



# Storth CofE School

## Inspection Report

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**Unique Reference Number** 112265  
**Local Authority** Cumbria  
**Inspection number** 289227  
**Inspection date** 8 February 2007  
**Reporting inspector** John Heap

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

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<b>Type of school</b>	Primary	<b>School address</b>	Storth Road
<b>School category</b>	Voluntary controlled		Storth, Milnthorpe
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4-11		Cumbria, LA7 7JA
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed	<b>Telephone number</b>	01539 562517
<b>Number on roll (school)</b>	49	<b>Fax number</b>	01539 563217
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body	<b>Chair</b>	Mr Michael Webster
		<b>Headteacher</b>	Mrs Alison Charlesworth
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	1 September 2001		

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## **Introduction**

The inspection was carried out by one Additional Inspector.

## **Description of the school**

This is a small primary school with a White British population. It serves a village community with few signs of social or economic disadvantage. An average proportion of pupils have learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Attainment on entry to Reception varies year-on-year according to the make up of the small groups of children, but is broadly typical for four year olds. The school has Healthy School status.

## **Key for inspection grades**

Grade 1	Outstanding
Grade 2	Good
Grade 3	Satisfactory
Grade 4	Inadequate

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 2

This is a good school with outstanding features. It provides good value for money. Parents, pupils and the local village community are rightly proud of the school. Pupils make an excellent contribution to the school and community. As one parent put it, 'There is a strong sense of community in the school and I think this is reflected in the way children care for each other.'

Personal development is outstanding because the curriculum is very rich and the care for pupils is outstanding. Pupils thoroughly enjoy school and this is amply demonstrated by their excellent behaviour and attendance that is consistently above average. Pupils play safely and they rightly recognise the signs of unacceptable behaviour and how to deal with it. Pupils say that they know who to turn to if they have a problem. They have an exemplary understanding of the benefits of leading a healthy and active lifestyle. This is very successfully promoted by the school's outdoor curriculum and the development of gardening skills.

Achievement is good and standards are above the national average. The school has moved forward well since the dip in performance in 2003. Standards by the end of Year 6 have been on an upward trend since that year. Children get a good start in the Foundation Stage (Reception) and enter Year 1 with standards that are typical for their age. Standards are average by the end of Year 2 and pupils make satisfactory progress. Teaching and learning are good but are strongest in the Foundation Stage and Years 3 to 6 where teachers plan extensive opportunities for pupils to use their skills, knowledge and understanding across all subjects. This is less effective in Years 1 and 2 where teaching is satisfactory. The development of pupils' basic skills is adequate but teachers do not plan enough opportunities for pupils to practise these skills in subjects such as history or geography.

The enrichment of the curriculum is superb, with extensive use and development of the school's outdoor environment, the broad use of the local area and the very varied provision for creative work. Moreover, the school rightly recognises its responsibilities in developing pupils' knowledge and understanding of life in a diverse society. These responsibilities are discharged very well in lessons and through the active link with a school in a culturally diverse area. As a result, pupils are well prepared for their future education and life in general.

Leadership and management are good. Self-evaluation is effective, with most judgements being accurate and good systems in place to check on performance and provision. The headteacher has a clear sense of purpose and this has led to an upward trend in academic achievement since 2003. The capacity to improve further is good.

### What the school should do to improve further

- Improve standards and achievement in Years 1 and 2.
- Improve teaching and learning in Years 1 and 2 by planning more opportunities for pupils to use and develop their literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology (ICT) skills across other subjects.

## **Achievement and standards**

### **Grade: 2**

Achievement is good and standards are above the national average. The small number of pupils in each year group means that a cautious view about data has to be taken. This is because each pupil is a high proportion of the class.

The school's data and inspection evidence show that children make strong progress in the Foundation Stage and reach the typical goals set for them. By the end of Year 2, standards are average and pupils make satisfactory progress. Standards are best in writing and mathematics and reflect the extra work that has been done to improve these subjects. Pupils in Year 6 make good progress and standards are above average. Attainment and progress are boosted by very good writing skills and the use and development of ICT skills throughout other areas of the curriculum. Trends over the last three years show that standards are improving in English, mathematics and science. The results in 2006 were not as good as the significantly above average results in 2005, but the 2006 group had a higher than usual proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. The proportion of Year 6 pupils who reach the higher Level 5 is increasing and in the 2006 national tests exceeded the national figure in English and matched it in mathematics. Girls do better than boys and this has led to improved provision for boys, particularly in motivating them to read and write. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are well supported and make good progress. Nevertheless, attainment and progress are not as high in Years 1 and 2. This is because these pupils do not have the same good opportunities to use and develop their literacy, numeracy and ICT skills in other subjects.

## **Personal development and well-being**

### **Grade: 1**

Pupils' personal development, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding. Pupils know the difference between right and wrong; they are polite and understand the good sense in being supportive and helpful. As a result, behaviour and attitudes to work and school are exemplary. Pupils say the school is a safe and secure place because relationships are very strong between pupils and with adults. Pupils benefit greatly from the school's calm, supportive and purposeful ethos. They make a full and important contribution to this superb atmosphere by willingly taking on a range of responsibilities, including providing support (playground buddies) for others and serving on the active school council.

Survey returns by parents and pupils show overwhelmingly that pupils thoroughly enjoy school and this is further emphasised by the consistently good attendance figures. Pupils are proud of the school's achievements and value the many academic and social opportunities that it gives them. These successes are reflected in awards, such as Healthy Schools and in the way that the local community supports school activities. As a result, pupils understand the benefits of diet and exercise and they have the means to grow their own produce through the partnership with the village

gardening club. Pupils are well prepared for their future because of their good academic skills and their exemplary attitudes to work and school.

## Quality of provision

### Teaching and learning

#### Grade: 2

The quality of teaching and learning is good and is strongest in the Foundation Stage and Years 3 to 6. In these classes, the teaching promotes good academic progress, excellent attitudes to work and strong basic skills. Typical features include:

- the effective setting of learning intentions and checking that they have successfully been met
- excellent classroom management that ensures there are few interruptions to learning and the development of concentration
- very good relationships to ensure that learning takes place in a happy and secure environment
- good questioning, which in the best lessons, promotes thinking and independence.

In Years 1 and 2, teaching and learning are satisfactory and pupils make steady progress. Basic skills are adequate and pupils develop a firm foundation for future learning, but they have too few opportunities to use these skills independently. In 'topic' books there are too many worksheets that limit, for example, the development of writing skills. Results in national tests and work in pupils' books show high levels of achievement, particularly in Year 6.

Marking is regular and gives pupils a clear picture of whether they have achieved the learning intention for the lesson. Teaching for pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is good and they progress well.

### Curriculum and other activities

#### Grade: 1

The outstanding curriculum plays an excellent part in promoting pupils' personal development. Exemplary use is made of people from outside the school to develop pupils' skills, particularly in French and music. Recent building improvements have significantly increased opportunities for learning; for example, the new library and music rooms and the conservatory area for Foundation Stage play. The Christian ethos of the school and activities with the community maximise pupils' interests and lead to practical ways of learning, for example, the very fruitful links with the Wildlife Trust and the Area of Natural Beauty group in creating a sensory garden. Pupils' knowledge and understanding of cultural diversity is promoted very effectively by very rich links with a school in Blackburn. An outstanding range of enrichment activities are much appreciated by pupils and their parents. Pupils have lots of opportunities to make very effective use of their speaking, reading, writing, number and ICT skills. This results in above average standards by the end of year 6 and prepares pupils very well for their next stage of education.

## **Care, guidance and support**

### **Grade: 2**

The care, guidance and support provided for pupils are good. Staff know the pupils and their families very well. Pupils appreciate the high level of personal and academic support they receive. As a result, they are confident that there is someone to approach if they are worried. Arrangements for safeguarding pupils are in place and procedures to ensure their health and safety are monitored regularly. Child protection and racial harassment procedures are robust. The school has good links with outside agencies to provide the extra support that some pupils need. Data about pupils' personal development is monitored well. Data on their academic progress is monitored well in years 5 and 6, and challenging learning targets are set, but pupils do not always fully understand what they need to do to achieve them.

## **Leadership and management**

### **Grade: 2**

Leadership and management are good. The headteacher has a strong vision for school development and this is shared by staff and governors. As a result, there have been good improvements in the tracking of pupils' achievements and the use of assessment information to increase the level of challenge for pupils. Governance is good. Governors are supportive, and are kept well informed by the headteacher. They take their monitoring responsibilities very seriously, particularly for health and safety and manage finances prudently. The headteacher is supported very well by specialist health and safety advice provided frequently. School improvement planning identifies the right priorities. Nevertheless, some measures of academic achievement are based mostly on outcomes in Years 2 and 6. These are used well to set challenging targets for many pupils, but the progress and achievement of some pupils in Key Stage 1 is not good enough.

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## Inspection judgements

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate	<b>School Overall</b>
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### Overall effectiveness

<b>How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?</b>	2
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2
The quality and standards in the Foundation Stage	2
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes

### Achievement and standards

<b>How well do learners achieve?</b>	2
The standards <sup>1</sup> reached by learners	2
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	2
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	2

### Personal development and well-being

<b>How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?</b>	1
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1
The behaviour of learners	1
The attendance of learners	2
How well learners enjoy their education	1
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	1
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	1
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	1
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	2

### The quality of provision

<b>How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?</b>	2
<b>How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?</b>	1
<b>How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?</b>	2

<sup>1</sup> Grade 1 - Exceptionally and consistently high; Grade 2 - Generally above average with none significantly below average; Grade 3 - Broadly average to below average; Grade 4 - Exceptionally low.

## Leadership and management

<b>How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?</b>	2
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	2
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets	2
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	3
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	2
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	2
Do procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements?	Yes
Does this school require special measures?	No
Does this school require a notice to improve?	No

## Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

Storth CofE School

Storth Road

Storth

Milnthorpe

Cumbria

LA7 7JA

8 February 2007

Dear Pupils

I really enjoyed being in your good school. I am most grateful for the warmth of your welcome, your courtesy and the help you provided. A special thank you is due to the many children who talked with me.

What I particularly liked about your school:

- the improvements in Year 6 national test results since 2003
- the good teaching and progress in Reception and Years 3 to 6
- your exemplary behaviour and attitudes to school and the very strong relationships you develop
- the hard work you all put in to make your school such a caring place to work
- the excellent contribution that you make to the life of your school and the wider community
- the excellent use of the outdoor areas, the links with the local community and further afield that make learning interesting, exciting and challenging for you
- the good leadership and management of the headteacher.

I have asked the teachers to help you do even better in your work in Years 1 and 2. I have also suggested that pupils in Years 1 and 2 have more opportunities to use their basic literacy, numeracy and ICT skills in other subjects, such as history or religious education. You can be a great help by always doing your best work and by using your skills whenever you can.

I wish you well and good luck for the future.

Yours sincerely

John Heap

Lead inspector