

INSPECTION REPORT

R L HUGHES PRIMARY SCHOOL

Ashton-in-Makerfield

LEA area: Wigan

Unique reference number:106424

Headteacher: Mrs L J K Carroll

Lead inspector: Mrs L J Traves

Dates of inspection: 18th - 20th April 2005

Inspection number: 267532

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

© Crown copyright 2005

This report may be reproduced in whole or in part for non-commercial educational purposes, provided that all extracts quoted are reproduced verbatim without adaptation and on condition that the source and date thereof are stated.

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school. Under the School Inspections Act 1996, the school must provide a copy of this report and/or its summary free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the full cost of reproduction may be made for any other copies supplied.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Primary
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	3 - 11 years
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
Number on roll:	500
School address:	Mayfield Street Ashton-in-Makerfield Wigan
Postcode:	WN4 9QL
Telephone number:	01942 701147
Fax number:	01942 701147
Appropriate authority:	The Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr T Brennan
Date of previous inspection:	June 1999

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

R L Hughes is a large primary school with 500 pupils on roll. It is situated in the small town of Ashton-in-Makerfield, close to Wigan. The majority of the pupils live close to the school and often their families have had a long association with it. Pupils come from a wide range of backgrounds, but most families have average social circumstances. The vast majority of pupils are of white, British heritage and speak English. The number of pupils having a free school meal is broadly average (9.7 per cent). The number with special educational needs is below average (11.9 per cent), with 4 pupils having statements. Their needs are mainly related to learning difficulties. When they enter school pupils' skills and abilities are as expected for their age. There are currently 59 children who attend the nursery on a part-time basis. The 63 reception aged pupils are taught in one unit by three teachers. In Key Stage 2, pupils are taught in ability groups for English and mathematics. Currently, there are more boys than girls on roll. The school has achieved the 'Investors in People' award and also the 'Activemark' award. A new headteacher joined the school in September 2005, replacing a headteacher of many years standing.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
24039	Mrs L Traves	Lead inspector	The Foundation Stage English as an additional language Physical education Religious education
13723	Mrs J Overend	Lay inspector	
18154	Mr S Rigby	Team Inspector	Mathematics Design and technology
32347	Mrs J Brighthouse	Team inspector	Special educational needs Science Music
32567	Mr S Isherwood	Team inspector	English Geography
33260	Mr C Wong	Team Inspector	Information and communication technology Art and design History

The inspection contractor was:

CfBT Primary Associates
Suite 13 West Lancs Technology Management Centre
Moss Lane View
Skelmersdale
Lancashire
WN8 9TN

Any concerns or complaints about the inspection or the report should be made initially to the inspection contractor. The procedures are set out in the leaflet '*Complaining about Ofsted Inspections*', which is available from Ofsted Publications Centre (telephone 07002 637833) or Ofsted's website (www.ofsted.gov.uk).

REPORT CONTENTS

	Page
PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT	1
PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE MAIN INSPECTION FINDINGS	
STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS	3
Standards achieved in areas of learning and subjects	
Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities	
QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL	6
Teaching and learning	
The curriculum	
Care, guidance and support	
Partnership with parents, other schools and the community	
LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT	10
PART C: THE QUALITY OF EDUCATION IN AREAS OF LEARNING AND SUBJECTS	13
AREAS OF LEARNING IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE	
SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 1 AND 2	
PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS	25

PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

OVERALL EVALUATION

R L Hughes is a good school with some very strong features. It is a warm and friendly place to learn and children develop really well in its caring atmosphere. Standards are good overall. Good teaching ensures that the majority of pupils learn effectively and achieve their potential. The school is well led and managed, with the new headteacher providing very strong and effective leadership. It gives good value for money.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- The new headteacher is leading the school very well, with good support from governors and staff;
- The majority of pupils achieve well in response to good teaching but, in English, some more able pupils in particular could do even better;
- Pupils reach particularly high standards in mathematics, physical education and music by the age of 11;
- A very wide range of out of school clubs, visits, visitors and community links enrich the curriculum very effectively;
- Provision for and achievement in sport are outstanding;
- Pupils are highly valued and, in response, develop as mature, confident individuals, who respect themselves and care for others.

There has been good improvement since the last inspection and many areas of strength have been sustained. The issues identified last time have been dealt with effectively. In addition, teaching is stronger and the curriculum has been improved.

STANDARDS ACHIEVED

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

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

Pupils achieve well. Results for Year 6 pupils in the national tests in English, mathematics and science dipped in 2004. This went against the trend in previous years for results to be above and, in mathematics, well above average both in relation to all schools and those in similar circumstances. The dip was partly because more pupils in the class had special educational needs than in previous years. In English, it was also partly because the more able pupils did not do as well. Writing results were particularly disappointing. The current Year 6 pupils are on course to do better, with standards being above average overall in English and science, and well above average in mathematics. Results in the national tests for pupils in Year 2 have been around average for several years in reading, writing and mathematics. In 2004, there was an improvement in writing, with results being above average. The current Year 2 class are on course to improve still further, with standards being above average in all three areas. However, despite this improved picture, inspection findings indicate that, throughout the

school, more able pupils could be more effectively challenged in English. Pupils with special educational needs do well in relation to their abilities in response to the good support they receive. Children in the Foundation Stage (nursery and reception) achieve well from their starting points. The majority of the current reception children are on course to reach the expected goals for their age in all areas of learning and a good number will exceed these, particularly in their personal and social development. Standards are also better than in most schools in information and communication technology (ICT), music and physical education.

Pupils' personal qualities, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, are very good. Pupils develop as mature, confident individuals. They enjoy school and all it offers. They behave very well and get on well with each other. Attendance is very good and punctuality is good.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION

The quality of education provided by the school is good. Teaching is good overall. A significant amount of very good teaching was observed, particularly in the older junior classes, where pupils make the best progress. Mathematics, music and physical education are taught particularly well. In English, teachers could improve the range of opportunities provided in writing to stimulate and encourage pupils more effectively and consistently. Pupils with special educational needs achieve well because they receive good support tailored to meet their needs. Teaching assistants have a positive impact on their learning. The curriculum is varied and interesting. Opportunities provided to enrich learning, for example through after school clubs, visits and visitors, are very good. Participation and achievement in sport is outstanding and pupils also have a rich musical diet. Staff have the best interests of the pupils firmly at heart and provide a good standard of care for them.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

The leadership and management of the school are good. The headteacher's very strong and purposeful leadership is steering the school through this important transition phase. Senior staff are giving good support and high quality teamwork is in evidence. Governors fulfil their responsibilities effectively. They are closely involved in setting the direction for the school and know its strengths and weaknesses well.

PARENTS' AND PUPILS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

Parents think highly of the school. They have confidence in the teaching and are pleased with the range of activities on offer. Pupils are very enthusiastic about school and know they are valued.

IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

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

- Ensure that the more able pupils are challenged more consistently and effectively in English;
- Improve the range of writing opportunities provided for pupils throughout the school.

PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS

STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

Standards achieved in areas of learning and subjects

Standards are above average overall by the age of 11 and the majority of pupils achieve well. In mathematics, standards are well above average for the current Year 6 pupils. In English, the more able pupils throughout the school could achieve more in reading and writing, with a more consistent level of challenge. Pupils make the best progress in Key Stage 2 as a result of stronger teaching. Those with special educational needs achieve well in relation to their abilities because their needs are effectively met.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards are well above average in mathematics by the age of 11;
- Standards in physical education and aspects of music are much better than usually seen;
- Children in the Foundation Stage do particularly well in their personal and social development;
- Standards in ICT and physical education have improved significantly.

Commentary

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
reading	16.3 (16.0)	15.8 (15.7)
writing	15.3 (14.5)	14.6 (14.6)
mathematics	16.7 (16.5)	16.2 (16.3)

There were 63 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year.

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
English	26.1 (28.3)	26.9 (26.8)
mathematics	27.7 (28.8)	27.0 (26.8)
science	28.9 (29.9)	28.6 (28.6)

There were 60 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year.

1. When children enter nursery their skills are wide ranging. However, the majority have attainments that are similar to those of most children of their age. The current nursery pupils are making good progress in relation to their starting points. A strong emphasis on developing their personal and social skills ensures they do particularly well in this area, which gives a firm foundation on which to build. The current reception children are also achieving well and building effectively on their skills. A very strong emphasis is placed on developing early reading, writing and number skills and this is paying dividends in the good progress children of all abilities are making. The majority are on course to achieve the expected goals for children of this

age in all areas of learning by the end of reception, and a good number will have exceeded them.

2. Results in the national tests for 11-year-olds dipped in 2004. The biggest downturn was in English, where results were below average in relation to all schools nationally and to those in similar circumstances. Although an above average number reached the expected level in the tests (Level 4), far less than average reached the higher level (Level 5). This was largely the result of changes in organisation and staffing for some groups, which affected their progress. In addition, there was a higher than usual percentage of pupils with severe special educational needs in the cohort. In mathematics and science, the dip was not quite as dramatic, with standards being around the average in relation to both all and similar schools. As with English, this was mainly due to the percentage of pupils with special educational needs. The school's own assessment data shows that the current Year 6 pupils are on course to reach above average standards in English and science, and well above average standards in mathematics, reversing this dip. This reflects the standards that the school achieved for several years prior to 2004, when results had risen faster than in other schools. Inspection findings confirm this picture. However, in English the more able pupils could achieve even more with a more consistent level of challenge.
3. In the tests for 7-year-olds, results dipped dramatically in 2002 but, since then, they have been rising steadily in reading, writing and mathematics. In the 2004 tests, pupils reached average standards overall in reading and mathematics, when compared to all schools and those in similar circumstances. They did well to achieve above average standards in writing. Although an above average number achieved the expected level (Level 2) in reading and writing, and a well above average number in mathematics, the number reaching the higher level (Level 3) was average in writing and mathematics. In reading, it was disappointingly below average. This year's Year 2 pupils are on course to achieve more. However, in English, although newly introduced phonic programmes are showing an impact, more able pupils could still do even better. Overall, in Key Stage 1, pupils make better progress in the Year 2 classes, where teaching is more consistently challenging.
4. The school has a strong focus on raising achievement and has improved the systems for tracking pupils' progress to this end. The new arrangements are already bearing fruit, although it is still early days. The 'setting' arrangements in the upper junior classes are proving particularly beneficial and are accelerating achievement, especially in Year 6. Pupils with special educational needs are doing well in relation to their abilities because they are well supported, both in class and in small groups. The school is also working hard to identify their needs and put the right levels of support in place as early as possible to boost their progress further. Over a number of years, boys have not done as well as girls in English. Staff are implementing strategies to engage all pupils more effectively and this is also starting to have an impact, particularly in some of the junior classes.
5. Standards in ICT and physical education have improved since the last inspection and are now better than usually seen. Pupils also reach high standards in music.

Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities

Pupils' attitudes and behaviour are very good. The provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Attendance is very good.

Main strengths and weaknesses.

- The very positive ethos underpins the work of the school, promoting very good attitudes, behaviour and learning;
- Very good attendance has a strong impact on learning;
- Relationships are very strong;
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is actively promoted.

COMMENTARY

6. Pupils develop very well as mature, responsible individuals who are willing to think for themselves and to look after others. Attendance figures compare very well with the national picture. Children clearly enjoy coming to school and their punctuality is good, which enables the school day to get off to a rapid start and ensures learning is uninterrupted. Pupils of all ages get on well with each other and speak highly of the adults who work with them. All children spoken to were confident they could get help from an adult if they needed it. A minority of parents expressed concern about bullying, although not about general behaviour. In fact, the vast majority of pupils behave very well. Play at lunchtimes can be boisterous sometimes but there was no evidence of bullying during the inspection. The school has a range of very effective procedures to prevent and eliminate bullying if it occurs. Older children help the younger ones at lunchtime and there are 'Buddies' for children who are new or who have issues at playtime. Racial harmony is promoted well. There are very popular systems to promote good behaviour, such as the yellow and red cards. These are used consistently and fairly throughout the school. Behaviour in the classroom is usually very good and in the lunch hall it is exemplary. There have been no exclusions in the past 12 months.
7. The provision for spiritual development is good and the quality of assemblies has improved since the last inspection. They are usually well planned and the best give good opportunities for reflection and prayer. An example of this was seen in a Key Stage 1 assembly, looking at creation stories from around the world. The children were encouraged to reflect sensitively on the beauty of God's creation and learned how many different cultures had their own creation stories. The very good use of music and singing really adds to the enjoyment of the learning and worship. In 'Circle Time', when children share their feelings and ideas, and discussion times in lessons, pupils are strongly encouraged to express their feelings and views. They are helped to understand their own progress better through the use of the 'traffic light' signals at the end of lessons, where they decide how well they have learned. The school also works hard to show children that they are valued by seeking and acting on their views and celebrating their various achievements.
8. Pupils' moral and social education is very well promoted throughout the day through discussion and reminders of the school rules. Children are very clear about the rewards and sanctions and all are helped to understand the need for school rules. Ethical issues, such as caring for the environment, are promoted very well and the introduction of recycling bins has been a great success. Many opportunities are given for children to respond to topical issues through charitable initiatives, such as collecting for the Tsunami victims and making and selling biscuits and cakes to raise funds. The very wide range of sporting activities and after school clubs provide many different social settings in which pupils are able to relate to each other and develop co-operative skills. The school council gives pupils a real taste of democracy and impresses on them their responsibility for their peers. A very wide range of jobs is offered, both on the council and throughout school life, to which the children respond very well. An example of this is the children who prepare the halls for assemblies and work the equipment. Parents also value the residential experiences highly for developing their children's independence skills. The school makes good provision for raising children's awareness of their own cultural heritage through involvement in music festivals, church links, theatre and museum visits. Children have very strong involvement in the sporting and ICT culture. While the

school is at an early stage of developing multicultural awareness, nevertheless assemblies and curriculum subjects, such as religious education, music and sport, are used to promote tolerance, understanding and respect for other races, faiths and cultures. The school is investigating how to further improve pupils' experience of the diversity of cultures in Britain today.

Attendance

Attendance in the latest complete reporting year (%)

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
School data	4.4	School data	0.1
National data	5.1	National data	0.4

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

QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

The quality of education provided by the school is good. The curriculum is good and has improved since the last inspection. The extra-curricular activities and strong local community links in particular enrich learning. Staff have positive relationships with the children and take good care of them.

Teaching and learning

Teaching and learning are good throughout the school, with a significant percentage of very good teaching observed, particularly in key Stage 2. The teaching within mathematics, music and sport are particularly strong features.

Main strengths and weaknesses.

- Relationships between staff and pupils are strong, which supports learning well;
- Setting of pupils by ability enhances learning very well in mathematics and English at Key Stage 2;
- More could be done to challenge the more able in writing;
- Classroom support staff have a strong impact on learning;
- Teaching is particularly strong in music, mathematics and physical education.

Commentary

9. Children in the Foundation Stage get off to a good start because of consistently good teaching. They do very well in their personal, social and emotional development, because staff emphasise this area and work hard to build a firm foundation for learning. Early literacy and numeracy skills are taught with good levels of expertise and, as a result, pupils of all abilities build rapidly on their skills. Teachers in reception could sometimes provide a better balance between letting children choose activities and explore for themselves and directing their learning.
10. Good teaching enables the vast majority of pupils to achieve well. Throughout the school teachers plan their lessons thoroughly and most have good and sometimes very good subject expertise. This is particularly so in music, physical education and mathematics, where lessons are almost always dynamic and interesting. The setting of pupils by ability for mathematics and English at Key Stage 2 is accelerating progress, because in most cases, teachers are able to move learning on at just the right pace for the pupils. Strong relationships between staff and pupils underpin learning effectively, creating a positive working environment that promotes learning well. Teachers have high expectations of behaviour and work rate and, in the vast

majority of lessons, pupils rise to this by working diligently and behaving well. Any disruptions to learning are usually handled well and teachers use a wide range of strategies to motivate and encourage pupils, such as a ticket system to reward positive actions.

11. There were many examples of very good teaching seen across the school, although the majority of such lessons were seen at Key Stage 2. The very best lessons are delivered at a good pace, maintaining pupils' interest from start to finish. They are extremely challenging for all groups, with clear objectives outlined early to encourage pupils to focus on the task in hand. In these lessons the most able are fully extended. For example, in an excellent mathematics lesson, the most able mathematicians wrestled with a liquid capacity problem. The information provided was always only sufficient for them to make progress to the next goal, ensuring that they had to work to the limit for the next part of the challenge to be revealed. In another lesson, a teacher encouraged a group to greater efforts by telling them 'I know it's hard but I also know you're up to it!'
12. Where more ordinary lessons were seen, the pace sometimes slackened in the middle and work was not pitched as well as it could be to meet the needs of all ability levels throughout. Very occasionally lessons lacked variety and sparkle, resulting in pupils being less stimulated and progress being slower.
13. Pupils with special educational needs are well supported overall and make good progress. They have good work plans in place to underpin their learning, which set attainable targets for them. Support staff do a good job in ensuring these pupils make a valuable contribution in lessons. For example, they encourage them to express their opinions and share their ideas. In small groups led by the special needs co-ordinator, the quality of teaching is strong in literacy sessions and leads to effective learning. However, numeracy sessions are less effective in challenging pupils at the right level and building on their skills.
14. Assessment procedures are good overall. Pupils' progress is tracked effectively, the next steps in learning are clearly identified and targets set for them. The school has recently improved its systems, which is already enabling staff to set targets more accurately. In the majority of lessons, teachers use the information gained on pupils' progress effectively to help groups achieve well. However, information to fully challenge higher attaining pupils is not consistently applied, particularly in writing where procedures are not as sharp as in reading. The best marking is very effective in identifying how pupils can improve. However, this is not a consistent picture at present.

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 63 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
1 (2)	18 (29)	32 (51)	12 (19)	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.

The curriculum

The curriculum is good with some very good features. It enriches pupils' learning experiences very well and provides a wide and interesting range of opportunities for all. Accommodation and resources are good overall and there is a good match of staff to meet the needs of the pupils effectively.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The school provides its pupils with a broad and balanced curriculum, which prepares them successfully for the future stages of education;
- The curriculum is very well enriched through visits, visitors and out of school activities;
- The participation of pupils in music and the arts is very good. It is outstanding in sport.

Commentary

15. The school is successful in maintaining a rich and broad curriculum that meets all statutory requirements, including those for religious education and collective worship. Support for learning activities outside the school day is very good. Equality of access and opportunity is good overall. Staff work hard to develop and adapt learning so that most pupils achieve well. The curriculum meets the needs of special educational needs pupils effectively. Individual education plans are drawn up with specific, clear targets and detailed success criteria. They are reviewed regularly, involving parents and pupils in the process. Projects to enrich the curriculum, such as the 'Cool Project' which helps pupils develop self-confidence, enhance learning well. Curriculum review and innovation is strong. The current focus on the development of pupils' thinking skills and teachers' awareness of how children learn is having a positive impact and helping to ensure that boys and girls are equally well motivated.
16. The curriculum is well organised and good teamwork is evident in planning for the parallel classes in each year group. It is reviewed regularly and effectively managed so that pupils can build progressively on their skills from year-to-year. The setting arrangements for pupils in English and mathematics at Key Stage 2 are carefully planned and skilfully delivered; they are having a positive impact in raising achievement. The school has responded very well to the issues reported in the previous inspection and, as a result, the curriculum has significantly improved. Library provision is now much stronger, with increased opportunities for children to use and apply their skills in different situations. This has led to children developing greater confidence in their abilities and more positive attitudes to reading and learning.
17. The Foundation Stage curriculum is good. It is effectively planned to cover all six areas of learning well and provide a good range of experiences for all pupils. There are strengths in the provision for children's personal, social and emotional development and their early literacy and numeracy skills in particular. Joint planning between nursery and reception staff ensures that pupils build progressively on their previous learning. Most learning activities are set up and closely directed by staff. Although children do have some time to explore and investigate without direct adult intervention, more opportunities could be provided for them to choose activities and follow lines of enquiry for themselves.
18. A real strength is the wide range of additional learning opportunities provided, which greatly enrich pupils' experiences, stimulate their thinking and develop their personal and social skills. Visits and visitors are used extensively to support learning. For example, the annual residential visit is used very effectively to support pupils' personal and physical development. Subjects such as geography and art are made more meaningful by field trips and visits, for example to the Drumcroon centre for art. Visits are carefully planned to extend pupils' learning, with a clear focus on improving skills in observation and discussion, and are greatly enjoyed by the children. Numerous visitors are invited into the school throughout the year and links with the local community are very strong. The quality and range of musical experiences provided by the school is very high. Opportunities for pupils to participate in extra-curricular activities in music and drama are very good. In sport they are outstanding. Close links with other local schools and colleges extend these opportunities still further. A current priority is to further extend the opportunities for personal, social and health education (PSHCE) and an awareness of citizenship.

Firm plans are in place to audit current provision and to identify key areas for action, using the 'Healthy Schools' award as a benchmark.

19. Effective links have been established with local high schools to support pupils' learning in French, in activities for more able pupils and in the transition from primary to secondary schooling. This enables pupils to be well prepared for the future stages of education. The school is also keen to take every opportunity to utilise staff expertise, for example ensuring that specialists teach music and dance.
20. The school makes best use of the building and accommodation. The premises are very well cared for with a cycle of maintenance and improvement in place, which is carefully managed by the governing body. On a daily basis, the school is kept beautifully clean and tidy by the hard working site management staff. Resources overall are plentiful, of good quality and well organised in most areas, as a result of regular audits. There are no major gaps and a planned, rolling replacement programme has been implemented.

Care, guidance and support

The provision for pupils' care, welfare, health and safety is good. The school provides good support, advice and guidance. The involvement of pupils through seeking, valuing and acting on their views is very good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Relationships throughout the school are very good and the staff know the children very well;
- Children's long-term health is being promoted very well;
- The school consults with and values pupils very well.

Commentary

21. All staff are very caring and work very hard to ensure pupils are happy in school. They know the pupils and their families very well and so can tailor their support to the needs of the individual. Pupils' progress is effectively monitored and support provided to help them do their best. Those with special educational needs have well thought out individual education plans which underpin their learning well. Child protection arrangements are secure and the co-ordinator and staff are aware of their responsibilities in this regard. Good induction procedures are in place to ensure children settle happily into school. Most parents are very happy with the start their children make.
22. Health and safety arrangements are good. The school effectively uses the expertise available to them, for example from governors and the local education authority, to keep school procedures up to date and the children safe. Children are taught effectively about keeping themselves safe, for example through participation in a road safety scheme. A very strong focus is put on healthy practices such as sports and also eating healthily.
23. Children's views are listened to very carefully in 'Circle Time' and other discussions in lessons. Pupils' views are gathered in the weekly class council meetings. Here pupils' ideas are sensitively debated to see what may be viable as ideas to take to

the whole school council. At the full school council, children are empowered to take the best ideas and act on them for the good of the school.

Partnership with parents, other schools and the community

Links with parents are good. The partnership with the community is very good. Links with other schools and colleges are good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Parents show a high level of satisfaction with the school;
- The school consults parents very well and values them highly;
- Shared activities with other schools and colleges are bringing benefits to both pupils and staff;
- Community links impact very well on learning.

Commentary

24. Parents express a high level of support and regard for the school. They are particularly happy that their children like school and that staff expect their children to work hard. A minority of parents do not feel well enough informed about their children's progress. Some have concerns about bullying. The school has very effective procedures in place to prevent or eliminate bullying. It takes its role in preventing all kinds of harassment very seriously and is successful in this.
25. Information is sent home weekly in a newsletter, with plenty of day-to-day information available. Curriculum booklets are sent home and a list of dates of events before each half term. End of year reports, which were unsatisfactory at the last inspection, are now judged to be satisfactory. However, they still do not consistently indicate progress made or share helpful 'next steps' for learning. Targets are given but are not always specific enough to help the children move on.
26. The school has regularly sent out questionnaires to parents over the last few years to gather their views. These have included responses to workshops and looking for ways to improve. Parents are very enthusiastic about the workshops and courses the school provides, including SATs, ICT and 'Inspire', and feel strongly these enable them to help their children more appropriately. The school always informs parents of the outcome of questionnaires in terms of overall views and the school's response. Help received from the PTA is highly appreciated, as is help from parents who assist in school or with extra-curricular activities.
27. Sporting links with other schools are providing valuable experiences of competition and team building skills. The local cluster of schools has recently been able to provide special days for children designated gifted and talented and some pupils attended the science day. The cluster links are providing opportunities to share expertise and training events. The school is providing a member of staff for the 'HOS Project' one day a week to share ICT skills with other schools. There are good links to a local higher education college to provide teacher training placements. Links to Wigan and Leigh College have helped to run the parents courses. Pupils benefit from the carefully planned transfer programme to link secondary schools and there are good links with local high schools. Activities such as French teaching for Years 5 and 6 and use of facilities otherwise not available enrich the children's education.
28. There are very good productive links to the local and wider community. The outstanding sporting experiences offered the children are made possible through such links. Local churches provide speakers for assemblies and there are regular visits from the fire and police services to deliver safety messages more effectively. The school is very outward looking and gives back to its community as well as receiving sponsorships from businesses. Lots of charities are very generously supported, including 'Jeans for Genes' which the school was asked to help by a member of the local community. Very good use is made of visitors, such as Mr Graham who came for World War II day, to share his first-hand experiences. Also of benefit is the participation in local music festivals, at which the school has been very successful. The outcome of these community links is a far richer range of learning experiences which impact very positively on standards achieved.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

The leadership and management of the school are good. The new headteacher's leadership of the school is very strong and effective. She is well supported by the senior management team and other key staff, who do a good job. Governance of the school is also good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The very effective leadership of the headteacher is steering the school very well in this transition phase;
 - There is good teamwork between the headteacher, governing body and senior management team;
 - There is very good capacity to move forward;
 - The headteacher is leading the development of teaching and the curriculum very well.
29. The very strong and effective leadership of the headteacher is the driving force for ensuring that the school has remained stable, yet moved forward in this transitional phase. She has been very successful in earning the respect and confidence of staff, pupils, parents and governors in a short space of time. This is because she has a very clear vision for the school, which she communicates very well, and a strong commitment to making it even better. She has involved all stakeholders in setting the aims for the school and identifying the criteria by which they will be achieved. This has ensured that everyone is moving on together for the benefit of the pupils. She has also given a very strong lead in developing the curriculum to embrace new national guidelines and in developing the quality of teaching and learning. As a result, both of these areas have demonstrably improved.
30. A key feature of leadership and management is the strong teamwork in evidence. Staff on the senior management team have formed an effective partnership already. They have clearly defined individual roles and responsibilities, such as pastoral care and assessment, which have been strengthened. The impact of their work can be clearly seen, for example, in the very good behaviour and personal development of the pupils and in the tighter procedures in place for checking on pupils' progress. They have set up very thorough and workable processes for evaluating the work of the school and managing its development. Most importantly, they have identified the key priorities for school improvement, with a well structured plan to underpin the work. This is an impressive achievement since September. Other key staff have also been involved in the process and are doing a good job overall. For example, the literacy co-ordinator has effectively implemented new strategies for phonic teaching throughout the school. The Foundation Stage leader has worked closely with the headteacher to draw up exciting and innovative plans for the future development of the reception and nursery classes. Other subject leaders also do a good job. The leadership and management of physical education is outstanding, for example, because the subject leader's expertise, drive and commitment underpin the school's excellent sporting achievements. The leadership and management of special educational needs are satisfactory. The co-ordinator is well qualified in some aspects and particularly in some specific areas of literacy. He keeps detailed records in some areas and liaises appropriately with parents and external agencies. He is currently supported by the headteacher, who is taking the lead in monitoring the area; she has a clear idea where improvements need to be made.
31. Governors have a good committee structure and a wide range of expertise, which effectively underpin their decision making process and strategic input into the development of the school. They have a good working knowledge of the strengths and areas for development, as a result of the probing questions they ask and the high quality information provided by the headteacher. A significant achievement for governors in recent years has been the financing and building of a dedicated

nursery unit. Another testament to the governors' astute management has been the appointment of the new headteacher, which is proving particularly successful.

32. Finances are well managed. Governors have a good overview of finances and use the expertise of an experienced bursar well. Good quality budget information is provided, on which governors can reliably make their spending decisions. Day-to-day systems are managed with maximum efficiency, allowing the headteacher and staff to get on with teaching and other tasks. Administration staff carry out their duties very well and provide an excellent first point of contact with the school.

Financial information

Financial information for the year April 2004 to March 2005

Income and expenditure (£)	
Total income	92294
Total expenditure	1177501
Expenditure per pupil	2505

Balances (£)	
Balance from previous year	36135
Balance carried forward to the next	40747

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

AREAS OF LEARNING IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

Provision in the Foundation Stage is good. Teaching is good. There are currently 122 children in the Foundation Stage, 59 in nursery on a part-time basis and 63 in the reception class. When they enter school children's skills cover a wide range but, overall, most have abilities which are as expected for their age. Children achieve well in all areas of learning. They do particularly well in personal, social and emotional development and basic literacy and numeracy skills, because of the emphasis staff place on these aspects. Staff provide a good range of activities in each area of learning. In nursery, activities are very well planned to meet children's needs. This ensures a good balance between those that children choose and explore for themselves and those that are directed by adults. In reception, very good planning for small groups of children to work on focused activities with a designated adult is accelerating their progress in literacy and numeracy. However, there are fewer opportunities for children to choose activities and investigate for themselves. The school has identified the organisation and resourcing of the reception unit as a priority area and has very firm plans for its future development. Good leadership and management is resulting in strong teamwork between all staff and development of key areas, such as assessment.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Staff have high expectations of children;
 - All adults provide very good role models for children to follow.
33. A high priority is given to children's personal and social development in both nursery and reception. Very good teaching enables children to achieve well and most reception pupils have exceeded the goals set for them already. Even the youngest pupils, who have only been in nursery since January, are very happy and settled and able to follow the routines. All staff provide very good role models for the children and have strong relationships with them. Staff have high expectations which they constantly reinforce. As a result, children are keen to please and behave very well. Opportunities for personal and social development are woven through all areas of learning. Children in nursery follow adults' instructions and concentrate on activities really well for their age. For example, when playing games in the hall they didn't put a foot wrong when the teacher gave instructions such as 'All the boys lift the parachute and shake it five times, while all the girls lie still underneath.' In reception, children dress and undress for physical education with minimal adult support and share dice and take turns appropriately when playing games.

COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Listening skills are very good;
- Basic reading and writing skills are taught very well;
- More opportunities could be provided for children to explore writing for themselves.

34. Good teaching in this area ensures that pupils make good progress. Phonic strategies are taught particularly well. The school has invested great time and effort in this area since September in order to boost progress, and this is proving particularly effective. The organisation of pupils into small ability groups for literacy based activities is also accelerating progress well. As a result, the majority of pupils are likely to reach the goals set for them by the end of the reception year and a good number will exceed these. Already most nursery children can recognise their own names and identify, for example, that tiger begins with 't' and snake begins with 's'. They love the exciting game that the teacher plays with them to develop these skills. They enjoy writing, for example, when they compile lists of parts in the 'garage'. In reception, pupils' handwriting skills develop well because they have regular, systematic teaching and practise daily. They understand the link between reading and writing through, for example, writing their own books of fairy tales. More opportunities could be provided, however, for children to choose when and what they write, outside of the more structured daily sessions. More use could be made of the exciting role play areas, such as the jungle and the airport, for children to write for a greater range of purposes. All staff develop speaking and listening skills well and children's responses are encouraged and valued. As a result, they are confident and articulate speakers by the end of reception. Children in both nursery and reception demonstrate very good listening skills for their age, which accelerates their learning in all areas.

MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision in mathematical development is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Early number skills are developed very effectively;
 - More opportunities could be provided for pupils to choose some of the mathematical activities they engage in.
35. Children achieve well in response to good teaching and the vast majority are on course to meet or exceed the goals set for them. In reception, daily numeracy sessions in small groups, tailored specifically to match their abilities, are helping pupils to progress at a rapid rate. In nursery, pupils show good recognition of familiar shapes and numbers. Mathematical activities are always on offer for children to choose. Staff take every opportunity to encourage them to count and use their mathematics skills in many different situations, for example when playing games. Good use is also made of stories and rhymes to develop counting skills. In a very good reception lesson observed, pupils made great strides in their understanding and use of positional language, because of the interesting and challenging 'games' the teacher used. They could quickly identify that a number on the 'number square' was above or below another one and the more able could give a number between, for example, 6 and 9. The teacher carefully posed questions at just the right level of challenge for individuals and used her assessment of how well they were doing very effectively to move them on. All staff are skilled at teaching the correct mathematical vocabulary and in encouraging children to explain their thinking. There is scope, however, for pupils to have more opportunities to choose and explore mathematical activities themselves.

KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE WORLD

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- A rich range of activities is provided which link well with other areas of learning.
36. A varied range of practical activities is provided in this area. Children achieve well and are on course to meet the goals set for them by the end of the reception year. Teachers plan thoroughly to make good links with other areas of learning. For example, in studying the theme of transport reception children wrote lists of items which Barnaby Bear might take on holiday. In response to the story 'We're going on a bear hunt', children enjoyed preparing for their own 'bear hunt' and reading the clues provided as they acted out the story. In the nursery, children were also experiencing the theme of transport in many different ways. For example, they talked about the journeys they had made themselves to get to school or to go on holiday, and acted out scenarios using 'small world' equipment. Activities take place outdoors, as well as inside the classroom. For example, they plant seeds and bulbs to watch them grow. Role play is also used effectively to provide experience of the world of work. Nursery children thoroughly enjoy mending cars in the 'garage' and in reception they love taking on the role of pilots and stewards on the plane, even when it crashes! Good everyday opportunities are provided for them to build with construction toys and explore sand and water. Good use is also made of the computer. For example, nursery children use the interactive whiteboard confidently to identify a range of different shapes. In reception, children are adept at using the mouse to choose from a menu and click on objects on screen.

PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision in physical development is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils have good opportunities to develop their physical skills, both indoors and outside.
37. Children are on course to meet the goals set for them by the end of the reception year and a good number will exceed these. A wide range of activities is provided, both indoors and outside, to enable them to develop both their large movements and their manipulative skills. All children have daily, well planned and organised opportunities to use wheeled toys, balls and climbing equipment. Nursery children negotiate space well as they pedal the wheeled vehicles and take account of the 'road signs'. Reception children have very good opportunities to refine and develop their physical skills through the regular sessions of dance, gymnastics and games in the hall. In a games lesson observed, children made really good progress in developing their throwing and balancing skills. Pupils' manipulative skills are also developed well through good opportunities to write, paint, use play dough and do jigsaws.

CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT

Provision in creative development is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children work with a good range of materials and media;
 - Music is a strength of provision.
38. Children achieve well and are on course to reach the goals expected by the end of reception. Teaching is good and good quality opportunities are provided for children to work with a range of tools, materials and media. For example, they use knives, cutters and rollers dexterously as they work with play dough. Children in reception were observed cutting and sticking carefully as they made pictures for the 'ice cream parlour'. There are plenty of good examples on display of children's paintings and collages. Opportunities for reception children to experience music are exceptionally good. They have regular sessions with a highly skilled specialist teacher and their standards in singing are much better than usually observed. Children's imaginations are developed effectively through the good opportunities they have in both nursery and reception for role play.

SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 1 and 2

ENGLISH

Provision in English is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards are above average and the majority of pupils achieve well overall;
- Higher attaining pupils could achieve more in reading and writing with a more consistent level of challenge;
- Children are provided with a good range of opportunities to develop their skills in speaking and listening;
- Good leadership and management is developing the subject effectively;
- Pupils could develop their skills in writing at a faster pace with a wider range of opportunities to write and use their skills in other subjects.

COMMENTARY

39. Standards are above average at both key stages and the majority of children achieve well from their starting points. At Key Stage 1, results in the national tests for 7-year-olds have risen slowly, but steadily, since the time of the last inspection, with the exception of 2002 when there was a dip. Improvements have been brought about as a result of better teaching overall, leading to more effective learning. In the 2004 tests, pupils reached average standards in reading and above average standards in writing, in relation to all schools and those in similar contexts. The current year two children are on course to reach standards that are above average. By the end of year two, most pupils are able to make good use of letter sounds, groups of letters and clues within the text to help them read new and difficult words, because these basic skills are taught well. Good use is made of guided reading in small groups to teach strategies and to develop pupils' comprehension skills. For example in a Year 1 class, children were skilfully encouraged to use expression and take account of punctuation, using a range of word building prompts and clues. As a result, children were highly motivated, engaged in their learning and made good progress. Reading is promoted strongly and pupils demonstrate a keen interest in books from an early stage, with good support and encouragement from home. New systems of phonic teaching recently implemented are accelerating progress.

40. In the 2004 tests for 11-year-olds, results were below average in relation to all schools and also to those in similar contexts. This represented a dip on the high performance of the school in the previous four years, when standards were above, and sometimes well above, average, as at the time of the last inspection. The dip was largely due to the profile of the class, which had a higher percentage of children with special educational needs than in previous years, and changes in arrangements, which did not facilitate learning as effectively for some groups. However, the current Year 6 pupils are on course to reach above average standards. Achievement for these pupils is good. Setting arrangements at Key Stage 2, where pupils are taught in groups of similar ability, are accelerating learning really well. However, progress is stronger in reading and speaking and listening than it is in writing.
41. Standards in speaking and listening are above average in both key stages and opportunities to develop skills are successfully highlighted by teachers in lessons. Throughout the school children are encouraged to become good listeners and confident speakers. In pairs, with talking partners and in small groups, their opinions are sought and given on a wide range of issues. Opinions are always valued, which increases their self-esteem and confidence. The quality of their listening skills, in particular, has a significant impact on learning in other areas.

42. Standards in writing are improving across the school and, in the 2004 tests, Year 2 pupils did particularly well. However, inspection evidence suggests that in both key stages more able pupils could do even better. This is because teachers do not always challenge these pupils as consistently and effectively as they might, in all parts of lessons. Also, opportunities to write for a range of purposes, using different styles for different audiences, exploring feelings and expressing opinions, are not consistently applied in all lessons. The use of extended sentences and imaginative vocabulary, which would take the writing to a higher level, is variable.
43. Teaching is good overall. Where it is best, progress is rapid. Teachers make effective links with previous work, use a range of teaching styles and make every second count. The questioning of pupils is challenging. Good use is made of the beginning and end of lessons to set targets for future learning and to revisit the aims of the lesson. As a result, children are keen to learn, rise to the challenges set and work well for extended periods. For example in a Year 6 ability set, pupils were encouraged to understand a balanced argument and to express their opinions with each other. This led to high levels of interest, as pupils were able to discuss their work and suggest how it might be improved. In a small number of lessons in both key stages, teaching lacks sparkle and fails to capture the interest of some pupils who do not do as well as they could. Writing tasks are a little pedestrian and, as a result, pupils' writing lacks imagination. The assessment of pupils in writing is not yet as sharp as it is in reading. In writing, teachers do not always have an accurate enough picture of what the children can do or how to help them pinpoint exactly what they need to learn next.
44. Pupils with special educational needs and those of lower ability achieve well because their needs are identified early. Work is planned accurately to match their needs and they receive good support from classroom assistants. There is also good support through a range of new initiatives, such as 'brain gym', which is skilfully delivered and is having a good effect on improving levels of concentration.
45. The subject leader provides good leadership and management. She has an accurate view of the strengths and weaknesses, through the scrutiny of pupils' work and teachers' plans and by monitoring lessons. She is leading the subject forward effectively and setting the right priorities for improvement. She has successfully led recent improvements in the teaching of phonics across Key Stage 1 and has made significant progress in improving library provision across the school.

LANGUAGE AND LITERACY ACROSS THE CURRICULUM

46. The links between literacy and other subjects are stronger in some aspects than in others. For example, pupils use their speaking and listening skills well in the vast majority of lessons. Opportunities to research information from books and the Internet are developing well. Improved library provision is adding to this picture, as are regular opportunities to practise library skills. However, in writing the picture is not yet a consistent one. For example, in science pupils make effective use of frameworks to support their recording of investigations and use lists and labels appropriately. In ICT, pupils are given every opportunity to discuss their work and use their skills in planning and recording. However, in religious education opportunities for writing are often limited to a question and answer format, or a brief retelling of a bible story. This limits the progress of more able pupils in particular,

because they could use their skills to much better effect. The school has identified this as an area for improvement and firm plans are in place to develop this further.

MATHEMATICS

Provision in mathematics is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards are well above average by the age of 11;
- There is very good teaching in evidence at Key Stage 2;
- The leadership and management of the subject are strong and effective;
- Mathematics needs to be further developed in other areas of the curriculum.

Commentary

47. Standards in mathematics are above average for children in Year 2 and well above for pupils in Year 6. Pupils achieve very well overall. Test results took a dip in 2004 for Year 6 pupils. However, this was because of the profile of the group, which had a higher percentage of pupils with special educational needs than in previous years. Also, changes in grouping arrangements had not worked as well for some pupils as the school had hoped. However, despite this dip, mathematics continues to be one of the schools strengths and evidence suggests that the dip will be reversed by the current Year 6 pupils, who are doing very well indeed.
48. Pupils have positive attitudes towards mathematics and enjoy the routines and patterns of work that the school has established. This is reflected in the enthusiasm shown during mental calculation and number work. Children participate fully, with obvious enjoyment. Good relationships are in evidence and engender confidence. Children often ask, for example, 'Can I have a couple of minutes to work it out?', with teachers replying 'Of course you can! I'm not going to rush you.' Comments such as 'You really are a superstar this morning' encourage and motivate.
49. Teaching in mathematics is very good overall. It is best at Key Stage 2, where most lessons are very good and one excellent lesson was seen. In the best lessons, the objectives are very clear and particularly well explained. These lessons are delivered at a cracking pace, retaining pupil's interest. High quality, probing questions test understanding to the limit. Occasionally, in some Key Stage 1 lessons, although pupils are fully challenged and stimulated in the shared parts, group tasks are more mundane and do not stretch all pupils as fully as they could. Teachers throughout the school plan thoroughly together and lessons frequently revisit and build really effectively on children's previous learning. The arrangement of Key Stage 2 pupils into ability groups really works well to ensure all pupils are effectively challenged and supported. This arrangement accelerates learning rapidly.
50. Homework is well used to both reinforce work taught within lessons and also to provide a valuable home/school link. Another valuable boost to pupils' learning is the use of mathematics software programs. They are being used voluntarily during lunchtimes by selected groups of children. The work encourages a high level of independence, as children move through the units at their own pace, with ongoing assessment allowing them to monitor their own progress.
51. The assessment and monitoring of pupils' work is done well. Pupils' progress and levels of achievement are individually tracked by their teachers, with targets reviewed termly to assess progress. The targets set for the children are demanding.

52. Pupils with special educational needs make very good progress because the teaching assistants support learning very well. They are both knowledgeable and well deployed. The impact of their work was particularly noticeable when they were supporting children during oral sessions. They effectively encouraged pupils to contribute their opinions, both on a one to one basis during 'paired' activities, as well as to the whole class.
53. The subject is well led and managed by a knowledgeable co-ordinator who has a firm overall understanding of pupils' progress within the subject. He gives good support and guidance to colleagues.

Mathematics across the curriculum

54. The school has identified that there could be greater links between mathematics and other subjects. There are examples of mathematics being used in science, ICT and design and technology, for example, to measure and handle data. In music and dance, pupils often use number skills to count beats and keep time. However, the picture could be more consistent.

SCIENCE

Provision in science is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The subject is well led and the co-ordinator has been successful in moving the subject forward since the last inspection;
- The curriculum is effectively enriched by visits, use of the local environment, participation in science events and good classroom displays;
- Assessment processes could be more consistent.

COMMENTARY

55. Standards in science are above average at both key stages and pupils achieve well. Pupils have done consistently well in the national tests for 11-year-olds over the past four years. A slight drop in results in 2004 can be explained by an increase of pupils with special educational needs in that year group. The present Year 6 pupils are on course to regain the high standards of previous years.
56. At the time of the previous inspection, the quality of teaching in science was judged to be satisfactory overall, with variations between classes and year groups. There has been good improvement since then and teaching is now judged to be good overall. During the inspection, some very good teaching was seen and, on occasions, there were elements of outstanding practice in some science lessons. This was exemplified in a Year 6 class, where pupils were taught in a stimulating and innovative way to create their own food chains and food webs. They learned through practical methods by physically constructing a web using wool and taking on the roles of the components, for example seed, bird and fox. They also learned through discussion and setting hypotheses. With excellent teacher guidance, they rapidly grasped the concept of interdependence between animals and plants. They could also talk knowledgeably, for example, about the process of photosynthesis at an advanced level, using the correct scientific terms.

57. Currently Year 1 pupils are studying plants. Having been out on a 'plant walk' in the school grounds and the local area, they examined the functions of the different parts of a plant and what constitutes a living thing. The work was effectively supported by the use of an interactive whiteboard, which allowed them to label the parts of the plant and watch pictorially the process of photosynthesis in its simplest form. When asked how they thought plants move, one child astutely said 'Some heads of flowers move to see the sun!' Their subsequent donning of plastic gloves to handle, examine and label the parts of a real plant led to some lively discussion and very good progress in their learning.
58. Good teaching in science ensures that lessons are usually enjoyable, productive and catch the pupils' interest well. Where lessons are at their best, teachers provide a range of well planned and stimulating activities with an emphasis on practical work. Pupils then have the opportunity to work in pairs, groups or individually, which helps to promote learning really effectively. In Year 4, for example, when working on the topic of 'Electricity', pupils were led effectively to construct a circuit to power a motor which would cause a clown's bow tie to spin! All groups were successful in the activity and some higher ability pupils were then able to take on the challenge of making it spin in the opposite direction.
59. The subject is well led and managed and the co-ordinator has been instrumental in moving science forward. She has a clear idea of the next steps for development, which include ensuring a consistent approach to assessment at both key stages. Plans for this are well in hand.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards have improved since the last inspection;
- There has been major investment in resources, which contributes to the rising standards;
- Very good subject leadership and management are ensuring that improvement is continuous;
- Staff expertise has improved but will need to continue to develop.

Commentary

60. Standards in ICT are better than usually seen at the end of both key stages and, in some aspects, significantly better. This is an improvement from the time of the last inspection, when standards were judged to be satisfactory. There are a number of signs that standards are continuing to rise throughout the school because a firm foundation of skills has been built. For example, Year 6 children are able and confident in discussing the way technology has developed over their years at school, and how what they learn in school feeds into the use of technology in wider society. Pupils' skills are strongest in word processing and in employing computers for research, using the Internet and CD-ROMs.
61. Improvements in standards have been brought about through the strong commitment of staff and governors to developing the subject. The major investment

in hardware has been a good decision, as has the large investment in high quality software. This is paying dividends. Teaching is consistently good and there were some very good lessons seen. Teachers use demonstrations skilfully on the interactive whiteboards to focus children's attention and to involve them closely in recapping previous learning and building new concepts on to this. Questioning skills are used well to draw information from the children and check on their understanding. In a Year 3 lesson, for example, the teacher was able to quickly ascertain who was confident with the use of email and who would need extra support in fulfilling the task. The teacher and well directed teaching assistant were then able to support learning accordingly. Activities and demands are matched sensitively to pupils' needs.

62. Very good subject leadership and management ensure that the school keeps up-to-date with new developments. The staff are well supported in the planning, delivery and assessment of the curriculum. As a result, they are becoming increasingly confident with the hardware and software they use and this, in turn, instils confidence in the pupils, who then learn rapidly. For example, Year 2 pupils are already displaying above average skills in some aspects, such as research using ICT. Another strength has been the commitment to staff development for the co-ordinator. Timetable release has enabled him to share good practice in this and other schools to enhance teaching and learning. Through the 'HOS' (Hands On Support) programme, the co-ordinator has, for example, supported colleagues in enabling Key Stage 1 pupils to access PowerPoint presentations for use in the history curriculum.
63. Whilst staff expertise has improved significantly since the last inspection, an area for further development is the need for continual training to enable staff to fully utilise the vast range of hardware and software purchased by the school. For example, the full range of online software subscribed to has not yet been fully exploited.

Information and communication technology across the curriculum

64. Teachers plan worthwhile opportunities for pupils to use computers in most curriculum areas. As a result, pupils practise their skills and apply them in many different situations. For example, Year 3 made good links between literacy and ICT, as they compared the use of email to standard written letters. Year 6 made good use of ICT in numeracy in the teaching of decimals work. The use of ICT for art in both key stages was evident in displays. Good use is made of interactive whiteboards and associated software, for example, in science to teach about circuits and conductors.

HUMANITIES

65. During the inspection, it was possible to observe only two **geography** lessons and one **religious education** lesson. No **history** lessons were seen. It is, therefore, not possible to make overall judgements on provision and teaching. Evidence was drawn from teachers' planning, discussions with staff and a scrutiny of pupils' work. In religious education and geography, pupils' achievement is as expected for their ages and in history it is good.
66. In geography, pupils cover an appropriate range of topics. By Year 2, pupils are able to produce maps and plans of the school building using a simple key, draw comparisons between new and old buildings and recognise the main features of a

town. In Year 6, pupils draw comparisons between themselves and children in other lands and have begun to explore world climate changes with an appreciation of the effects on the environment. Visits and visitors to support topics are used effectively to promote interest and extend pupils' thinking. For example, Year 4 pupils were engaged in their learning by a talk from a representative of the town of Angers and fieldwork is undertaken around the school and in the local community. Pupils respond well to these experiences and their learning accelerates as a result. Links with other areas of the curriculum, such as ICT, are improving. For example, with pupils act as world reporters by researching news and facts from the Internet and displaying them around the school.

67. In history, the curriculum is of good quality and pupils achieve well. They develop a good knowledge of the topics covered. Children enjoy their work and discuss it enthusiastically. They understand and can explain how things have changed over time. They learn about the lives of significant historical figures and past events from the history of Britain and the wider world. They can recognise why people did things, why events happened and what happened as a result. Good use is made of visits and visitors to support learning. For example, Year 5 pupils visited Quarry Bank Mill as part of their topic on the Victorians, whilst Year 3 has had a visit to Chester as part of their work on the Romans. These experiences really contribute to their understanding and they produce quality work as a consequence. Historical interpretation and enquiry is evident. For example, in Year 6 pupils researched World War II, using the Internet, followed by a question and answer session with a war veteran invited into the school. The value of this was extended via role playing and 'bringing to life' such things as evacuation and drill practice. Such lessons motivate the pupils, who apply themselves well and show interest in their work.
68. Achievement in religious education is not judged to be as good as at the time of the last inspection. The subject has been 'on the back burner' for a number of years and has lacked satisfactory co-ordination to drive it forward. However, staff have maintained an appropriate diet for pupils during this period and ensured that requirements are fully met. There are some strengths, for example, in the breadth of experiences pupils have, both in terms of Christianity and other major world religions. Links with the local church and visits, for example, to a Jewish museum also enhance learning. However, provision is inconsistent and lacks continuity at present, because the infant and junior classes follow different schemes of work; these do not always match up as effectively as they could. As a result, progress is not as sharp as it could be. The recently appointed co-ordinator has fully audited the subject and has a good handle on what needs to be done. She already has firm plans in place to revamp the curriculum, improve resources, support and monitor teaching and raise the subject's profile. Senior management are strongly supportive and have allocated funds to ensure this work can go ahead in the near future.

CREATIVE, AESTHETIC, PRACTICAL AND PHYSICAL SUBJECTS

69. Only a very small number of lessons were seen in **design and technology** and **art and design**; it is not possible, therefore, to make an overall judgement about provision or the quality of teaching in these subjects. However, examples of children's work were scrutinised, discussions were held with staff and planning was analysed.

70. There is evidence in the work samples that pupils produce high quality work in art and design. Displays show good development of skills and techniques. A display in Key Stage 2, for example, shows the same theme from different 'viewpoints', giving the chance for pupils to use their knowledge of a variety of art styles, including sketching, wax-resist paintings and comic strips.
71. Standards are better than seen typically at the end of Years 2 and 6. Pupils achieve well and standards have improved since the previous inspection. Pupils in Year 6, for example, learned about the importance of exploring and developing their ideas by collecting visual information in a sketchbook. Pupils' increasing skill and creativity is clearly demonstrated in Year 1, where a simple but very effective display on 'Warm and Cold Colours' was created, using mixed media including paint, oil pastels and crayon being rubbed and blended with each other. Lessons are often linked to other subjects to make pupils' work more meaningful.
72. Due to good leadership and management the staff are secure in their teaching. The co-ordinator has developed the national guidance for art with additional materials from commercial and local education authority resources. There is an increasing use of ICT. For example, in Year 2 various images were taken by the pupils with a digital camera in the nearby woods, then these images were used for interpretation into pencil and paint drawings, play dough modelling and batik-style fabric paintings. Visits to the school from local artists, as well as regular visits to Drumcroom art centre, enhance the teaching and learning of art in Key Stages 1 and 2. These connections help to nurture pupils' interest and develop their knowledge, skills and understanding.
73. Standards in design and technology are similar to those found in most schools. For example, in Key Stage 1 children have made finger puppets and Joseph's 'coat of many colours', making useful links with religious education and literacy. In Key Stage 2, pupils' work on designing a chair using soft material and card had been well designed and evaluated. This resulted in good quality work that met the design brief. In Key Stage 2, there was also evidence of links with science, with children making torches with electric circuits and switches.
74. In the lessons observed in Key Stage 1, teaching was good. Clear instructions were given and other adults in the classroom were used effectively to support learning. Good use was made of a computer software program to draw and design the pattern of the coat onto a paper pattern. The children enjoyed the work and high levels of concentration were in evidence, with careful measuring and cutting taking place.
75. Leadership and management are satisfactory. The co-ordinator is developing an assessment record and clear guidance for staff in delivering a range of practical units. There is also a portfolio of work being gathered, both as a photographic record of work undertaken and as an exemplar of good practice. The resourcing for food technology and the opportunities for children to work with softwood construction materials needs to be further developed.

MUSIC

Provision in music is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses:

- The subject is very well led and managed;
- There are very many opportunities for enrichment in the music curriculum;
- Standards and achievement in music are high throughout the school.

Commentary

76. Music is given a high profile and the school is justifiably proud of its high standards. Pupils are taught throughout the school by a very knowledgeable and talented teacher, who develops their skills and understanding to a level which is significantly better than seen in most schools.
77. Teaching is of a high standard. The specialist teacher has very good expertise and her enthusiasm transfers to her pupils, as do her high expectations. Pupils in Year 6 demonstrated an obvious enjoyment of the subject and a proficiency in the use of both tuned and untuned instruments, as the whole class played recorders and percussion, reading the music accurately and accompanying their own singing. Infant pupils are also reaching high standards in their work, as through singing, clapping and playing percussion instruments they were led to explore tempo, timbre, dynamics and rhythm. When pupils sing throughout the school the quality of sound created is very good indeed. They show a remarkable talent in being able to sing in parts and with descants.
78. Whenever possible music is linked to other subjects in a meaningful way. It is also a major contributor to the wider curriculum through out of school clubs, choir and fund raising activities. Music provision itself is enriched by the visiting teachers, who come in to school to teach a variety of instruments, and also by live performances from professional musicians. The school has also taken part in competitions, made a CD and put on many productions of a high standard. The subject is very well led and managed by the co-ordinator. Everything is well planned and she has clear ideas about how to improve provision even further.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

Provision in physical education is **outstanding**.

Main strengths and weaknesses:

- Standards are much better than usually seen at both key stages;
- Excellent subject leadership and strong commitment from other staff, parents, the community and governors ensure that the subject goes from strength to strength;
- There is excellent enrichment of learning through extra-curricular activities and participation in local sporting events.

79. Pupils achieve very well in physical education and reach standards which are significantly higher than seen in most schools. Very good teaching, and a rich range of extra-curricular activities that are available to the majority of pupils, ensure that children develop their skills very effectively. Teaching is very good overall. In the lessons seen, teachers were confident and enthusiastic themselves and this transfers to the pupils. Support staff often play a very strong part both in supporting and leading learning. For example in a Year 2 lesson, the assistant led the 'warm up' and 'cool down' sessions, as well as supporting a group with particular needs. In most lessons, teachers have high expectations of the pupils in terms of both their attitudes and the quality of their work. For example in a Year 6 dance lesson, children worked at a fast and furious pace with total concentration, as they choreographed a Haka in groups. The end results were of very good quality, with pupils being involved in evaluating their own performance and that of others. They report that they thoroughly enjoy physical education lessons.
80. The high standards reached are also the result of very effective leadership and management and the commitment of staff, parents and pupils. The subject leader is very knowledgeable, enthusiastic and committed to providing the best possible deal for all pupils. He works tirelessly in developing both the curriculum and the extra curricular provision. He gives very good support to colleagues. The school gives a high profile to physical education and provides many opportunities for all pupils. A key feature is the extent and range of sporting activities the school takes part in, both locally and further afield. Strong links have been forged with many local schools and organisations, including local football and rugby clubs. These really enhance provision. The involvement of experts such as local coaches, sports people, parents and ex pupils, both within the curriculum and in the many after school clubs on offer, give pupils a huge variety of exciting and worthwhile sporting experiences. The school has had many successes in a wide range of sporting events over recent years. The opportunities provided, for example being part of a team, have a strong impact on pupils' social and moral development, as well as increasing their physical skills.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP

81. This area is developing well because the school has chosen to make it a focus for improvement. A new co-ordinator has recently appointed to manage this. There are some strong elements. For example, 'Circle Time' and both class and school councils are well established to give pupils responsibility and a 'voice'. The very good relationships between children and staff give children the confidence to think through and articulate their ideas more productively. This was seen, for example, in a Year 4 'Circle Time', where children were asked to think of times when difficulties could have stopped them achieving what they wanted. They had to consider how they had felt and what had changed things. They all related very well to the boy who was unable to kick a ball over a set of posts but now, after practice, he can. The school is working very hard to promote healthy practices and raise awareness of health risks. There is appropriate provision in place for sex and relationships education and drugs awareness. Recycling bins have been placed in all classrooms and the school office. Good use is made of the 'Life Caravan' to give children first-hand experiences and life skills. The co-ordinator is seeking training in the area to update expertise and is starting to implement a system to ensure that children can build more progressively on their previous knowledge and skills from year-to-year.

PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

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

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