the mouse well, change the lines and colours on the drawing program and enjoy the interactive games that help them to learn letters and numbers. Photographs of themselves as they grew from babies to toddlers to school-age children help them learn about time passing for history. The class story has helped them to learn about different climates and locations, and they enjoyed building homes for the animals in the sand tray. The children carefully examined natural objects with microscopes and discussed changes in the weather when outside. The teacher skilfully used the windy weather conditions to link science with design and technology when the class made kites. They thoroughly enjoyed running round in the strong winds trying out their kites to see how high they would fly.

## **PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT**

44. It is not possible to make an overall judgement on provision or teaching in this area, as no direct teaching was observed. However, a good range of well-planned activities develop the children's physical skills effectively. Their good attitudes and behaviour ensure they use equipment safely and confidently and children moved with good control, balance and co-ordination as they ran round outside flying their kites. The

children take responsibility for their clothes and dress themselves efficiently when preparing to go outside. They show good control of small equipment such as the computer mouse, models, counters and tools. All children use scissors safely, handle pencils and brushes competently, and managed to place the glue in the right spot on their jungle masks. They are well on the way at least to meet the early learning goals by the end of their Reception Year.

## **CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT**

45. It is not possible to make an overall judgement on provision in this area, as no direct teaching was observed. However, the classroom is well equipped with good quality materials for children to investigate and express their ideas. Their paintings, drawings, prints, models and collages are displayed well. This enhances the room and gives value to children's efforts, and makes a good contribution to their personal development and self-esteem. The role play area is currently equipped as a jungle for the '*Noisy Monkey*' story. The children love dressing up and acting as the different animals, and created their own 'jungles' using the small world toys in the sand tray. The walls of the outdoor area are used well as a house for role play and the well-planned activities successfully encourage imagination and language development. Children enjoy singing and use songs to help remember words and numbers. They use instruments from the music trolley to investigate sounds and rhythms. The majority are well on the way at least to meet the early learning goals.

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

### **ENGLISH**

Provision in English is **satisfactory**.

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

- Standards are above the national expectation in Year 2 and Year 6 in all aspects of English.
- Pupils achieve satisfactorily rather than well because teachers do not always plan well enough to meet their individual needs, leading to some underachievement, especially for the more able.
- Reading is taught well and carefully chosen texts successfully promote pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural understanding.
- Pupils with special educational needs receive good support in class but the targets in their individual education plans are too vague to enable their progress to be tracked well.
- Pupils want to learn. They behave very well and apply themselves enthusiastically to the tasks they are given.
- Pupils use their language and literacy skills well in most other subjects but the use of ICT to promote and consolidate literacy work is underdeveloped.

#### **Commentary**

46. Pupils have good speaking and listening skills. They speak confidently and articulately in front of the class and in assemblies, using a good range of vocabulary. They listen to others and consider their opinions carefully before reaching their own. Standards in reading are good. Pupils of all ages enjoy reading and they read well, following the good example set by their teachers. They enthusiastically discuss their favourite authors and what they like about the books they have read. Older pupils extend this to discuss the author's style and relate a good range of fiction and non-fiction to their own interests and experiences. Reading is taught well and pupils are highly motivated by the good range of books available in class and in the school library, which was set up and extensively stocked since the previous inspection. The

texts used in class are carefully chosen to reflect a variety of issues and cultures and this contributes well to the pupils' overall spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

47. Pupils put the knowledge they gain from reading to good use in their writing and standards are also above the national expectation in this aspect of English. Grammar, punctuation and spelling are mostly accurate, sentences are well constructed and pupils convey a good sense of audience and purpose in their writing. However, handwriting is very variable. The school has only recently introduced a new handwriting policy and currently, pupils in Years 1 and 2 still do not use a joined-up script. Too many pupils in Years 3 to 6 still print, too much work is still done in pencil, handwriting is not always neat and legible, and presentation is sometimes untidy. Pupils understand the importance of drafting and editing their work but rarely use ICT to help them do so. Computers are used occasionally to consolidate spelling and grammar but they are not used often enough to improve writing.
48. The quality of teaching is satisfactory. Pupils come to school eager to learn and most start school with good literacy skills. Throughout the school, they remain on task, behave and concentrate very well and all of this has a positive effect on their learning. However, teachers do not always provide writing activities that are suited to pupils' different stages of learning. This leads to some underachievement in writing. During the inspection, there were some good examples of different groups of pupils in Year 2 and Year 6 being given appropriately challenging work to do. However, pupils' books show that they mostly do the same work, just more or less of it depending on their capability. For example, more able pupils were somewhat restricted by the use of writing 'frames' when they were clearly capable of writing at length on their own, while less able pupils, using the same frames, wrote much less because they had run out of time or were struggling to find ideas to keep their writing going. Similar weaknesses were found in grammar work. Here, more able pupils had long lists of, for example, verbs or adjectives, while less able pupils had only one or two verbs or adjectives in their lists. Teachers' marking does not help pupils improve by showing them what they need to do. Where there are comments, they are not focused on what it is the pupil is expected to achieve. Pupils know that there are class targets but they are not always sure about what they need to do to reach them. These factors, taken together, result in pupils' overall achievement being only satisfactory by Year 6 when compared to their good levels of attainment on entry. Homework is used well to improve reading, spelling and grammar but it is rarely used to promote extended writing skills.
49. Well-briefed teaching assistants provide good support for lower attaining pupils and those with special educational needs. They know the pupils' targets and help them to cope with the work set, and they contribute well to the pupils' overall satisfactory achievement. However, the targets in the pupils' individual education plans do not always identify clearly enough the steps that the pupils need to take to improve their learning, and teachers do not use the targets explicitly in their planning. As a result, pupils' progress is not closely enough tracked. No significant differences were noted between the achievement of boys and girls, although it was noted that boys were more reluctant to answer in class. Teachers worked hard and in most instances, successfully encouraged them to do so.
50. Leadership and management are satisfactory. The co-ordinator's hard work and commitment are paying off in that the decline in standards noted since the last inspection is successfully being reversed. Nurtured by the drive and initiative of the headteacher and support from the local education authority's literacy consultant, the co-ordinator has helped staff to agree a common format for literacy planning that is securely based on national guidance. Assessment and its use in planning are still unsatisfactory but they are improving. The systems implemented last term allow each pupil's progress to be adequately tracked using the outcomes of test and assessment data. Teachers have already used the information satisfactorily to identify pupils in need of additional support and to set class targets. However, the school still has some way to go to use all of its assessment information effectively in planning so that work always meets the pupils' different levels of capability and ensures their best achievement. Nevertheless, it has made a good start on tackling the overall unsatisfactory improvement since the last inspection.

## Language and literacy across the curriculum

51. Pupils use their language and literacy skills well in other subjects. Teachers successfully promote this through, for example, providing many opportunities for speaking and listening in different lessons, and through written work in history, geography, religious education and personal, social, health and citizenship education. The pupils' use of writing skills in science, though satisfactory overall, is less well-developed because of the restricted ways presented to them to record scientific investigations, and extended writing skills are not often promoted through relevant homework. The use of ICT for drafting, editing and promoting extended writing skills is very underdeveloped.

## MATHEMATICS

Provision in mathematics is **satisfactory**.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Although standards are above the national expectation for pupils in Year 2 and Year 6, pupils' overall achievement is satisfactory.
- Pupils have very good attitudes to their work.
- Pupils use and apply their number skills well to practical work and to problem solving.
- There are too few opportunities to use ICT to support teaching and learning.
- Although the quality of teaching is satisfactory overall, assessment information is not used well enough in planning.

### Commentary

52. Pupils in Year 2 and Year 6 are working at standards above those expected nationally for their age. However, achievement throughout the school is only satisfactory in relation to the children's good standards on entry to Reception. This is because assessment information is not used well enough in teachers' planning to match activities to the specific needs of all pupils. As a result, a minority of pupils, usually higher attainers or pupils with special educational needs, do not achieve as well as they could because all are given the same work to do and simply do more or less of it.
53. The quality of teaching is satisfactory. Curricular planning follows national guidelines and good emphasis is placed on the teaching of basic number skills. Pupils enjoy mathematics and respond well to practical activities and to the quick fire mental calculations and number games at the beginning of lessons, which effectively sharpen their mental skills and reinforce learning. During these sessions, teachers effectively involve all pupils by adapting questions to suit their individual needs. This is not always the case in other parts of lessons, especially when there is no extra support for lower attaining pupils or those with special educational needs. Good opportunities are provided for pupils to apply their range of well developed calculation strategies to practical and problem solving activities, for example, when finding the area of compound shapes in Year 6. However, opportunities are missed for younger pupils to record the collection of data.
54. Where teaching is good, resources are well organised and the teachers' clear instructions and demonstrations ensure that pupils can clearly see and understand methods of calculation and recording. This was evident as Year 3 pupils compared the values of a range of two and three digit numbers. Time was managed well in this lesson and the teacher's high expectations of pupils' behaviour and work rate resulted

in good pace and productivity in learning. In an unsatisfactory lesson, planning did not build well enough on pupils' previous learning, instructions lacked clarity and were confusing, and questioning and follow up work provided little challenge for a significant number of pupils. Throughout the school, pupils show very good attitudes to learning and take pride in the presentation of their work. Most teachers use praise and encouragement well to reward pupils' efforts and to promote confidence and self-esteem. This has a positive impact on their learning. However, written marking does not help pupils to identify how well they have achieved or what they need to do to improve. A good range and amount of homework reinforces learning beyond the school day.

55. Leadership and management are satisfactory. The subject leader has a clear action plan which rightly identifies the need to raise pupils' achievement. However, assessment procedures, recently introduced by the new headteacher, are not yet rigorous enough. Although test and assessment results have been analysed, the information gathered is not used well enough to inform teachers' planning, to set targets or to track pupils' progress. Resources are satisfactory and classroom displays support learning well. However, ICT is not used well enough to support pupils' learning in mathematics. This is an area identified for development in the coming year. Overall improvement since the last inspection is unsatisfactory because standards are lower and pupils' achievement is not as good. However, under the new headteacher, the school is working hard to improve assessment procedures and continue the improvement in standards seen last year. It is well placed to do so.

### **Mathematics across the curriculum**

56. Pupils use and consolidate their mathematical skills satisfactorily in other subjects. For example, they make temperature graphs in geography, record and interpret data in science and use shape and measurement in art and design and design and technology.

### **SCIENCE**

Provision in science is **satisfactory**.

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

- Standards are above the national expectation and by Year 6, pupils know and use a good range of scientific vocabulary.
- Pupils behave well and show good attitudes to their learning. However, higher attaining pupils are not challenged enough by their work.
- The limited way in which assessment information is used is unsatisfactory.

#### **Commentary**

57. Standards in Year 2 and Year 6 are above the levels expected nationally for pupils' ages. Achievement is satisfactory throughout the school, including for pupils who have special educational needs. The pupils' very good attitudes and behaviour ensure that

they complete their work well. They use equipment safely and carry out investigations carefully.

58. All areas of the curriculum are fully covered. Most classes comprise two age groups and teachers' plans are based on a structured programme to ensure pupils do not repeat work. Teaching is satisfactory overall. Whole-class sessions are used well to recap on the main points of the lesson to ensure pupils are clear about what they have learnt. Pupils know and use scientific vocabulary well when reporting their results. They show good recall of what they have learned. For example, Year 6 pupils readily discussed their investigations of filtration and compared the results with their initial predictions using the terms '*filtration*', '*soluble*' and '*sieve*' competently. Year 2 pupils used their language skills well to discuss their investigation of different forces. They are beginning to understand that a test must be fair. Several pupils took their investigation of forces further by varying the height of the slope for the cars. By the end of the lesson, they had acquired a good knowledge of the difference between 'pushes' and 'pulls'.
59. Pupils generally present their work satisfactorily in brief accounts with a clear, labelled diagram. However, they do not report their findings in a variety of ways, for example, by using charts or ICT. Older pupils are not given enough opportunities to report their findings following scientific conventions with predictions and conclusions inferred from their results. A great deal of pupils' work is copied from texts, and this limits their ability to select reporting methods or use their full range of writing skills and styles. Pupils of all abilities are often given the same work to do. This does not present sufficient challenge to the more able pupils and is sometimes inappropriate for those with special needs. Teachers mark pupils' work regularly, but the marking does not always help pupils know how to improve their work. The use of assessment information is unsatisfactory. Assessment procedures are not used effectively enough to check and record pupils' progress, to set targets for them to aim for, or to help teachers plan work best matched to pupils' capabilities.
60. The leadership and management of science are satisfactory. Appropriate areas for improvement have been identified, such as assessment procedures, and some release time has been made available to develop the subject. There are enough suitable resources to support teaching and learning, thereby ensuring that all pupils have the materials necessary for their investigations. Improvement since the previous inspection is satisfactory.

## **INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY**

Provision in information and communication technology is **unsatisfactory**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Pupils' ICT skills are underdeveloped, achievement is unsatisfactory throughout the school and standards are below the national expectation in Year 2 and Year 6.
- The recent purchase of new equipment is improving access to ICT for all pupils but there is no coherent scheme of work to ensure their continuous progress throughout the school.
- The quality of teaching is unsatisfactory as is the quality of leadership and management.

### **Commentary**

61. Pupils do not achieve enough in ICT because their work is not sufficiently well planned. Until recently, the lack of equipment has severely limited the pupils' access to ICT, despite the

subject having been a key issue at the last inspection. There has been very little improvement since that time. Ceiling projectors were purchased but several years on only two have been connected and put into use. Despite several requests to the relevant authority, the school is still awaiting the connection of the others, finally promised for the near future. This is not a good use of resources.

62. Pupils observed using computers did so confidently and competently. They entered and saved data and used a variety of computer programs aimed at developing, for example, spelling and calculation skills. In a sampled lesson, pupils in Years 4 and 5 confidently entered data into a spreadsheet and used a formula to calculate averages. Pupils in Year 2 have a satisfactory understanding of how to program a floor robot to carry out a series of instructions, and a very small sample of older pupils' work from last year showed that this is extended in one class to programming a robot to draw letters on screen. Discussions with pupils showed very clearly that they had had very little experience of control technology, or of creating multimedia presentations or using word processing to enhance their work in other subjects. The analysis of pupils' workbooks and discussions with them show that the work they are given to do in ICT does not sufficiently extend their learning or take account of their ICT capability.
63. The quality of teaching is unsatisfactory. Teachers' own expertise is variable and there is little guidance to help them. Up until recently, the school used a set of commercial worksheets and most of the pupils' ICT learning, as seen in their books and folders, has consisted of paper exercises with little 'hands-on' experience at the computers. Just such an exercise was observed during the inspection as pupils in Years 4 and 5 spent far too long constructing database 'trees' on paper instead of on the computer. In this unsatisfactory lesson, the paper exercise and the shortage of scissors wasted valuable learning time as pupils waited for each other to catch up. It is to their credit that they waited patiently and behaved very well throughout. In addition, the pupils' lack of access to computers and the teacher's lack of understanding of what the pupils could already do placed severe restrictions on the development of their ICT skills. The purchase of wireless laptops towards the end of last term has improved the pupils' access to computers and has brought the ratio of computers to pupils to above that found nationally.
64. Leadership and management are unsatisfactory. The co-ordinator has had some opportunity to work alongside other teachers but the weaknesses referred to earlier have restricted the usefulness of this. He is currently working on a new scheme of work because there is no coherent scheme to guide teachers or to ensure the systematic, progressive acquisition of the skills, knowledge and understanding required by the National Curriculum. The adoption of national guidance ensures that statutory requirements are met and the units of work suggested in it have been annotated with the software programs the school feels are most likely to help teach each unit. However, no account is taken here, or in lessons, of the pupils' prior learning or capability, much of which has clearly been accumulated through using computers at home. There are no assessment procedures and no recording of pupils' progress.

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

65. The use of ICT across the curriculum is very underdeveloped. There is no systematic approach to this. However, during the inspection, pupils in Year 6 used a geography program confidently to research the geographical features around Coniston and discussions with pupils indicated that they had used the Internet to research different historical topics at school and at home. There remains some confusion in teachers' minds about the teaching of discrete ICT skills and the use of ICT in other subjects. The approach is to keep the two separate rather than to view one as consolidating the other. This is not helpful in promoting pupils' progress and overall achievement.

## **HUMANITIES**

66. Religious education was not inspected, as this is a voluntary aided school. **Geography** was sampled and no lessons were observed; therefore, no overall judgements are made about provision, including the quality of teaching, in geography. The evidence gathered from pupils' books and discussions with Year 6 pupils showed that standards are as expected nationally in Year 2 and above the national expectation in Year 6. The curriculum is covered using a nationally recognised scheme of work which forms the basis of teachers' planning. By Year 6, pupils use maps well and quickly and accurately locate various towns and counties in the British Isles. Their work shows they enjoy this subject, and their achievement is good. The use of ICT to explore the geographical features of the land around Coniston captured their imagination and led to high levels of involvement in learning. Occasionally, other subjects contribute to pupils' knowledge of the world, for example, when Year 2 read about weather conditions in Brazil in a literacy lesson. Assessment procedures are unsatisfactory, although promising work in this area is being trialled in one class. The co-ordinator is clear about how to improve the subject and has recently drawn up a helpful action plan to accomplish this. Overall, however, leadership and management are unsatisfactory because the systems do not yet focus sufficiently on improving achievement throughout the school.

## HISTORY

Provision in history is **satisfactory**.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils behave well and show good attitudes in their lessons.
- Good displays provide extra resources and information.
- All pupils are given the same work to do, and they are not encouraged to devise their own historical research or presentations.

## COMMENTARY

67. Two history lessons were observed during the inspection and teaching and learning were at least satisfactory in both. Evidence was also gathered from discussions with Year 6 pupils and from pupils' books. This showed that in Year 2 and Year 6, standards are in line with national expectations and have been satisfactorily maintained since the last inspection. Achievement is satisfactory. Assessment procedures and the use of assessment information to monitor progress and plan future work are unsatisfactory.
68. As they studied the life and work of Florence Nightingale, pupils in Year 2 listened attentively and displayed great sympathy for the conditions suffered by the wounded soldiers. They showed a highly developed sense of spiritual, moral, social and cultural issues. The teacher set suitable homework for the pupils to look for information on the TV news, giving them a sense of responsibility for their own learning. Good displays provide extra resources and information. Year 6 pupils make good comparisons between their lives and those of people in the past. A lesson on school in Ancient Greece began interestingly when the teacher made links to an important recent football match. This captured the attention of the class well, and pupils made good use of books and the Internet to research Greek school life. However, pupils are not yet

aware that some sources of historical information are more valid than others, or that some accounts are opinion whilst others sources are factual.

69. Throughout the school, all pupils are usually given the same work to do. They are not encouraged to devise their own historical research or presentations, or to learn in a variety of ways that bring the subject alive. Some out-of-school visits are related to history and enrich the curriculum, for example, to the Roman remains in Chester. Leadership and management are unsatisfactory as the co-ordinator has not yet had the opportunity to monitor standards or develop the curriculum and scheme of work.

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

Design and technology, art and design and music were sampled and not inspected in full; therefore, no overall judgements are made about provision, including the quality of teaching, or, except for art and design, on the standards attained. Two lessons were observed in art and design and one each in design and technology and music. None were observed in physical education. There are no assessment systems in place to record pupils' progress or achievement in any of the four subjects, and the leadership and management of them are unsatisfactory. However, the new headteacher has set out clear procedures in the school's improvement plan to develop the role of subject leaders and work has begun on this.

### **ART AND DESIGN**

70. Standards match the national expectation for pupils in Year 2 and Year 6 and achievement is satisfactory. Pupils have appropriate opportunities to experience painting, observational drawing and printing work, and to learn about the work and techniques of famous artists from different times and cultures. However, teachers' planning is not yet focused enough on the development of skills and there are no systems in place to track pupils' progress as they move through the school. The use of sketchbooks for pupils to collect and explore ideas or for teachers to assess pupils' work is limited and there is little guidance for teachers who are less confident teaching the subject. Teaching was satisfactory in the two lessons seen. Pupils enjoyed their work and showed good levels of concentration and perseverance on the tasks set. However, there were too few opportunities for them to evaluate their own work and that of others in order to improve.

### **Design and technology**

71. Teachers' planning is based on the nationally recommended scheme, but this has not yet been sufficiently adapted to meet the needs of the school and its pupils. However, this is an issue to be addressed in the near future, through staff development work, following the recent intensive training of the subject leader. The very limited amount of evidence available shows that pupils have a satisfactory understanding of the processes associated with designing, making and evaluating products and artefacts. Although there are no assessment procedures, pupils are given suitable opportunities to learn by evaluating their own and others' work.

### **Music**

72. There was very little evidence of planning for music in the teachers' planning files but the school's overall planning shows that national guidance is supplemented by two commercial

schemes that ensure statutory requirements are met. However, there is no guidance for teachers to ensure that pupils make continuous progress throughout the school. The school improvement plan indicates that the subject is a focus for next term. A suitable action plan focuses appropriately on improving provision and pupils' achievement in music, including re-starting peripatetic music provision and extending extra-curricular activities.

### **Physical education**

73. Teachers' timetables include weekly physical education lessons, with planning taken from a variety of sources. After-school clubs, sports competitions, visits from specialist coaches and an activity day away for Year 6 pupils further enhance provision in the subject and all pupils reach the required standard in swimming. However, there is no coherent scheme of work to ensure progression in skills across all aspects of physical education and no records of assessment to show how well pupils achieve. Under the leadership of the new headteacher, the school is planning to remedy these weaknesses in the coming year, as laid down in the school improvement plan.

### **PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP (PSHCE)**

74. This aspect of learning has been given appropriate priority and is being developed well by the deputy headteacher. Only one lesson was observed during the inspection and in this, Year 6 pupils were very effectively engaged in a mature discussion about the law in relation to smoking and the effect of smoking on health. The issues were dealt with sensitively and knowledgeably by the teacher. Each area of PSHCE has a term's focus and skills are built up progressively from Reception to Year 6. The school liaises with the school nurse with regard to sex and relationships education and the suggestion boxes in each class involve pupils well in raising issues of importance to them. The school's very good provision for spiritual, moral, social and cultural development contributes in great measure to the pupils' personal development. Elements of citizenship are covered well through initiatives such as the school council, involving pupils in topical issues and in raising money for various local, national and international charities. Pupils are prepared well for life beyond school.

## PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

### *Inspection judgement*

### *Grade*

<b>The overall effectiveness of the school</b>	<b>4</b>
How inclusive the school is	4
How the school's effectiveness has changed since its last inspection	5
Value for money provided by the school	4

<b>Overall standards achieved</b>	<b>3</b>
Pupils' achievement	4

<b>Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities (ethos)</b>	<b>2</b>
Attendance	2
Attitudes	2
Behaviour, including the extent of exclusions	2
Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2

<b>The quality of education provided by the school</b>	<b>4</b>
The quality of teaching	4
How well pupils learn	4
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	5
Pupils' care, welfare, health and safety	4
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

<b>The leadership and management of the school</b>	<b>4</b>
The governance of the school	4
The leadership of the headteacher	2
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).*