

## INSPECTION REPORT

### **LONGSANDS COMMUNITY PRIMARY SCHOOL**

Fulwood, Preston

LEA area: Lancashire

Unique reference number: 130261

Headteacher: Mr Paul Seagraves

Lead inspector: Mrs Margaret Lewis

Dates of inspection: 1<sup>st</sup> - 3<sup>rd</sup> March 2004

Inspection number: 256775

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:	Community
Age range of pupils:	4 - 11 years
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
Number on roll:	211
School address:	Longsands Lane Fulwood Preston
Postcode:	PR2 9PS
Telephone number:	01772 795676
Fax number:	
Appropriate authority:	The Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	Mrs S Hackett
Date of previous inspection:	April 1998

## **CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL**

The school is situated on the outskirts of Preston in Lancashire. It is about the same size as other primary schools having 211 pupils that it draws mostly from the new, surrounding, private housing estate. The school is very popular and oversubscribed. Movement of pupils in and out of the school at times other than the usual times of starting and leaving are about the norm. The majority of pupils are white, although there is a significant minority of pupils (about 15 per cent) who are mainly from Asian backgrounds. Bilingual pupils have good language skills in English and are fluent English speakers. Fewer than average pupils (13 per cent) have special educational needs (SEN). A much higher percentage of pupils than average have statements of SEN (3.3 per cent). Children's attainment on entry to school varies widely from year-to-year. However, the current reception pupils began school with skills that are average overall for their age. The school received a Schools' Achievement Award in 1999 and 2000.

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
22787	Mrs M Lewis	Lead inspector	The Foundation Stage Science Information and communication technology Religious education English as an additional language
11084	Mrs J Hughes	Lay inspector	
33228	Mrs C Groves	Team inspector	English History Geography
30078	Mr R Powell	Team inspector	Mathematics Art and design Design and technology Music Physical education Special educational needs

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## PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

### OVERALL EVALUATION

**This is a very good school with some outstanding features.** Under the very good leadership of the headteacher, the teaching and learning at all key stages is especially interesting and challenging, so that the school has a vibrant atmosphere, buzzing with animated discussions and active learning. Pupils' achieve very well and learn rapidly. Standards are high at the age of 11. Pupils have excellent attitudes to their work and their behaviour is exemplary. The school is managed very well and it provides very good value for money.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- Very good teaching enables pupils to reach very high standards, particularly in English, mathematics and science at the age of 11;
- The headteacher provides very strong leadership. He is fully committed to maintaining the high standards he sets for all aspects of the school;
- Key staff and governors perform their roles with dedication and enthusiasm;
- Pupils develop as mature, well rounded and confident individuals, who respect each other and know their own worth;
- The school provides well for all its differing pupils; boys, girls, the most able, those with SEN, those from a variety of ethnic backgrounds and those interested in the arts and sports;
- It provides rich learning experiences both within and outside lessons;
- Children get off to a flying start in the Foundation Stage and the strong and effective partnerships established with parents, the community and other schools continue and blossom throughout the school.

The school has improved significantly since the last inspection in 1998, when it had been open for two years and was much smaller. It has grown considerably in size and has dealt very well with all the issues identified for improvement at that time. It has made further improvements particularly in raising standards and the quality of teaching and learning.

### STANDARDS ACHIEVED

Results in National Curriculum tests at the end of Year 6, compared with:	all schools			similar schools
	2001	2002	2003	2003
English	A	A	A*	A
mathematics	A*	A*	A*	A*
science	A*	A	A*	A*

*Key: A\* - very high; A - well above average; B – above average; C – average; D – below average; E – well below average*

*Similar schools are those whose pupils attained similarly at the end of Year 2.*

**Pupils' achievement is very good.** They reach very high standards by the age of 11. The school has maintained consistently high and very high levels in test results in recent years. Results in English, mathematics and science in 2003, for pupils in Year 6 were in the top 5 per cent of the country when compared with those nationally and those in similar situations. Results in national tests for pupils in Year 2, were in the top 5 per cent in the country for writing, well above average in reading and above average in mathematics. Children in the Foundation Stage are on course to reach and exceed goals expected of them in all areas of learning by the time they begin in Year 1. Standards are above average in all subjects by the age of 11, except in music where no judgement could be made.

**Pupils' personal qualities, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, are very high.** Pupils' enthusiasm for school, in all its aspects, is first class and they have a thirst for learning. Behaviour, both in lessons and around the school is exemplary. Pupils get on very well with each other and the older are proud to take care of the youngest. The school provides excellent support and guidance for its pupils. Attendance levels are well above the average.

## **QUALITY OF EDUCATION**

**The school provides a very good quality of education for its pupils. Teaching is very good,** throughout the school. Teachers are very knowledgeable and confident across all curriculum subjects. It is of particularly high quality in mathematics where levels of expertise are very strong and some outstanding teaching occurs. Teachers devise interesting and challenging tasks, use very effective questioning and a wide range of resources. This makes learning exciting and pushes pupils to the limits of their thinking. Pupils are given good opportunity and responsibility to learn independently by finding out and researching for themselves. Pupils with SEN achieve equally as well as others because of the very good support they receive from all staff who work with them. The especially rich curriculum is very well planned and organised to meet the needs of all pupils, including those with special gifts and talents. A wealth of activities, both inside and outside the classroom, enrich pupils' learning.

## **LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT**

**The leadership and management of the school are very good.** The headteacher's leadership has a very positive impact on the quality of education provided, standards reached, and pupils' achievements. All aspects of the school are managed very well. Governance is good. Governors have a good understanding of the strengths of the school and show determination to maintain them.

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

Parents are very satisfied with the school and appreciate its work. Pupils have very positive views of the school. They enjoy and look forward to being there.

## **IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED**

This is a very effective school and there are no major improvements needed. However, two minor areas that the school may wish to consider improving are:

- Using the school development plan more systematically so it is of maximum use to the school and its governors to maintain the high standards to which the school is committed;
- Giving formal opportunities to pupils to be involved with the work and development of the school.

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

### **STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS**

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

Standards are very good throughout the school and pupils of all abilities and from all backgrounds achieve very well.

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

- Pupils reach particularly high standards in English, mathematics, and science at the age of 11;
- Overall, standards have improved since the time of the last inspection;
- Standards are above the expected level in information and communication technology (ICT), history, design and technology and physical education at the age of 11;
- Pupils in Year 2 reach above average standards in reading, writing and mathematics;
- Pupils with SEN achieve as much as they can, because they are very effectively supported.

#### **Commentary**

1. Standards have risen considerably since the last inspection.
2. In 2003, in comparison with results nationally, results for pupils in Year 6 were outstanding in English, mathematics and science and were amongst the top 5 per cent of results nationally. The picture was similarly high in comparison with similar schools. For the last three years, results for this age group in mathematics have been consistently in the top 5 per cent in the country. This is a very impressive achievement. Results in English and science over those three years have never fallen below well above average. In 2003, results at Year 6 showed that the school adds excellent value to pupils' progress. It sets high targets for pupils in Year 6 and they achieve them. In Key Stage 1, results in 2003 were well above average in reading, above average in mathematics and high in writing where they were in the top 5 per cent of schools nationally. Over recent years, results have fluctuated only slightly from above average and well above average, apart from in 2002 when they dipped in all three subjects, due to the make up of that particular group of pupils. Teacher assessment in science in 2002 showed that pupils' attainment was well below that achieved nationally in several aspects of the science curriculum. Inspection findings show that results in 2003 are a fair reflection, although pupils in Year 2 are now achieving at the expected level in science. Children in the Foundation Stage do well and are likely to reach and the goals expected of them in most areas by the time they start in Year 1.

#### ***Standards in national tests at the end of Year 6 – average point scores in 2003***

Standards in:	School results	National results
English	30.4 (29.9)	26.8 (27.0)
mathematics	31.8 (30.3)	26.8 (26.7)
science	32.2 (30.9)	28.6 (28.3)

*There were 30 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year.*

**Standards in national tests at the end of Year 2 – average point scores in 2003**

Standards in:	School results	National results
reading	17.6 (15.6)	15.7 (15.8)
writing	17.4 (14.4)	14.6 (14.4)
mathematics	17.2 (15.5)	16.3 (16.5)

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

3. Improvements in standards, since the last inspection, have been brought about by several factors including:
  - team commitment by the current headteacher, staff and governors in promoting high standards;
  - very good quality of teaching and learning;
  - a very well planned curriculum with very good monitoring of subjects by subject co-ordinators;
  - excellent relationships and behaviour and an inspirational atmosphere;
  - strong support given by parents to pupils' learning.
4. The influence of the headteacher and senior managers' leadership is seen across the curriculum in the teaching and learning in specific subject areas. This is particularly the case in English, mathematics, science, ICT, the Foundation Stage and in the provision for pupils with SEN. Curriculum priorities are consistently monitored and pupils' progress and achievements assessed, tracked and rewarded. Two good examples are in ICT and science where the impact of action taken can be seen in the gains in pupils' learning in both subjects. The planned whole school approach taken to improve the provision for ICT across the school has been very successful. The school first had to reach the baseline targets in terms of computer ratio and now that this is exceeded, it is not complacent and is working towards closer links with two local high schools to develop and share innovative teaching with videoconference links. In science, investigative work was an area identified and the ensuing emphasis on practical work is having an increasing effect, particularly in the infants, where standards have risen since last year's tests.
5. Children get off to a flying start in the Foundation Stage (reception class). All children, including those who began with below average attainment for their ages in mathematics and English, are on course to meet the Early Learning Goals by the time they begin in Year 1. A significant minority will exceed the goals expected of them in all areas of learning except creative development, where children attain the levels expected of them for their ages.
6. Boys and girls, higher attaining and gifted and talented pupils, and those from minority ethnic groups achieve as well as they should because the school tracks all pupils individually as they move through the school and further boosts those in need with a variety of initiatives. Pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds do as well as other pupils and play an equal part in the life of the school.
7. Pupils with SEN are well supported in class and consequently they make very good progress. Accurate assessment of their needs and levels in English and mathematics ensures they are given work they can complete but which challenges them. Carefully written individual education plans (IEPs) accurately guide and direct teachers' lesson planning, enabling these pupils to be included fully in class activities. Teachers in class are aware of the targets included in their IEPs and provide the right materials from the school's well-equipped resources.

8. The school puts a strong emphasis on the breadth of the curriculum and foundation subjects make a significant contribution to providing very good opportunities for learning in literacy, numeracy, science and ICT. Innovative teaching and links between subjects enrich pupils' learning and improve their achievements. Consequently, pupils reach above average standards in art and design, design and technology, and history, at both key stages and in ICT and physical education at Key Stage 2. Pupils attain expected levels at Key Stage 1 in ICT and geography and in geography at Key Stage 2. Standards in religious education at both key stages, are as expected by the locally agreed syllabus. Insufficient evidence was available to make judgements on physical education at the end of Key Stage 1 and in music at both key stages.

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

Pupils maintain excellent attitudes to school and equally impressive standards of behaviour. Provision for pupils' personal, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural, development is very good. Attendance is well above average.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Pupils really try their best all day long;
- The strikingly purposeful learning environment stems from exemplary behaviour;
- Excellent relationships are the foundation of everything good in the school;
- Under the close guidance of staff, pupils develop impressive value systems.

### **Commentary**

9. Without doubt, pupils really like this school. Their enthusiasm is plain to see in their cheerful arrival each day and they are still keen for more by the time they meet up with the 'walking bus' at home time and meander down the road to after school club. The far higher than average attendance figures confirm that children wholeheartedly embrace school life and their parents confirm this. When questioned, pupils say only positive things about their school such as, 'We like the headteacher; he explains things rather than shouting and is funny....' Throughout the school day teachers can also be found explaining and demonstrating to pupils and this adds to the very busy, yet mostly light hearted, atmosphere. Pupils of all ages are exceptionally well focused and they produce significant volumes of high quality work during lessons. The oldest pupils even come out of booster classes at the end of a long day with broad grins, saying how much they have enjoyed the lesson and how useful it was.
10. Exemplary behaviour is the norm here. Teachers consistently develop pupils' curiosity and, because lessons are thought provoking, children are engrossed in what they are doing. Everyone is interested in what is happening in classrooms and around the school; they see no need to be silly or create distractions. Pupils are unfailingly polite and quickly make way in corridors or hold open doors. They always try to answer questions to the best of their ability and take delight in fulfilling any responsibilities. There have been no exclusions from school. Lunchtimes are pleasant, social occasions where the supervisors uphold the consistently high standards expected by teachers. No inappropriate behaviour was seen during the inspection and pupils are very sure that there is no problem with bullying in the school.
11. Relationships between all members of the school community are first class and are the reason why pupils state categorically that they know there is always someone to turn to if they have a problem. All adults show great interest in pupils' lives and the pupils recognise that their opinions are valued. They say that if they have a real problem or area for debate, they can always go straight to the headteacher. Indeed, during the inspection, many children were seen going in and out of his office, either to show him something noteworthy that they had achieved or to steal some extra time on his computer. This is a headteacher whose

door really is always open and the children value this. Unusually, he also undertakes the initial assessment of the youngest children when they first join the school. He does this so that there is an immediate, positive bond between them and this strategy is very successful.

12. Great efforts from all staff contribute to the very high quality of personal development seen in pupils as they move up the school. Corridors and classrooms reflect the beauty of the natural world and children are enveloped within a seductively uplifting learning environment. Wonderfully displayed work catches the eye at every turn and yet pupils are not allowed to take anything for granted. For example, children in reception sing a delightful song at the end of the day, confirming 'We have had a happy day!' Similarly, in the weekly celebration assembly, along with the usual plaudits, the whole school sings a 'Well done' song to congratulate their peers, which is a real 'goose bump' moment for invited parents.
  
13. That pupils develop social and moral values of the highest order is down to the sheer determination of all the staff. They have a relentless focus on nurturing their pupils so that everyone in school lives the 'TEAM' dream, 'Together Everyone Achieves More'. Small instances of pupils really taking care of each other while growing in personal stature are everyday occurrences. Children in reception delight in their half hour 'Tiny Tots' sessions run by different pairs of Year 6 pupils. The older pupils plan a cycle of activities, display the plans on the library notice board and run sessions at lunchtime that include song, dance, videos, games, stories and various design projects. The younger children love this time and the older pupils show great maturity in their approach to the task. The school is not complacent. It encourages pupils to think of those less fortunate and raises considerable sums for charities. Equally, pupils participate in local sports fixtures and festivals and learn more about what it means to be a useful part of a larger community. The mix of differing ethnic groups ensures that all pupils have a really firm understanding that the world is made up of a great diversity of cultures. In this school, older pupils go around showing the younger ones elements of great significance in their beliefs. Meticulous displays give space to many treasured artefacts and all pupils show rightful pride in their own cultural heritage. Pupils withdrawn from collective worship spend the time in meaningful reflection with their parents.

## Attendance

### *Attendance in the latest complete reporting year %*

Authorised absence	
School data	3.8
National data	5.4

Unauthorised absence	
School data	0.0
National data	0.4

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

Attendance rates at the school in the 2002/2003 academic year were well above the national median. Pupils' punctuality is very good.

## Exclusions

There have been no exclusions.

## QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

The quality of education provided by the school is very good. Teaching, the assessment of pupils' progress and the quality of the curriculum are all very good. Pupils are very well cared for, guided and supported which helps them mature into well rounded individuals. There are very strong links with parents, the community and other schools.

### Teaching and learning

The quality of teaching and learning is very good throughout the school. Teachers make very good use of assessment to ensure pupils move on and learn rapidly. Consequently, pupils of all abilities achieve very well and reach high standards by the age of 11. There is inspired teaching in almost every class in the school. Teaching has improved since the last inspection when it was judged as good.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teachers are very confident and have strong knowledge and expertise across curriculum subjects;
- Lessons are planned and structured very thoroughly to meet the needs of all pupils;
- Staff have excellent relationships with pupils, encouraging, motivating them to do their best;
- Pupils are challenged very effectively and as a result, they achieve well and make rapid progress;
- High quality support is given by teaching assistants and to those with SEN.

### Commentary

#### Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 30 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
1 (3)	14 (47)	12 (40)	3 (10)	0 (0)	0 (0)	0 (0)

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

- One of the main strengths of the school is the quality of its teachers. Pupils learn quickly and achieve very well because of the very good teaching that they receive. Teachers are very knowledgeable and have high levels of expertise in all National Curriculum subjects. This is a significant improvement since the last inspection, when teachers were said to lack confidence and subject knowledge in some areas. Now all teachers play a significant part in devising and monitoring the curriculum as main and shadowing subject co-ordinators. Teachers share their subject expertise, plan and structure lessons very well and manage cross-curricular links between lessons skilfully. Planning is exemplary. It is very detailed and makes good provision for pupils of all abilities in the class. Tasks and activities challenge pupils who rise to them and tackle them well. Teachers always have time for pupils, demonstrating, praising, discussing and answering their questions and queries effectively, without allowing this to detract from the brisk pace and clear objectives of their teaching. Teachers questioning is very good and questions are generally carefully designed to develop pupils' thinking skills so they arrive at answers for themselves. This helps to motivate the pupils well and increases their initiative for personal study.
- Relationships are excellent between pupils and staff. The younger pupils clearly enjoy their learning and exciting activities provided for them. For instance, pupils in a Year 2 ICT lesson used programmable floor robots, parking them in a garage which was then rotated to make the task harder. Older pupils speak very positively about their teachers and how they make learning more interesting. For example, in a Year 6 geography lesson, the pupils had to plan, research and make a presentation on how mountain environments across the world are similar to and different from each other. Teachers show flair in their teaching, use resources such as overhead projectors, video and digital cameras and microscopes. They consolidate pupils' learning in interesting ways. For instance, in a mathematics lesson in Year 4, pupils played a variety of well devised games to further their understanding and in a science lesson when pupils were studying habitats, they collected specimens from the school pond for identification. Teachers had good forethought and had arranged that creatures would be available to ensure the success of the lesson.
- Teachers deploy teaching assistants very well and assist them to give high quality support through good briefings and clear planning. The work of the teaching assistants has a very

significant impact on pupils' learning. Teachers and assistants work very well together to ensure that lessons run smoothly and that pupils achieve as much as they can. Teachers plan with assistants to ensure good levels of support for pupils with SEN, so that they gain as much as other pupils from lessons. Pupils with SEN are taught alongside their classmates and all children have full access to everything that the school offers. These pupils receive very good quality teaching, guided and directed by accurate IEPs. These identify specific learning targets, enabling teachers to plan accordingly to meet their needs. Teachers skilfully plan appropriate activities and provide effective support and encouragement. Some pupils receive extra support, working individually or as part of a group with teaching assistants. This ensures that they are well prepared for the next learning activity or have opportunities to reinforce previous learning.

17. Assessment procedures in English, mathematics and science are very good. Teachers have a good idea of what pupils can do and help them to set targets for themselves. Pupils are aware of what they need to do to improve their work. The accurate assessments of pupils' work enable them to make the progress of which they are capable because teachers use the information very well to plan work that stretches them. Assessment in the Foundation Stage is first rate and thorough. For instance, parents are kept exceedingly well informed each week with a mini report for the week of the work the children have done and how they have succeeded or what they need to practise. This is particularly helpful for working parents who cannot collect their children each day.
18. In other subjects, assessment is also well developed and this allows teachers to plan the next stages of work for all pupils' needs. The result is that work is challenging and the pace of learning is maintained. Expectations of pupils are high and there is an insistence in all lessons that they should strive for high standards in all their work.

### **The curriculum**

The school provides a very good curriculum, meeting all the statutory requirements. There are very good opportunities for enrichment. Accommodation and resources are very good.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Pupils benefit greatly from the rich curriculum and the very wide range of extra-curricular activities;
- Provision for pupils with SEN is very good.

### **Commentary**

19. There is a broad curriculum with a very good focus on literacy and numeracy. The school gives a strong emphasis on the development of knowledge, skills and understanding in other subjects. The curriculum meets the requirements of the National Curriculum and the locally agreed syllabus for religious education. This is helped by the very good staffing levels in the school which provide a very good match of teachers and support staff to ensure that the curriculum is taught effectively.
20. The school provides well for all its pupils including those who have SEN. As a result, these pupils make good progress. IEPs clearly identify the targeted areas of learning. These targets are realistic and build on pupils' prior learning. These plans also help to guide teaching assistants in how to support pupils' learning in the classroom and parents in how they can help their children at home. All pupils with SEN have access to the same curriculum as their peers. Girls and boys, higher attaining pupils and those from minority ethnic backgrounds are all valued and catered for very well by the school.
21. Improvement since the last inspection has been good. Detailed plans for the curriculum in each subject are in place. Teachers have a good overview of the whole curriculum. This allows links between subjects to be planned systematically, which makes the curriculum

more interesting for pupils. Teachers have worked hard and very effectively in this area. There is a very good match of teachers and support staff to ensure that the curriculum is taught effectively.

22. The school provides very good enrichment to the curriculum. This applies not only in lesson time but also after school and at lunchtimes. Teachers volunteer their time to provide further opportunities in a wide range of activities, such as weaving, cross-stitch, gardening, football, tag rugby, netball, art and computers. A high proportion of the pupils take advantage of these opportunities and this helps to cement the very good relationships in school and provides a very good basis for pupils' personal, social and health education (PSHE).
23. The school has an excellent ethos based on the belief of teamwork. This is supported in assemblies and PSHE lessons. For example, in a Year 1 lesson on relationships children were happy to share their thoughts on the consequences of their actions in school and home and how it could affect their relationships. Throughout the school, pupils co-operate effectively and share fairly. All pupils display a sensible and mature attitude to school and to others.

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

There is very good provision for pupils' care, welfare, health and safety. Staff provide excellent support, advice and guidance for children. There is good involvement of pupils in the life, work and development of the school through seeking, valuing and acting on their views.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Staff pay comprehensive attention to every aspect of pupils' well being;
- The headteacher and all adults are extremely knowledgeable about each child's individual situation;
- The informal systems to gauge pupils' opinions work well;
- Some pupils say they would welcome the opportunity to serve on a formal school council.

### **Commentary**

24. The school has a considerable wealth of experience to meet the needs of all pupils and it does this very well. Comprehensive systems are in place to ensure that any general safety issues are competently addressed. For example, there are very regular fire drills where the headteacher makes sure that differing scenarios, such as blocked entrances and lost children are addressed. Most importantly, the school realises the importance of practising at 'inconvenient' times. It does not flinch from lunchtime drills, for example. Crucially, the school is very responsive when new guidance is provided. The school secretary provides a first class service and makes sure amendments to current practice are speedily introduced and that the conscientious caretaker has the information he requires. Matters of child protection are given the utmost attention and staff receive regular training updates. More vulnerable children, such as those in public care, are provided with all the necessary support by the school.
25. Carefully considered systems make sure that all children are treated as individuals. Each child is provided with a comprehensive induction programme that has been designed to serve their particular needs. Often, staff will use their own personal knowledge of how something should work to amend the systems used in school and this personal touch works very well. Staff know the children inside out and consistently push them to give their very best. The process begins on day one in reception where the staff question unremittingly to squeeze the very best out of each child each day. Nothing is given away freely and children really have to work for their knowledge, but this is what makes them into the resourceful and self-confident pupils who leave at the end of Year 6. Pupils have a very good grasp of their

own targets and make sure they keep on exceeding them. They really do have to 'Reach for the Stars', as the reward system asks of them.

26. From their very first experiences in the school, pupils are encouraged to chat to the headteacher and staff about any issues or concerns they may have. They grow up in school knowing that their views are valued - that is crystal clear from the way staff constantly ask them 'What?' 'Why?' 'How?' about everything that happens. Teachers have a pretty clear idea of the things pupils like most about school and areas they would like to improve. However, pupils with these levels of maturity could easily cope with the democratic experiences and responsibilities of electing, running and serving on a formal school council, something that is not yet established in school.

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

The school maintains very good links with parents, the local community and other schools, colleges and early years' providers.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- A warm welcome, clear communication and a happy school are greatly valued by parents;
- The local community holds the school in high regard and contributes in many ways to pupils' personal development;
- Local and international school networks bring marked benefits to pupils;
- The school does not reflect its many strengths in its prospectus and governors' annual report to parents.

### **Commentary**

27. Parents are very happy that their children come to this school. They feel that teachers get to know their children quickly and that they can come into school with any problems. Regular newsletters keep them informed about school life and they receive curriculum information so that they can offer children support at home. The secretary is a very welcoming first contact for parents; she epitomizes the friendly nature of the school and quickly settles any problems. Some parents have raised concerns about the timing of the two parents' meetings during the school year and the headteacher is currently considering how to address this issue. The school ensures that parents of children with SEN are fully involved in reviewing the support their children receive. IEPs include targets for children that parents can help them achieve.
28. Detailed, evaluative progress reports to parents contain much useful information and include targets to help pupils to develop. Parents like the reports. Some say, 'Yes, that's my child'. Much time is taken by staff to make sure the reports accurately reflect the efforts children have made during the year. Surprisingly, the school does not take as much care when reporting to parents on its own hard work. The prospectus and particularly the governors' annual report to parents are bland documents that do little to celebrate the huge heart at the centre of this school and the noteworthy activities that take place here. This is definitely a missed opportunity to show what makes the school tick.

29. The local community is a cherished ally for the school. As well as encouraging business links with local enterprises, a premiership football club runs football coaching for pupils and children go on a wide variety of visits around the locality to expand their experiences. The school premises are used for lettings to community organisations, such as the Brownies and there are strong links with the local churches. Clergy from the local Church of England Longsands Mission regularly lead school assemblies. The school has also backed the local community campaign to oppose the erection of telephone masts nearby.
30. Creative liaison with other schools and colleges helps to ensure that pupils have access to a number of new experiences. Through the Comenius project, schools from France and Romania have visited Longsands and a joint environmental project on recycling was undertaken. Pupils are now used to contacting their friends abroad by Internet links and this has helped to improve their general ICT skills. Local nurseries agree that the positive links with the school help children to cope more effectively when they transfer into reception. Very effective curriculum links in areas such as mathematics, ICT and science bring an extra dimension to pupils' knowledge and understanding. For example, a science teacher from one of the local high schools ran a very successful forensic crime day for the pupils. She brought in evidence from a 'crime scene' and the pupils had to work out a solution; this involved taking a plaster cast of an incriminating trainer. This was fascinating stuff and a great application of science. Pupils are able to go on 'taster days' to local colleges and experience some aspects of secondary school life. The school also plays host to a weather station that belongs to one of the colleges. This is due to be linked up via the web shortly.

## **LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT**

Overall, the leadership of the headteacher and key staff is very good. Management is very effective and governance is good.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The staff is a very strong team;
- There is a strong and encouraging ethos that promotes an excellent atmosphere for learning;
- There is a fervent commitment by the staff and governors to maintain the success of the school;
- The school ensures that all pupils participate fully and achieve highly;
- The school development plan is not used sufficiently systematically to ensure maximum use;
- There are some minor omissions in the school prospectus and in the governors' annual report to parents.

### **Commentary**

31. The headteacher's leadership is having a very positive impact on standards and pupils' achievements. He has successfully created a school where relationships are of a high order. There is a very positive learning atmosphere evident throughout the school. The governors, staff and parents have great confidence in him. He has very successfully led the development and growth of the school since the last inspection. He has worked very effectively with staff to promote high standards and establish a rich and enjoyable curriculum that enables children to make important links in their learning of different subjects. He encourages staff to use their expertise, talents and enthusiasm to promote children's learning, achieve high standards and improve the quality of the curriculum. Very good leadership is having a positive impact on maintaining high standards in English, mathematics, science and ICT. Improvements since the last inspection have also taken place in design and technology, physical education, art and design, and ICT where children are producing work that is better than usually seen in most primary schools.

32. The governance of the school is good. There is a good committee structure and regular monthly meetings of the finance committee ensure good financial management. The governing body has a good understanding of the strengths of the school and is determined that these will be maintained. They quite rightly recognise and celebrate the school's achievements. However, as part of the school's development planning process, they need to ensure that they have greater involvement in setting out priorities for the years ahead and monitoring the effectiveness of the planned activities of the previous year. The school needs to ensure that all the required information is included in the governors' annual report to parents and the school prospectus.
33. Management of the school is very good. Some strong features are:
- pupils' progress in English, mathematics and science is closely monitored by the headteacher and key staff to ensure high achievement is maintained;
  - co-ordinators know their subjects well and are keen to promote developments;
  - the management of the Foundation Stage and of SEN are both very good;
  - performance management is thorough and is supporting further improvement;
  - approaches to financial management are very good. The principles of best value have been used very well and the school gives very good value for money.
34. The school development plan could be used more effectively to help ensure that high standards are maintained. It needs to become more useful to the school and its governors in their shared desire for continued success.

## Financial information

### *Financial information for the year April 2002 to March 2003*

Income and expenditure (£)	
Total income	454,883
Total expenditure	458,148
Expenditure per pupil	2,171

Balances (£)	
Balance from previous year	52,278
Balance carried forward to the next	-3,265

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

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

Provision is **very good overall** in the Foundation Stage.

This is an improved picture to that found at the last inspection. The reception class currently has 30 children who were admitted in September. When they join the reception class most children have attended a nursery. Good induction procedures are in place. The overall attainment on beginning in the reception class is broadly as expected for children of this age, although this varies from child to child and year to year. The co-ordinator, who is also the class teacher and assistant headteacher, leads and manages the key stage very well. The curriculum is well planned and assessment of children's progress is very thorough. Parents are kept well informed of their children's progress. Children in the Foundation Stage work towards the nationally agreed Early Learning Goals and the stepping stones to reach them. As the year progresses, those who are ready, work in more formal ways in supported and independent groups on National Curriculum based activities. No pupil is identified as having SEN in the Foundation Stage. A key strength of teaching is the consistently high expectations of the teacher and support staff and their organisation and management of the children.

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

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

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

- Relationships are excellent;
- Teaching is very good and children are very well motivated to learn;
- Children settle quickly into school and become familiar with the organisation of their days;
- They grow quickly in confidence, are friendly and respond well to the independence they are given.

#### **Commentary**

35. Children are eager to learn and adjust quickly to the regular routines and organisation of the days. They play a full part in school life almost from the beginning, following a good induction programme and staggered entry in the first few weeks. Teaching is very good and children quickly become confident in moving around the school with staff and take part in whole school assemblies, and visits out of school. They are constantly presented with different options and made to think when they ask questions. Children respond appropriately in various social situations and show increasing independence in their work. They work sensibly alongside their peers in the classroom, get ready independently for physical activities in the hall and when going outside. They become fully involved in their learning activities, develop excellent relationships with adults and each other and are proud to show their work to others. They achieve well and almost all attain the goals expected of them by the time they begin in Year 1.

## COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY

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

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teachers' expertise in early literacy is very good;
- A strong emphasis on developing early reading and writing skills;
- An interesting curriculum, well planned and tailored to meet children's needs leading well into the National Curriculum;
- Very good support from teaching assistants.

### Commentary

36. By the end of the reception year, all children reach the goals expected of them in this area and about a third of them are on course to well exceed these levels in reading, writing, talking and listening. Teaching is very good overall. Many children begin school with good skills and confidence in speaking, addressing others confidently and politely with phrases such as, 'May I have a turn?' Children learn to listen attentively as part of a large group and lower attainers are well supported by the teaching assistant to help them concentrate. Most children, including the lower attaining, discuss the 'big book' they look at with the teachers. They use their skills of deduction well from looking at the pictures and put forward their own ideas and reasons why they have arrived at them. The oldest reception children are able to hold their own and identify with the character 'Titch' in a discussion led by the teacher. Children develop their reading abilities well because they are given frequent opportunities to listen, respond and enjoy books and stories. They have a choice of colourful and enticing books which they take home everyday to share with their parents as well as frequently reading to staff. They are taught effectively through a systematic programme of teaching letter sounds and blends. These phonic skills are taught every day and as a result, most children know and recognise a wide range of sounds and letters and are able to successfully recognise and build up simple and more difficult words, such as 'chips, cheese and chair'. Teachers use good strategies, such as a 'feely bag', to keep children interested and recognise objects, such as 'chocolate' and 'chime bar' to teach the sound 'ch'. They are introduced to books in the reading scheme as they are ready and read stories in their reading books and use clues from the picture to help with the meaning. Most parents support their child's reading development well at home.
37. Although some children lack writing skills when they arrive, their skills are developed well and they reach the goals expected of them. The children are encouraged to develop their writing skills in a variety of formal and informal situations, such as writing in a sand tray and tracing and copying writing patterns and writing letters to post in envelopes. Most children develop the control of pencils and writing tools quickly. All pupils write their own first names confidently as well as other familiar words. The staff value all of the children's efforts and they become confident writers, as a result of the positive reinforcement and help that is given.

## **MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT**

Provision in mathematical development is **very good**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Children learn rapidly, as a result of very good teaching;
- Practical activities and resources are interesting;
- Classroom assistants give strong support.

### **Commentary**

38. Although when children begin school, many fall short of expectations for their ages in their mathematical skills, children achieve well and by the end of reception almost all attain the goals expected of them and a significant proportion exceed these. Teaching is very good. Children are given exciting and interesting practical activities to motivate them and develop their knowledge and understanding in number, shape, space and measures. For instance, hunting and matching coins hidden in sand, making patterns and shapes to form jungle spiders and snakes and sorting and using three-dimensional shapes. They learn to order and recognise numbers up to twenty and solve simple addition problems using fruit. During the inspection, the teacher introduced the children to the concept of subtraction in a variety of ways. Very effective questioning and resources linked to songs resulted in children developing a good understanding of the vocabulary of subtraction, such as 'less than', and 'take away', as the children were asked to count the numbers of bottles before and after some had disappeared and to use toy teddy bears to make number sentences. Support for children of different abilities is planned very well. Although children are given opportunities to work independently at some time in a mathematical session, designated groups rotate and all children benefit from strong adult support on a daily basis.

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

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

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Children achieve very well in their computer skills;
- A wide range of practical, hands-on experiences are provided.

### **Commentary**

39. This aspect of children's learning is taught and developed very well through topic work when the children know that they are 'finding out things'. Children make good progress and attain above the expectation for their ages overall. For instance, in one session children learned how to recognise wood, its properties and uses by exploring the outside and inside environment before constructing and modeling a forest, houses and totem poles from a selection of materials.

40. Children achieve well in developing their computer skills and by the time they start in Year 1, they exceed the goals expected of them. Most children have access to computers at home so they already have skills that staff can build upon when they begin in the reception class. Nearly all children can work a mouse, click accurately and draw objects to new spots. They follow and listen to instructions in programs carefully and support each other in their group when working on the computer. Computer programs are used particularly well for consolidating children's learning in reading and mathematical development.

## PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision in physical development is **good**.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Best use is made of the space in the hall to develop children's physical skills;
- The outdoor area is readily accessible and secure. The new soft play surface enables pupils to move with confidence and in safety.

### Commentary

41. Overall, good teaching in lessons helps children make good progress. All are likely to exceed expectations in this area by the end of the reception year. Their manipulative skills are developed well on a daily basis through the many opportunities they have in using construction materials and kits and a variety of cutting, pasting, drawing, painting and threading tools. Children are provided with a good range of opportunities to develop their physical skills, both indoors and out. The outdoor play area dedicated to reception children gives them space to play safely with wheeled toys, developing their control and awareness of others. Due to inclement weather, children were not observed using outside play equipment. Children have short daily access to the hall following assemblies for dance and exercise to music which they clearly enjoy. This provides a good sociable start to the day as they move with an awareness of others, control their movements in running, walking, jumping, hopping and skipping, as well as working together in pairs for balancing activities, such as 'Row, row, row your boat'. During the inspection, children made sound progress as they developed their skills of moving and stopping on a signal, balancing, throwing and catching beanbags in a games lesson.

## CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT

Provision in creative development is **good**.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children are very confident in this area;
- Activities to develop children's imaginative play are planned well.

### Commentary

42. In their creative development, pupils were observed to achieve well in an art lesson combined with design and technology. They showed good knowledge and confidence with drawing and using colour and good skills with cutting as they used scissors correctly to make pictures using patterns and folding card. The teaching in the lesson was good although the choice of art materials given to pupils was limited. Children develop good skills in planning and communicating their ideas for making models. They have good opportunities to use different materials and tools, such as junk materials and saws. Work on display included observational drawings and paintings in the style of Jackson Pollock and indicated that attainment in this area is as is expected for their ages when they leave the reception class. Children have sand and water available for their imaginative and acting out activities. During the inspection the focus was on 'Bob the Builder' and children used construction materials and tools for building successfully.

## SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 1 and 2

### ENGLISH

Provision in English is **very good**.

#### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards and achievement are high by the end of Year 6 and above average at Year 2;
- Teaching is always good or better;
- The subject is very well led and managed;
- There are very good opportunities provided for pupils to use their literacy skills across the subjects of the curriculum;
- Pupils with SEN are very well supported and make good progress.

#### Commentary

43. Standards in English are above average by the end of Year 2 and well above average by the end of Year 6. This represents very good improvement since the time of the previous inspection when attainment was judged to be at the national average. At both the ages of 7 and 11, a significant proportion of pupils reach the higher than expected Levels 3 and 5 respectively.
44. Literacy skills are very well taught and an emphasis is placed on the use of literacy across the curriculum. Teachers make good use of a wide range of carefully chosen texts in whole class and in group reading sessions. They provide good examples to pupils of how to read aloud with expression. Pupils in the juniors have a good understanding of how books are organised in the library and can find information readily. In geography, for example, pupils in Year 6 used a wide range of reference books and sources to gather and select information for a presentation. There is a limited range of suitable texts for infants and the library is not quite as accessible to them to use independently.
45. Standards in reading are above average in Year 2. Higher attaining pupils read confidently and independently and talk about the characters, plots and main events of the story. In Year 6, standards in reading are well above average. Most pupils read with confidence, accuracy and expression and demonstrate a very good understanding of texts. They are able to explain complex ideas, infer and make sensible deductions as they take turns to read from a script.
46. Pupils attain similarly high standards in writing; these are above average in Year 2 and well above average in Year 6. This owes much to the spark and pace of the lessons, throughout the school and the very good relationships within lessons, where pupils respect one another's views and contributions. A good example of this was seen in a Year 5 lesson on transforming direct speech into reported speech. The teacher maintained a very brisk pace throughout and questioned pupils constantly valuing and recognising their contributions to the lesson effectively. Teachers insist on high standards of presentation. By the time they are in the upper junior classes, handwriting is mostly joined and fluent. Pupils are encouraged to use their skills in ICT to present their work. Some of their poetry, story writing and research finds its way into small anthologies which are illustrated attractively to interest readers and catch their attention. For example, pupils in Year 4 have made storybooks and tourist guidebooks for other pupils to read during the regular reading sessions that take place daily throughout the school.
47. Standards in speaking and listening are well above average throughout the school. Most children have a good range of vocabulary when they start in Year 1, but the school takes this further and by the time they leave, pupils are confident in speaking to larger groups and

explaining themselves very clearly. Examples of this can be found in Years 1 and 2, where pupils will confidently describe their work to others and in Year 6, where pupils speak to the whole class when delivering their presentations in geography. Listening skills are developed particularly well; children are very attentive and wait their turn patiently during group discussions.

48. Pupils with SEN achieve well because of the high quality support they receive from the adults who work with them. The school makes very good use of the available programs for boosting pupils' progress, such as the early, additional and further literacy strategies to them to help these pupils. As a result, a significant number achieve broadly average results.
49. The quality of teaching is very good overall, across the school. Lessons are effectively planned, showing the teachers' secure knowledge of the literacy strategy. This very good teaching is closely tied to the high expectations of teachers. They challenge children to think, take pride in their work and give their best. The management and organisation of lessons is very good. Skilful questioning is used to assess and extend learning. As a result, pupils achieve well and make good and, at times, very good progress.
50. Leadership and management are very good. Good staff teamwork pays dividends here. All staff have good knowledge of the subject, the pupils achieve high standards and the co-ordinator understands what needs to be done to maintain these.

### **Language and literacy across the curriculum**

51. Very good opportunities are provided for all pupils, in all year groups, to develop their reading and writing skills in other subjects. Teachers encourage children to see the value of writing as a purposeful activity to communicate ideas, thoughts and imagination. For instance, in the Year 6 class, geography research prompted information writing on mountain ranges. The presentation of this research then allowed pupils to demonstrate their speaking and listening skills. Pupils have opportunities to write across a wide range of subjects and to use a variety of styles. For example, in science pupils write factual and structured reports of experiments they have done. In history, they are required to read and understand a range of source material and record their findings in pieces of analytical writing. An instance of this was when pupils in Year 4 wrote a factual account of the marriage of Henry VIII to Catherine of Aragon.

### **MATHEMATICS**

Provision in mathematics is **very good**.

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

- Performance in the national tests at the ages of 7 and 11 years is consistently above average and at times very high;
- Teaching is very good with high expectations;
- Pupils enjoy lessons and have very good attitudes to mathematics;
- All pupils achieve very well.

#### **Commentary**

52. In mathematics, pupils' performance in the national tests at the ages of 7 and 11 is very impressive. The result in 2003 for 11-year-olds placed Longsands in the top 5 per cent of all schools. Current inspection findings reflect these high results. This is an improvement from the last inspection.

53. The curriculum covers all aspects of the subject and ensures children use and apply their skills to solve problems. Children's achievement overall, is very good because of consistently high quality teaching. There are high expectations of all pupils. This was evident when pupils in Year 6 were working on calculating angles in a triangle, on a straight line or in a complete turn. All the children were able to work successfully, for example, when finding the number of degrees in the missing angle by adding the other two then subtracting that sub total from 180. Many pupils were able to do the calculations in their heads and, those that needed to, used efficient written methods to find the answer. The higher attaining pupils had more complex puzzles and solved them with enthusiasm.
54. All lessons are well planned and structured. The beginnings of lessons are used well to refine and sharpen children's mental calculation skills. Teaching strategies and activities are very well designed to deepen children's understanding or to give opportunities to practise and consolidate their skills. For example, in Year 5, a range of practical and written activities supported their work with metric weights. A strong feature of all lessons is the very good use teachers make of discussion and questioning. By prompting and probing, teachers encourage children to describe how they have worked things out and by assessing these responses, they give positive feedback and skilfully deal with misconceptions or errors.
55. Some outstanding practice takes place in mathematics.

In a numeracy lesson in Year 2, the children were counting in multiples of ten. The teacher then started to use money and count 10p coins. Then, the teacher set the class a special challenge; she was to drop 10p coins, one at a time, into a plastic dish. The pupils counted with her as each coin clinked into the pot 'ten...twenty...thirty...' The teacher then stopped and asked 'How many more will I need to make £1?' The teacher didn't take answers, instead she repeated the process a few more times, allowing the children to count on, in their heads, some using their fingers to stand for multiples of 10. Then she asked the class to close their eyes and listen to the coins. When she started it was possible to see the children's concentration, bodies still, heads nodding as they visualised the 'penny dropping!' The teacher demonstrated how to record this process;  $7 + 3 = 10$  became  $70 + 30 = 100$  and so on to prepare the children for their independent work. This excellent introduction enabled two groups of higher attaining pupils to work confidently and calculate correctly, in their heads, the missing number in a variety of number sentences; for example,  $230 + ? = 300$  or  $500 = ? + 440$ .

56. Mathematical vocabulary is used precisely, for example, 'zero', 'mass' and 'multiples'. Resources, both commercial and those designed and made by teachers, are used well in all lessons. Children's work is well presented and the marking tells pupils how well they have done and how they can improve their work. Careful and regular assessment by all teachers enables them to plan accurately the next steps for pupils.
57. Lower attaining pupils and those with SEN achieve very well in mathematics. This is because explanations and demonstrations are clear; the tasks set for children are appropriately designed; there is good support from teaching assistants and there are high expectations for all pupils.
58. Leadership of the subject is very good. The co-ordinator has strong knowledge and is very skilled in the subject. Her teaching in Year 6 ensures that children leave the school with high standards of achievement. She has established a very good curriculum plan, adapted from national guidance. The very good teaching and high achievement of all pupils reflect the commitment of the co-ordinator and the leadership of the school to developing excellence.

## Mathematics across the curriculum

59. This is a very notable and successful aspect of the school's work. Pupils are given good opportunities to use their mathematical knowledge and skills in other subjects. In science, children are often required to take and record measurements in a variety of ways and, in geography, they apply their knowledge and understanding of co-ordinates to identify places and positions on grids.

## SCIENCE

Provision in science is **very good** overall.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils achieve very well in the juniors;
- Teaching and learning is very good;
- Very good leadership and management ensures high standards are reached by the age of 11;
- Investigative science is well embedded into the curriculum and effective use of ICT brings science alive;
- Pupils' attitudes and enthusiasm are excellent;
- Not enough pupils achieve at a higher than average level in the infants.

### Commentary

60. Attainment for pupils in Year 6 is well above average. Every pupil is likely to reach at least the expected level and almost all the higher level. This trend of above average attainment by the end of the juniors is likely to continue, since nearly all pupils approaching the end of the juniors in Year 5 are already performing at the expected level of pupils aged 11. This judgement reflects the very high standards reached by Year 6 pupils in test results in 2003 when results were in the top 5 per cent of schools nationally. Standards have improved considerably for 11-year-olds since the last inspection, when they were judged to be average. This is due to several factors:
- the very well planned and wide ranging curriculum provided and carefully monitored under the leadership of an experienced co-ordinator;
  - teachers' good scientific expertise, probing questioning and the high expectations that they have of pupils;
  - the copious amounts of work that pupils record in science in the juniors;
  - the priority the school gives to investigative and practical science.
61. Teachers plan and resource science activities very well in Key Stage 2. They carefully outline the structure of lessons, which are often planned for a full afternoon session in the juniors and include a good balance of explanation, demonstration, practical activities and recording and reviewing. Teachers question pupils very effectively, probing and developing the use of high quality scientific language successfully. For instance, in a lesson on magnetism for pupils in Year 3, they learned and understood the terms 'attract and repel'. Pupils maintain their interest and concentration very well over a sustained period of time and show a thirst for knowledge and learning in science. For instance, in a very good lesson in Year 5, pupils investigated plant samples to find out the factors that affected their growth, compared their results and came to conclusions in a lively discussion, then summarized by the teacher to deepen the pupils' knowledge. Pupils have excellent relationships with teachers and make sensible and meaningful contributions to their learning by asking questions confidently. Pupils are interested in science for its own sake and in Year 6, have independently researched, using the Internet and other sources, the lives of famous scientists and their discoveries, such as Edward Jenner and the cure for smallpox.

62. ICT is used well, across both the infants and the juniors, for recording pupils' investigations in a variety of pictograms, charts and graphs including line graphs, bar and pie charts. In one lesson for pupils in Year 4, the teacher had set up digital microscopes interfaced with laptops in the corridor, so that pupils could view clearly and identify creatures they had found in the mud at the bottom of the school pond. This innovative idea made the pupils' task of counting legs, wings and antennae quicker and easier and caused great interest from other children as they passed by.
63. Pupils in the infants make steady progress and standards overall are as expected for their ages at Year 2. This is the same as at the time of the last inspection and is an improvement since last year when very few pupils were assessed by teachers as reaching the higher Level 3 in most areas of science. No lessons were seen in the infants and no judgement on teaching can be made. However, work in pupils' books indicates that higher attaining pupils could be stretched further. For example, pupils could move on to more challenging investigations. In their study of electricity, for instance, they do not investigate what happens when a switch is used break a circuit. When they study changes in living things, such as the effect of health and diet in animals, they do not explore why different creatures are adapted to living in certain environments.
64. The greater emphasis that the school has put upon investigative work since the beginning of the current year is paying off and helps pupils gain a deeper understanding of scientific knowledge and to remember earlier work. Teachers assess pupils' work well. The subject is very well managed and standards and teaching are monitored in each year group by the co-ordinator in a planned programme.

## **INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY**

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

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The subject is used very effectively in many other areas of the curriculum;
- Pupils achieve high standards in word processing in both the infants and the juniors;
- In other applications, pupils reach above average standards in Year 6;
- Teachers are confident in the use of ICT;
- Management and resources are very good.

### **Commentary**

65. Standards in ICT are better than expected for pupils at the end of Year 6 and in line with expectations at the end of the infants. This is similar to those found for pupils at Year 2 in the last inspection but is an improvement for pupils in Year 6, where standards at that time were as expected. No lessons were seen during the inspection in the juniors so no judgement can be made on teaching. However, pupils were seen using computers in many different contexts and their previous work and teachers' planning were scrutinised. This demonstrated that provision for ICT is very good.
66. Improvements in standards at the age of 11 have been brought about through the commitment of staff, and governors in developing the subject. Teaching and support staff have undergone training and staff support each other very well to develop their expertise and keep up-to-date with new developments. As a result, they are confident with the equipment and software they use and, for most, in making presentations to pupils as part of the teaching and learning in school.

67. The subject co-ordinator, who is also the headteacher, is very enthusiastic and has very good expertise. The subject is managed skilfully and he works closely with teachers, sharing, developing and facilitating their teaching. For instance, in assemblies he incorporates well prepared presentations for the whole school using ICT. He has developed a good action plan for developing ICT in the school, as well as its use for administrative purposes, and ambitious links with local feeder high schools to set up and maintain videoconference links. Plentiful resources are of good quality with a wide range of new personal computers and laptops available for pupils. The school has a server for all computers, which are networked together.
68. Most pupils have access to computers at home and there is a good cross fertilisation of skills that they bring to their work in school and to those that they learn in lessons. Pupils are very keen to develop their skills further. As well as having good opportunities in lessons, in the juniors they use computers regularly on a rota basis in the lunchtime computer club. This extends their opportunities for developing their skills and for the preparation of work at length, such as presentations in history and geography. Pupils in Years 5 and 6 independently assemble presentations that include text, graphics and sound. Pupils research their information using a variety of sources including reference books and the Internet. They make their own decisions in choosing relevant programs to use in their work and are very confident with word processing, spreadsheets and using email and the Internet.
69. In a good lesson in Year 2, pupils worked in groups to meet the teacher's challenge to park the programmable floor turtles in garages. They took up the challenge with enthusiasm, working together well and by the end of the session, were able to program the turtle to move forwards and backwards, link their instructions together and make a turn when the teacher changed the angle of the garages. This imaginative teaching made the work fun for pupils.

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

70. Teachers plan worthwhile opportunities for pupils to use ICT in most curriculum areas. As a result, pupils see computers and other equipment, such as digital and video cameras and microscopes and sensors as an integral part of their learning. Teachers and pupils use cameras to record events and awards in school on a regular basis. For instance, a group of lower attaining pupils in Year 1 had the opportunity to speak alliterative rhymes into a video camera and a similar group of pupils from Year 2 were filmed practising and refining their performance of a musical accompaniment to the Lord's Prayer, later performed for parents in an assembly. This helped raise pupils' confidence and enjoyment of their work. Pupils use computers on a regular basis for charts and graphs in science, word processing in English lessons and using art programs.

### **HUMANITIES**

**History** and **geography** are taught alternatively each half term. The focus for this half term is geography and, consequently, no history lessons were seen so no firm judgement can be made on provision in history.

In **history**, inspectors looked at the work that pupils had already done and discussed with pupils and teachers. Sampling showed that, by the end of Years 2 and 6, standards are above those expected and that pupils, including those with SEN, make good progress and achieve well. Pupils have plenty of opportunities to use their literacy skills which contribute significantly to the recording of their work in history. In Year 2, work on Samuel Pepys' and his diary shows that pupils have started to perceive why people in the past acted as they did. Good use is made of educational visits to support children's learning and enjoyment of history. For instance, pupils in Year 1 recently visited Wigan Pier and this is helping them to understand how the way people's lives have changed over time. Very good quality history displays contribute to pupils' learning and show the high profile that history has in the school. Clearly many pupils obviously enjoy history. They present their work well and it is also clear that teachers are enthusiastic about the subject.

Pupils continue to develop their research skills as they progress through the school. Year 3 pupils have found out what life was like for children in World War 2 and pupils' work in Year 4 shows lots of research into aspects of Tudor times, for example, crimes and punishment, and the differences between rich and poor people. Year 6 pupils made good use of the census to find out about the past. They also showed good writing skills in their explanations about the attitudes of some people to the building of railways. Leadership and management are very good. The co-ordinator monitors the subject by checking teachers' planning and sampling the content of pupils' work across the school. She is fully aware of the standards in the school.

## **Geography**

Provision in geography is **good**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Standards are in line with those expected nationally by the end of Years 2 and 6;
- A strong emphasis is placed on developing pupils' geographical skills;
- Good use is made of educational visits.

### **Commentary**

71. Satisfactory standards at both Years 2 and 6 have been maintained since the last inspection. Pupils achieve well and develop sound map making skills. In a very good lesson in Year 2, pupils successfully drew maps of their routes from home to school. Pupils achieved well. They used the knowledge gained from a previous walk and photographs they had taken to produce a map and a high quality display for the classroom wall. In another very good lesson, pupils in Year 5 made very good progress when they used a range of maps and aerial photographs to help them locate features of Grange over Sands. This knowledge was then used to compare the locality with their own. The work seen in Year 5 suggests that standards are rising and will be above average in Year 6 by next year.
72. Teachers make good use of relevant geographical vocabulary and use resources well to support the pupils' learning. Very good planning with a high level of challenge and expectation from the teacher encouraged pupils in Year 6 to find out how mountain environments are similar and different in nature across a range of places. The pupils showed a sound understanding of their tasks, used appropriate vocabulary and a wide range of resources, including ICT, successfully.
73. Pupils are enthusiastic and focus on their tasks. They clearly understand their learning targets, make satisfactory progress and achieve well. Activities are well linked to the development of their literacy skills. A bi-annual residential trip enhances the provision for older juniors.
74. Leadership is very good. The co-ordinator has worked hard to ensure that the scheme of work is giving sufficient curriculum coverage. Teachers assess carefully the progress pupils make in lessons.

## Religious education

Provision in religious education is **good**.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils are encouraged to consider important questions and apply their learning to their everyday lives;
- There is a good balance between pupils' learning about Christianity and other world faiths;
- Teachers have good subject knowledge.

### Commentary

75. Standards of attainment seen during the inspection remain in line with the requirements of the locally agreed syllabus, as they were at the time of the last inspection. Two lessons were observed. A lot of work covered in religious education lessons, particularly in the infant classes, centres around discussions, so there was limited work to examine. However, evidence indicates that pupils' achievement is sound in Key Stage 1 and good in Key Stage 2.
76. In the lessons seen, teaching was good and very good and pupils are gaining a good understanding of Christianity. Pupils in Year 2 know that Jesus prayed to God and taught Christians to do so using the Lord's Prayer, which they learned and showed that they understood in their lesson. The lesson was a good example of how links with music can be used in teaching religious education. As a result of very good teaching and probing questioning in a lesson for pupils in Year 6, they were able to demonstrate a high level of understanding of 'Forgiveness' and write short, meaningful poems to demonstrate this. The lesson and the copious amount of written work produced by pupils in Year 6 demonstrate that pupils are being given the opportunities to discover the meaning behind religions and the teaching of the founders of religions as well as facts.
77. Leadership of the subject is good. The co-ordinator is vigilant in monitoring samples of pupils' work. She has a clear picture of standards across the school.

## CREATIVE, AESTHETIC, PRACTICAL AND PHYSICAL SUBJECTS

Only one lesson was seen in **art and design**, and **design and technology** and none in **music**. Two lessons in the juniors were seen in **physical education**. It is not therefore possible to make a firm judgement about provision in these subjects.

In addition to observing lessons, inspectors spoke to co-ordinators about their work and looked at pupils' work on display and portfolios of samples of completed work in art and design and design and technology for last year. Discussions took place with pupils about their work in these subjects along with additional evidence from photographs of visits, events and work undertaken.

From this sampling it is evident that:

- the school has the same high expectations for these subjects as it has in English, mathematics and science where pupils reach high standards;
- teachers use their own expertise and interest well to generate enthusiasm and motivate pupils;
- standards are better than seen in most schools in art and design, physical education and design and technology and pupils achieve very well;
- planning for all these subjects is very good and includes assessment of pupils' achievement.

In **art and design**, pupils cover a very good range in their work and standards are better than those typically seen for their ages at 7 and 11 years. This is an improvement since the last inspection when standards were as expected for pupils' ages. There is a very good curriculum plan that develops their experiences and skills and links these well with other subjects of the curriculum. For example, in Year 2, where the children created paint and fabric collages of King Charles and the Fire of London. Observational drawing skills were also extended through self-portraits in chalk and charcoal.

Children's work in art and design continues to flourish throughout the juniors and pupils achieve well. For example, there was good work in sculpture, mixed media observational drawings of blossom trees and oil pastel and chalk landscapes. The work in art and design is of good quality because pupils have the opportunity to build up their skills and expertise in response to a range of first-hand experiences. The best example of this was shown in the oil pastel and chalk close-ups of cross sections of fruit, drawn by the older juniors. These were very skilled drawings with sensitive use of tone and shading.

The school widens pupils' horizons and inspires them through showing them the work of other artists. In the hall for instance, there was a brightly coloured, vibrant display of collaborative work by children in response to the artist Judy Visser. Alongside, Muriel Maret's work had inspired individual explorations in shades of purple. The school enriches the art and design curriculum by using visiting artists, teachers from the local high schools, and visits to galleries and the local mosque.

Standards in **design and technology** are good at the end of both key stages. Pupils cover the full breadth of the curriculum and complete a good range of 'design and make' tasks. They progress well throughout the school, in generating ideas for their designs, planning what they will use and how they will go about the task. Pupils in Year 2 show a better than average understanding of the features of vehicles and use a good range of technical vocabulary, for example, 'chassis' and 'axle'. Children also learn how to evaluate their own and others' work. They are introduced to this at an early age. For example, in Year 1, pupils recorded evaluations of their models of houses. A well designed recording sheet, involving simple text, tick boxes and smiling faces enabled all pupils to record their judgements.

By the time they are in Year 6, pupils have achieved well and their work shows that they have good understanding of the design process. They add more detail to the specification for their designs, test out the suitability of materials and evaluate their appearance and suitability. There is a very good curriculum plan that, as in art and design, provides a good range of experiences and builds up pupils' skills. There are also good links with other subjects. For example, in Year 4, pupils have made their own working lamps using their knowledge of simple circuits.

In **music**, the whole school was heard singing in assemblies. The singing is of a very good standard. It is tuneful, with an awareness of diction and dynamics, and most pupils obviously enjoy singing. Lessons are enhanced by a seasonal choir and recorders, although there is no other instrumental teaching. Music is a subject that the school is aiming to develop through the introduction of a new scheme of work to improve staff expertise.

Pupils achieve well in **physical education** at Key Stage 2 and reach above average standards. No lessons were observed in the infant classes so no judgement on standards could be made. Again, there is a very comprehensive curriculum plan that ensures all aspects are covered. Children have good opportunities to participate in gymnastics, dance, games, athletics and swimming. Standards in swimming are good. It is unusual for any pupil to leave the school unable to swim and most are confident swimmers well before this time. The hall and the recently extended junior playground provide good facilities for physical education. There are after school clubs and teams for boys and girls that provide additional opportunities to develop team skills and enjoy sport. The school has also participated in a dance festival in Preston and interschool events, such as Tag Rugby and Triathlon.

In the two lessons seen in Key Stage 2, pupils were developing their skills in hockey. Both lessons were well taught and through a series of well designed skills' practices and group activities the children quickly improved their ability to 'push pass' the ball with some accuracy. Year 6 pupils enjoyed the small sided games that developed their skills and tactics. In both lessons, the teachers used the resources well, for example, by ensuring pupils had the right size sticks. Boys and girls of all abilities were suitably challenged and very good support was given to children with particular needs by teaching assistants.

The curriculum co-ordinator has enthusiastically led the development of physical education so that it has made good improvements since the last inspection. Dance is now firmly established on the timetable and grant funding has been obtained that will allow the creation of orienteering within the school grounds. The co-ordinator has provided senior management with an excellent evaluative summary of physical education in the school.

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

Provision for personal, social and health education and citizenship (PSHCE) is **good**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Timetabled discussions allow pupils to share concerns and air their views;
- Elements of sex, relationships and drugs' education are carefully considered.

### **Commentary**

78. The headteacher shows a firm commitment to this area of the curriculum and pupils produce thoughtful work on a variety of issues, often as part of a religious education lesson or within an aspect of science. The school nurse, along with the class teacher and headteacher deliver the elements of sex education and puberty. Parents and pupils are involved in the six-week 'PRIDE' project which is a drugs' education programme. Above all, the school tries hard to equip pupils to deal with real life dilemmas. For example, pupils were asked to consider ways to keep calm. They came up with some good ideas, such as '...grit your teeth, count to 100, walk away, use stress balls and take deep breaths'. They also learn about healthy living and general safety issues. Emotional health is also highlighted as important. In one lesson, pupils were asked to think about how their actions affected others and a sensible discussion followed about what had not been done and the consequences of their actions. The teacher knew the children well and was able to relate some of the answers to their own personal experiences, bringing in the responses of their siblings, for example.

## PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

<i>Inspection judgement</i>	<i>Grade</i>
<b>The overall effectiveness of the school</b>	<b>2</b>
How inclusive the school is	1
How the school's effectiveness has changed since its last inspection	2
Value for money provided by the school	2
<b>Overall standards achieved</b>	<b>2</b>
Pupils' achievement	2
<b>Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities</b>	<b>1</b>
Attendance	2
Attitudes	1
Behaviour, including the extent of exclusions	1
Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2
<b>The quality of education provided by the school</b>	<b>2</b>
The quality of teaching	2
How well pupils learn	2
The quality of assessment	2
How well the curriculum meets pupils' needs	2
Enrichment of the curriculum, including out-of-school activities	2
Accommodation and resources	2
Pupils' care, welfare, health and safety	2
Support, advice and guidance for pupils	1
How well the school seeks and acts on pupils' views	3
The effectiveness of the school's links with parents	2
The quality of the school's links with the community	2
The school's links with other schools and colleges	2
<b>The leadership and management of the school</b>	<b>2</b>
The governance of the school	3
The leadership of the headteacher	2
The leadership of other key staff	2
The effectiveness of management	2

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