

# INSPECTION REPORT

## LEIGH C OF E INFANTS' SCHOOL

Leigh

LEA area: Wigan

Unique reference number: 106516

Headteacher: Mrs S J Howard

Lead inspector: Mr E Jackson

Dates of inspection: 10 – 12 January 2005

Inspection number: 267201

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

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## INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school: Infant School  
School category: Voluntary Aided  
Age range of pupils: 4-7  
Gender of pupils: Mixed  
Number on roll: 173

School address: Walmesley Road  
Leigh  
Lancashire  
Postcode: WN7 1YE

Telephone number: 01942 673889  
Fax number: 01942 602922

Appropriate authority: Governing Body  
Name of chair of governors: Rev Dr A Cunningham  
Date of previous inspection: April 1999

## CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

Leigh Church of England Infants' School serves the parish of St Mary the Virgin in Leigh centre. It has 173 pupils on roll from age four to seven, almost equally boys and girls. Almost all the pupils are ethnically white, with a much lower than average\* number of pupils from minority ethnic groups or of mixed heritage. A very small number of the pupils learn English as an additional language. A broadly average number of pupils is identified with special educational needs, mainly moderate learning difficulties. The number of these pupils with statements of their need is about average. Socio-economic circumstances locally are below average, but the number of pupils in receipt of free school meals is broadly average. The number of pupils who join or leave the school during the school year is about average. Children's attainment overall at entry to the reception classes covers a wide range, and varies year-on-year, but is generally below average. The school is part of a local Excellence Cluster, recognised for the improvements made to standards and the quality of education offered. It has also achieved the local authority's Quality Standard, and is working towards Investors in People status.

\* 'Average' refers to comparisons with the national average.

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
3108	E Jackson	Lead inspector	English Music Physical education French English as an additional language
9952	L Brock	Lay inspector	
29504	S Herring	Team inspector	Areas of learning in the Foundation Stage Mathematics Information and communication technology Art and design Design and technology
1390	A Markham	Team inspector	Science Geography History Special educational needs

The inspection contractor was:

Nord Anglia School Inspection Services  
Anglia House  
Carrs Road  
Cheadle  
Stockport  
SK8 2LA

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## PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

### OVERALL EVALUATION

**This is a very good school, providing very good value for money.** The headteacher sets very high standards, and her leadership and vision are outstanding. She is supported very well by other staff, governors and parents. Because teaching and learning are very good, the pupils achieve high standards. They love the school, behave very well, and work hard. The school has no significant weaknesses.

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

- Leadership and management are very good.
- Pupils achieve high standards in national tests by the end of Year 2.
- The staff plan their lessons very skilfully, directly on the pupils' assessed needs.
- Inclusion is excellent, and the pupils' personal development is very good.
- Development planning is innovative whilst maintaining the school's strengths.

The school has improved very well since its last inspection, maintaining and extending its strengths. Particular improvements have been made in leadership, pupils' personal development, and the overall quality of education.

### STANDARDS ACHIEVED

**Pupils' achievement is very good.** Results in the 2004 national tests in reading, writing, mathematics and science were high, improved very well since the last inspection. The pupils generally achieve very well in these core subjects despite the average attainment at entry to the reception classes being below average. In 2004, pupils' results in reading tests were in the highest five per cent when compared with results in similar schools. The current Year 2 pupils have also achieved very well from a well below average starting point to have reached above average standards in reading and writing, and well above average in mathematics and science. They also achieve above average levels in art and design, design and technology, geography, history, and information and communications technology (ICT).

Results in National Curriculum tests at the end of Year 2, compared with:	all schools			similar schools
	2002	2003	2004	2004
reading	A	A	A	A*
writing	B	A	A	A
mathematics	B	B	A	A

*Key: A\* - in the top 5%; A - well above average; B - above average; C - average; D - below average; E - well below average*

*Similar schools are those with similar percentages of pupils eligible for free school meals*

The children in reception achieve very well and most of them reach the goals expected by the time they enter Year 1, with a good proportion exceeding these goals. **Pupils' personal development is very good, as is their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.** The pupils say that they love the school, and this shows in their determination, very good behaviour, and very good attitudes to their learning. Attendance is broadly average.

## **QUALITY OF EDUCATION**

**The quality of education is very good.** There are real strengths in the **high quality of teaching**, leading to very good progress in pupils' learning. Most lessons are good, and a high proportion is very good or excellent, with the best in the reception and Year 2 classes. These lessons are founded on the very good relationships established at all levels. The staff use what they know of the pupils' learning very effectively in planning new work for them, although the pupils are not always sufficiently involved in evaluating their own learning. Those pupils with particular needs receive well-targeted support and challenge to spur their progress. Whilst pupils have independent tasks in lessons, their opportunities to decide for themselves how to tackle their work are limited. The curriculum is very well planned and innovative. Cross-curricular links are used well to interest and enthuse pupils. Pupils' care and welfare are very good, and the school takes good account of their views. Links with parents are very good, and parents' support for the school and their children is outstanding. Links with the community and other schools and colleges are very good. Resources for learning are good, but whilst the accommodation is managed and maintained very well, it has some shortcomings, particularly for the reception children.

## **LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT**

**Leadership and management are very good** overall, and the headteacher's leadership is outstanding. She has very clear vision for the continued development of the quality of education, but also insists on the maintenance of the school's ongoing strengths. She keeps a very close eye on the work of the whole school, and uses this knowledge very effectively in managing change. The deputy headteacher supports her very well, particularly in promoting English and the assessment of pupils' learning. Other key staff also offer very good support, as does the governing body. There is a coherent, shared view of how the school should best help its pupils learn, and all those involved work very effectively together to focus on key areas for improvement. The school follows the principles of best value very well, and governors ensure that all statutory requirements are met.

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

The pupils say that they really enjoy their lessons, citing art work, physical education, history and trips out as favourites. Discussions with pupils who left last year confirm their strong attachment and pride in the school. Parents also are very supportive, and praise the quality of teaching leading to very good progress for their children. They are also rightly complimentary about the way that the school is managed, and how approachable all the staff are. The inspection confirms these very positive views.

## **IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED**

As this is a very good school, it has no significant weaknesses, but the staff and governors could consider further improvements in:

- the pupils' understanding of the variety and diversity of cultural traditions in this country, and the wider world;
- the opportunities available for pupils to evaluate their own learning, and to make their own decisions on how they might tackle their work;

- the accommodation for children in the reception classes, as funds allow.



## PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS

### STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

#### Standards achieved in areas of learning, and subjects at Key Stage 1

Pupils achieve **very well**, and the **standards achieved by the end of Year 2 in 2004 were high**. Children achieve **above average levels** in almost all the goals expected **by the end of reception**.

#### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children in the reception classes achieve very well.
- A specific focus on how letters sound (phonics), and form words, ensures that the pupils in Years 1 and 2 understand how to read very well.
- Pupils write for a very good range of purposes, and this generally helps them to develop well above average literacy skills by age seven, but handwriting is less well developed.
- Pupils develop above average speaking and well above average listening skills, but opportunities to promote purposeful discussion are missed in some lessons.
- Improved teaching of mathematics has led to high standards of numeracy both in mathematics lessons, and in other subjects such as science.
- Pupils with special educational needs, and those who are gifted and talented, make very good progress towards the targets set for them in their learning plans.

#### Commentary

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
reading	18.0 (18.0)	15.8 (15.7)
writing	16.9 (16.3)	14.6 (14.6)
mathematics	18.2 (17.2)	16.2 (16.3)

*There were 38 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year*

1. The table illustrates how well the school has maintained high standards in national tests for Year 2 pupils in the last two years, improved strongly since the last inspection. Results in national assessments in reading, writing and mathematics were well above the national average in 2004, and compared very well with results in similar schools. They were in the top five per cent in reading, for example. These results exceeded the school's own high targets for these pupils, and represent very good achievement. The current Year 2 pupils are on track to attain above average levels in reading and writing, and well above average levels in mathematics and science. This represents very good achievement since entry to the school.
2. Children in the Foundation Stage start school with a range of attainment, but on average their attainment at entry is now below the levels expected for their age, particularly in communication, language and literacy. The school has fully adapted to this change from the last inspection when children's skills were mainly average as they started school. The children achieve very well and almost all reach the levels expected in the six areas of learning, and many achieve above these levels. This is because the activities planned for them, and the staff's conscientious support of their

learning, ensure that they make good progress in their learning in most lessons. They reach average levels in creative development, and this is an area where the restrictions of the accommodation have some impact on the quality of provision. The lack of space inhibits the setting out of permanent areas for free painting, for example. However, children do well in developing musical skills because the teaching is of high standard.

3. There is a determined approach to improving standards for all pupils, and staff work hard to ensure that the differing needs of pupils are met. Good provision is made for the small number of identified gifted and talented pupils and consequently they achieve very well. Teaching assistants are used very effectively to support those pupils with special educational needs and, as a result, these pupils make very good progress and are achieving very well in relation to their prior attainment. The few pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds make the same very good progress as their peers.
4. Listening skills are promoted very well. The pupils achieve very well, and are patient and interested listeners. Speaking skills are above average for the current Year 2, representing good achievement. However, some opportunities are missed for pupils to talk about their work with each other, or to comment on other pupils' work in discussion.
5. Pupils achieve very well in reading across the school. The staff have been specifically trained in using a particular short daily programme concentrating on the sounds that make words. By Year 2, almost all pupils read at the levels expected for their age, and an above average proportion of them achieve above the expected level. Last year, almost half of the Year 2 pupils were assessed as achieving the level expected of children two years older. Pupils' spelling skills are also improved well by this approach.
6. Writing is taught very well so that the pupils in Year 2 make very good progress in their learning and achieve very well. They write confidently in a range of styles and for different purposes. Higher attaining pupils are working at levels expected of older children. Achievement in handwriting is satisfactory overall.
7. In mathematics, pupils achieve very well towards the end of Year 2. There is a clear emphasis on children applying their knowledge in new and often practical situations. A very thorough analysis of previous test results identified this as an area for development, and the increased focus is helping more pupils to attain the higher than expected level for their age. By Year 2, pupils' basic number skills are well-established, and they confidently work with numbers up to 100, some of them beyond. Gifted and talented pupils in Year 1 have tasks and activities that challenge them appropriately, and set them on track to achieve well above average levels by Year 2.
8. In science, pupils achieve very well across the school. They develop a good range of scientific knowledge and understanding, and by Year 2 have begun to develop investigative techniques well for their age. They present their work well, and use their numeracy and literacy skills very effectively in presenting their results.
9. The school is currently exploring fresh approaches to teaching the curriculum, and to raising pupils' achievement in the rest of the subjects taught. There were few opportunities in the inspection to assess standards in subjects other than the core,

but indications are that pupils achieve above the levels generally seen in art and design, design and technology, geography, history, ICT and personal, social and health education.

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

Pupils' personal development is **very good**. As a result, pupils' attitudes, behaviour and the development of their personal qualities, including their spiritual, moral and social development, are **very good** and cultural development is **good**. Pupils' levels of attendance and punctuality are **satisfactory**.

## **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Pupils enjoy their lessons and are enthusiastic about all the activities the school provides.
- Very good relationships between adults and children help pupils to develop self-confidence and self-esteem.
- Pupils' behaviour is very good because the school provides a very good environment for learning and very good opportunities for pupils to develop moral values.
- Assemblies contribute very well to pupils' spiritual development.
- There is a harmonious atmosphere in the school because pupils learn to respect and care for each other and develop social responsibility.
- Provision for multicultural development is good, but there are opportunities missed to further develop pupils' understanding of diversity.

## **Commentary**

10. Teachers have very good relationships with all the pupils and encourage and praise them effectively to develop their confidence and self-esteem. The staff make lessons stimulating and interesting. Consequently, pupils have very positive views about school and enjoy the very good range of experiences provided for them. This helps them to learn and to achieve very well. In lessons, pupils are enthusiastic and work hard. They appreciate the help offered to them by staff and welcome each day's different activities with interest and excitement. Relationships between pupils with special educational needs and support staff are very good and ensure that these pupils feel secure and confident in all aspects of school life, and achieve very well. Children in the reception classes are on course to achieve above the levels expected by the end of the year in their personal, social and health education.
11. The school provides a caring and friendly environment for pupils, which promotes very good behaviour. Staff's expectations of positive attitudes and effort start in the reception class and continue consistently throughout the school so that pupils know exactly where they stand and how they should behave. Staff make very good use of praise, which boosts pupils' self-esteem, but they are also swift to challenge any less than good behaviour, encouraging pupils to understand that they are letting themselves down. The effective deployment of teaching assistants and the learning mentor enables close attention to be given to the small number of pupils who occasionally exhibit poor behaviour. At playtimes and lunchtimes, pupils play happily together and there is a good sense of a whole school family. Almost all parents agree that their children like school, that behaviour is good and that bullying is not an issue. There were no exclusions in the year prior to this inspection.
12. Pupils' spiritual development is very good because they are presented with very good opportunities to reflect on their own feelings and empathise with others during assemblies and the timetabled personal, social and health education sessions. Assemblies focus on principles such as tolerance, fairness, justice and love. These occasions are used very well to celebrate pupils' achievements and to develop their understanding of how best to work with others.
13. Pupils' social development is very good. They work very well together in class and carry out a range of responsibilities enthusiastically. Older pupils are used as 'playground buddies' and they take care to ensure that anyone who is lonely or unhappy is given attention. These 'buddies' show mature understanding for their age.

of how to help other pupils. Library monitors keep the library corner neat and tidy and pupils are keen to help the teacher by taking the register to the office after registration. Regular support for charities raises pupils' awareness of the needs of others.

14. The school makes very good use of artists in residence, musicians, visits and visitors to develop pupils' awareness of local and traditional British culture. However, it does not yet do enough to help its pupils to appreciate the richness and variety of cultures in the multi-cultural society that is modern Britain. Although the school has taken some steps towards widening pupils' horizons, for instance basing artwork on African art in Year 2, the school is aware that this is an area requiring more attention.
15. Attendance is satisfactory, although slightly below average last year. Unauthorised absence is very low. The school takes positive initiatives to encourage parents to ensure their children attend every day, and most pupils are punctual.

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

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

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

**QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL**

The quality of education is **very good**, maintained at high levels since the last inspection. Teaching and learning are very good, as is assessment overall. The curriculum is rich and varied, fully meeting statutory requirements. Care, guidance and support are very good, as are partnerships with parents, the community, and other schools and colleges.

**Teaching and learning**

Teaching and learning are **very good**, as is assessment overall.

**Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The staff plan tasks and activities that meet curriculum requirements, but also match pupils' needs.
- The high expectations of the pupils' involvement in their work set by the headteacher and staff leads to very good concentration in lessons and highly effective learning for the pupils.
- Equality of opportunity and inclusion are excellent – pupils with special needs, those who are gifted and talented, boys, girls, and pupils from minority ethnic groups all have their needs carefully met.
- Support staff are deployed very effectively to work with individuals and groups.
- Pupils apply themselves very well to their work and this promotes their learning very well.
- Opportunities are missed for pupils to decide how they will tackle their work.
- Assessment is very good, and used very effectively to meet individual needs.
- Pupils have good understanding for their age of how to improve their work, although could on occasion be more involved in evaluating their own achievement through clearer marking.

## Commentary

### **Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 29 lessons**

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
1	10	15	3	0	0	0

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

16. Pupils' learning has improved to be very good because the teaching is now very good overall. The table shows that almost all lessons were at least good, and there was no unsatisfactory teaching seen. In the excellent lesson, a Year 2 teacher and support assistant (and some pupils) dressed in Victorian costume for a history lesson. This helped the pupils through role play to develop their understanding very well of how children in the past experienced school. This was an outstanding example of how the staff plan very effectively to meet the pupils' needs and cover the curriculum effectively.
17. Provision for pupils with special educational needs is very good, with very effective use being made of teaching assistants in lessons. Teaching assistants have good relationships with pupils and support them very well individually or in groups so that they make very good progress and achieve very well. The staff are very alert to the needs of boys and girls, and cater very well for the identified gifted and talented pupils. For example, in writing, talented pupils are encouraged to experiment with language, and produce complex sentences and extended stories.
18. In all their work, the staff make it clear to the pupils that they are expected to work hard, enjoy their activities, and achieve high standards, particularly in the core subjects. A newly qualified teacher has been inducted superbly into this approach, and she reinforces the school's high standards well with her Year 1 class. Pupils respond very well to these expectations from all the staff. For example, in a very good dance lesson for reception children, the teacher used music very skilfully to inspire their movements to tell the story of 'Jack and the Beanstalk.' The children joined in very enthusiastically and improved their responses through practice very well.
19. Pupils are set in higher and lower attaining sets for work in English and mathematics. This is an effective approach as it helps the staff to focus directly on different pupils' needs. For example, in a very good mathematics lesson with Year 2 pupils, they made very good progress in calculating with amounts of money up to £7. Here, very good use was made of ICT resources, including lap-top computers, the computer suite, and the interactive whiteboard.
20. Occasionally, opportunities are missed by the staff to encourage the pupils to decide for themselves how they will tackle their work. For example, in an otherwise good games lesson, pupils were not encouraged by the teacher to use the skills they had practised to develop their own practice activities and paired games. In an art and design lesson for Year 1 pupils, all pupils were fully engaged in drawing and making pictures and models as part a 'Toymaker' theme. There were four adults helping the pupils, but the pupils had very limited opportunities to decide how they might respond to the ideas in their own way, or in choosing their own materials to work with.

21. The staff have worked hard to develop effective assessment procedures in all subjects, led very well by the head and deputy headteacher. These systems are used very well, and drive the very effective planning of lessons and tasks for the pupils. They also provide very good data to set targets for improvement, shared with the pupils and their parents. This is an important element in the school's success in helping pupils to achieve very well. Teachers and support staff help the pupils to improve in discussion very effectively during lessons, through their ongoing assessment. However, marking of completed work does not always give sufficient guidance to help pupils take the next steps in their learning. There are also missed opportunities to involve the pupils more in assessing and evaluating their own performance in most subjects.

### **The curriculum**

The school provides a **very good**, wide and well-balanced curriculum that meets all statutory requirements. The opportunities provided for enrichment of the curriculum through clubs, visits and special events are **very good**. The accommodation and resources are **satisfactory** overall.

## **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The curriculum for children in reception and Years 1 and 2 is well planned and innovative, and links between different areas of learning are used well to interest and enthuse pupils.
- Provision for pupils' personal, social and health education is very good.
- Equal opportunity and inclusion are excellent.
- Provision for pupils with special educational needs is very good.
- Pupils are prepared very well for the later stages of their education.
- Opportunities for enrichment through sport and other activities are excellent.

## **Commentary**

22. The pupils benefit from a stimulating curriculum that contributes significantly to their very effective learning and high standards. In most subjects, the school has adopted nationally recommended schemes, but has reviewed and adapted these to ensure that they meet the needs of all pupils. Due emphasis is placed on literacy and numeracy and good attention has been given to creativity and the development of links between subjects and areas of learning.
23. The curriculum is successfully enriched through a range of activities including themed weeks for art and science, visits by local poets and artists, and visits to educational centres and the local church. The imaginative delivery of the curriculum through lively teaching, both within and beyond the school day, brings excitement and challenge to learning and successfully extends pupils' skills. The curriculum has improved well since the previous inspection.
24. The school promotes educational inclusion extremely well. The needs of all girls and boys from whatever ethnic or social background are catered for very effectively so that they achieve very well. Pupils with special educational needs are fully involved in lessons, whether they are withdrawn to a quiet place or involved in the classroom. Their learning needs are diagnosed and analysed and careful attention is given to planning programmes that meet their learning needs. The provision for gifted and talented pupils is very good and the work is suitably challenging for them. Consequently, their achievement is high.
25. The curriculum for children in the Foundation Stage in the reception classes is stimulating and planned carefully to provide very good variety for them. It presents them with many good opportunities to explore and investigate both inside and outside the classroom. The staff work well together and support the children well in all the areas of learning. A dance lesson using 'Jack and the Beanstalk' as the theme was inspirational for them as they developed their creative and dramatic movements, and illustrates effectively how the staff plan and provide resources that match the children's needs very well.
26. Liaison between the staff in the reception classes and Year 1 is developed well. This is having a positive effect on maintaining and improving standards. Liaison between this school and the nearby infant and junior school is very good. A number of initiatives ensure that pupils are very well prepared for the next stage of their education. Provision for pupils' personal, social and health education, including drugs and sex and relationships' education is very good, both in specific lessons and through work in other subjects.



27. The school provides a varied programme of after-school and lunchtime clubs. These include football, rugby, mathematics, a story club, recorder groups, choir, French and ICT. Effective use is made of outside coaches, parents and staff to provide this excellent range of activities, which extends pupils' experiences very well. The clubs are much appreciated by the pupils and parents.
28. The level of both teaching and support staffing is good. There is a good number of teaching assistants who are used very effectively to support learning in all areas of the curriculum. Their contributions enhance learning for all pupils. Resources for learning are good, but the accommodation has some shortcomings. There is no direct water supply in the Year 1 and 2 classrooms. The reception area is small for the number of children; the hall is also rather small, with some of the limited space given up to a library area; the ICT suite is rather cramped; and there are no cloakrooms. The school has active plans to enlarge the reception area. The staff and pupils cooperate very well in minimising the effects of the limited space, and ensure that the environment is bright, clean, attractive and stimulating.

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

The provision for pupils' care, welfare, and health and safety is **very good**. The guidance and support that pupils receive is **very good**. The school achieves its aim of providing a happy, secure and caring environment where all children are valued equally. The staff involve the pupils **well**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The quality of care and support for pupils is very good.
- There is a high level of awareness of pupils' needs and support is very sensitive and well-directed.
- The involvement of pupils through seeking and acting on their views is good.

### **Commentary**

29. The school provides very good support for pupils with special educational needs and as a result they make very good progress. The school has developed good links with external agencies to provide specialist support when this is needed and keeps parents well informed about ways in which they can support their children.
30. Everyone in the school community is united in making all children feel valued, cared for and loved. This gives them confidence and provides a firm bedrock for learning. Pupils from a variety of ethnic backgrounds are welcomed in school and the school feels that they enrich each other's lives. The very good links between the school and parents and carers make a significant contribution to the quality of care provided. Pupils also support and care for each other, as when older pupils care for younger pupils in the playground and in the dining hall. Although there is no school council, the school listens to and respects the views of pupils. Relationships between teachers and pupils are caring, constructive and mutually trusting and respectful. Pupils confirm that they feel valued, safe and supported in the way they are treated.
31. The procedures for checking safety and carrying out risk assessments are effectively undertaken and recorded. There are two fully qualified members of staff to carry out

first aid duties, ably supported by others with emergency first aid training. Child protection procedures are very good. The designated teacher is fully trained and has good support from the local authority adviser and the education welfare officer. Training in child protection procedures to update staff has been arranged. Through the very good provision for personal and social education, pupils learn to be responsible citizens and be aware of personal safety and healthy eating. The arrangements to ensure that children in their reception year settle into school routines are good. A series of meetings shared with parents about school routines and expectations prepares children well for entry. Children who find it difficult to settle into classroom routines are treated with unending kindness and understanding. The Breakfast and After School Clubs provide good care and support, particularly for parents in employment.

32. There is a very good climate for learning, as seen when Year 1 pupils felt confident enough to contribute ideas on road safety during a personal and social education lesson. Pupils' personal as well as academic development is monitored very well. Individual targets are given for pupils to work towards. During a discussion with Year 2 pupils, they confirmed that teachers welcome their contribution to lessons or to responsibilities around the school. Ex-pupils in Year 3 at the junior school said they had felt confident and well-prepared on transfer because the school helps them to become independent. Pupils grow and flourish within the "family" of the school.

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

The school's links with parents are **very good**. There are **very good** links with the community and with other schools and colleges. The school sees parents as partners in their children's learning, trusting each other in their efforts to support children.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- There is a very good partnership with parents, who support the school very well.
- Parents receive very good information both informally and through formal meetings.
- The school has very good links with the local community.
- The school links well with other schools and colleges as part of the "Excellence Cluster".

### **Commentary**

33. The contribution of parents to children's learning at school and at home is very good. Parents say that this is a happy school where their children are provided with a good range of learning experiences. There was unanimous support through the questionnaires that their children like school, are expected to work hard and are making good progress. Parents have a clear understanding of their children's achievements and if they have a problem or concern, they feel able to approach the school with it. The school works in close partnership with parents of pupils with special educational needs in the education of their child. It keeps them fully informed of their child's progress.
34. Fifteen parents and grandparents help regularly in school and more can be called upon to support special occasions. A range of courses for parents are offered in school, beginning with the INSPIRE programme for parents of pre-school children, to more detailed courses on how children learn in the different year groups. All these

initiatives have a very good impact on pupils' learning both at school and in the home. The school seeks parents' views well, and acts on the findings effectively.

35. The information that parents receive is very good. As a result of the school allowing parents to escort their children into class each day, there is much informal communication between parents and teachers. This enables day to day concerns to be dealt with immediately. There is a friendly prospectus and an informative annual report to parents from the governing body. There are regular, interesting newsletters and many letters home about events in school. There are two formal consultation evenings each year, with an optional one in the summer before reports are sent out. Reports to parents on their children's progress contain detailed comments on the progress they make in subjects and targets for improvement are set. Events in school are well-attended with almost all parents attending information evenings, concerts or assemblies.
36. Links with the community and other schools and colleges are very good. Parents appreciate the school Breakfast and After School Clubs provided by an external agency. The good links with the Parent/Toddler group and local nurseries and pre-school groups are ensuring that information on the achievement of children is passed on to the school when they enter the reception class. The experiences of parents in the Mother/Toddler group are enhanced by the very good Family Learning programme offered by the local FE College. There are very good links with the church. The choir sings in the church and a family service is offered each month.
37. There is a very good partnership with the junior school to which most pupils transfer. This entails the meeting of teaching staff to transfer records, an initial visit for Year 2 pupils and information evenings for parents. Junior school pupils were observed mixing happily with infant school children in the before and after school clubs. Visits into the local and wider community enhance pupils' learning, for example to Wigan Pier for a study of the Victorians, a country park and local supermarkets. Pupils confirm their enjoyment of visitors like artists and dance specialists and they also enjoy supporting local and national charities.

## **LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT**

Leadership and management are **very good**, maintaining the high quality identified in the last inspection. The **excellent leadership and vision of the headteacher** creates a very effective learning ethos and drives the school's success in raising standards. The leadership of other key staff is **very good**. Management of the school is **very good**. The governing body has a very clear understanding of the school's strengths and needs, and governance is **very good**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Excellent leadership by the headteacher is very well supported by the very good deputy headteacher and Governing Body.
- There is an outstanding commitment to inclusion for all pupils.
- Very good evaluation of the work of the school is clearly reflected in the very clear planning for future improvements.

### **Commentary**

38. The excellent leadership and outstanding determination of the headteacher is crucial in the exceptional success in fulfilling her very high aspirations of achievement for pupils. Her vision is excellent and this is translated well into a very comprehensive and well-researched plan, informed by very good, honest self-evaluation, to guide the future work of the school. She is very well supported by a very able deputy headteacher, who has made an excellent contribution in some aspects. This is seen in the systems she has introduced to track the progress of every child to ensure they meet their individual targets, and this has been a crucial element in raising achievement.
39. Very good key staff are given the time and the authority to monitor and manage their subjects very well. This has led to very good maintenance of the school's strengths, and very good improvements in standards and achievement. This is exemplified in the improvements in the provision for ICT since the last inspection. Excellent staff teamwork, including that from support staff, is evident in all aspects of the school's work and contributes very well to the excellent procedures for the induction of new staff.
40. It is the unanimous view of parents that the school is very well led and managed. They are very confident that any difficulties they share with the headteacher will be dealt with very effectively. These very good links with parents have helped to improve pupils' achievement. The way in which the school includes all pupils is excellent. This is evident in the very high level of support for pupils where it is needed and also the early identification and challenge for pupils who are gifted and talented. This leads to very good achievement for all pupils in school.
41. The leadership and management of special educational needs are very good. Procedures are very well organised and effective. As a result, the support given to pupils with special educational needs is very effective so that they make very good progress and achieve very well.
42. The governing body fulfils its statutory duties very well. Governors are regular visitors to school, leading assemblies and supporting in lessons, and are very aware of its strengths. Their very good awareness of what should be done to improve the school enables them to make a very good contribution to strategic planning. They are extremely supportive of the school, but nevertheless they ask searching questions and do not hold back from challenging the headteacher to explain the school's work and future plans. A major contribution has been the outstanding quality of its appointment of the current management team, which has resulted in the creation of a very good school.
43. Financial control and budgetary planning are very good. Spending is prudent and is closely linked to the priorities identified in the School Improvement Plan. The school has kept a realistic amount in reserve to support the proposed development of the reception unit. Principles of best value are applied very well.

***Financial information for the year April 2003 to March 2005***

Income and expenditure (£)		Balances (£)	
Total income	436,496	Balance from previous year	50,940
Total expenditure	408,157	Balance carried forward to the next	79,279*

Expenditure per pupil	2,668
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\*includes Standards Fund to July 2005 of £10,562, and carry forward of capital towards planned extension of reception classes.

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

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

Provision for children in the Foundation Stage is **very good**. This good improvement since the last inspection is due to a good improvement in the quality of teaching and assessment.

On admission to the Reception Unit, the attainments of the children vary but are below average overall. The school has fully adapted to this change from the last inspection when children's skills were mainly average as they started school. Consistently good teaching, and a very broad curriculum based firmly on the needs of young children, enables children to achieve very well. Children are well prepared for entry into Year 1. Children with special educational needs are identified early, and make very good progress towards the targets set for them.

The accommodation is satisfactory. The reception unit is bright and well cared for and is used very well to provide an interesting learning environment, though the school recognises that it is a little cramped should all the children be in the unit at the same time. However, creative use of other classrooms and of the computer suite extends the space available effectively. The school has plans to extend the unit, indoors and outside, as soon as finance becomes available.

The quality of teaching is very good, with particular strengths in the teaching of personal development and basic literacy, numeracy and computing skills so that children's learning in these areas advances at a very good rate. The very good use made of very accurate, regular assessments to match work to challenge and support individual children means that all children achieve very well. However, the day-to-day observations of the children by all the adults in the Foundation Stage are not sufficiently structured. The varied skills of the good number of support staff are used very well to enhance children's learning.

The Foundation Stage is led and managed well. Planning of the curriculum is very thorough. There is very good teamwork in which the contributions of all are valued and this is a major contribution to the very good achievement of young children.

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

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

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

- Children respond well to the high expectations of behaviour, and very good support is given to help the very small minority of children who find it difficult to comply.
- The children have a good understanding of a simple system of rules, sanctions and rewards.
- Children develop good attitudes to school.
- They are given good opportunities to consider feelings and emotions.

#### **Commentary**

44. Teaching is very good and children achieve very well. The vast majority of children meet or exceed the recommended goals in this area by the time they leave reception. Activities are interesting and suitably practical so that children develop good attitudes to school from an early age. The children have a good understanding of reception routines, for example waiting turns, as they are given very clear reasons; children waited to retrieve their Giant's Glasses from the table because they could not all fit round the table at once.

45. The school has an outstanding commitment to inclusion and provides a very good level of support, including a learning mentor, to help a tiny minority of children who sometimes demonstrate extreme behaviour. This has helped these children to benefit from settling into school whilst minimising any impact on others. The very good relationships between all adults provide a strong example for the children, who learn to work well together. Children have good opportunities to consider feelings and emotions and this helps them to be considerate of others.

## **COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY**

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

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- There is a strong emphasis on the direct teaching of basic skills so children achieve very well.
- The very good links with parents support children's reading development very well.

### **Commentary**

46. Teaching is very good and so children achieve very well. From below average attainments on entry to the reception classes, many children reach standards that are above average by the time they enter Year 1.
47. The basic skills of reading and writing are taught systematically, and children learn very well. Work in children's books shows very clear development in writing from the start of the year, when most children could make only isolated marks. There is a very good balance between allowing children independence in their creative writing and pushing their work to the limits through very well targeted suggestions. This was seen in a teaching session for average and higher attaining children where the teacher first demonstrated how to write a letter to the giant and then asked the children to write their own. Children showed good concentration to improve and complete their letters, with many higher attaining children using capital letters and full stops correctly.
48. There is a good emphasis on developing reading skills, with many objects and displays clearly labelled. Very good assessment procedures are used to give children an appropriate reading book from an early stage. Children share books regularly with an adult at school and there is very good support from parents, who practise words or share a book with their children each night. This regular practice and structured approach to learning words and sounds helps children to make rapid gains in their reading skills. The majority of children can read simple sentences and lower attaining children have learned to make good attempts at reading words using initial sounds and picture clues to help.

## **MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT**

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

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Practical resources and activities are used very effectively to help children understand.
- Assessments are used very well to plan work that provides a high level of challenge and appropriate support.

## **Commentary**

49. Teaching is very good and children achieve very well. By the time children start in Year 1. A very good variety of activities including clapping and reciting rhymes helps children to develop good counting skills. There is a strong emphasis on developing understanding through interesting and imaginative practical activities. This was demonstrated well in a lesson in the hall in which the teacher had prepared with outsize dominoes, hopscotch and number lines. This promoted excitement, interest and enjoyment and helped children to develop their numeracy skills very well.
50. Very good assessment is used very well to plan the next stage of learning for different groups. There is a high level of support to help lower attaining children to practise and consolidate their counting skills, whilst those who are already confident with these skills are challenged to relate the combining of two groups of objects to simple addition. There is a good emphasis on developing mathematical language, as when using giant feet to compare whether different lengths are longer or shorter.

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

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

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Computing skills are taught systematically so that children achieve standards that are above average.
- There is a good range of practical activities to develop children's understanding of the world.
- The available outdoor area, dedicated for reception use, does not lend itself to frequent and regular use as an integrated learning space.

## **Commentary**

51. Teaching is good and children achieve well in this wide area of learning. Standards are above average by the time they enter Year 1. A strong aspect is the systematic, direct teaching of computing skills so that children learn to use computers with confidence. Clear explanations and demonstrations and the opportunity for each child to have sole use of a computer helps children to develop their skills well.
52. Teachers plan a wide range of interesting activities across all aspects, so that children learn to distinguish between old and new toys, observe the changes in seasons and experience different materials. Children have good daily access to a very good range of construction toys and natural materials such as sand and water to build their understanding. The children use the attractive school grounds to plant seeds and bulbs. However, the outside area to which they have direct access is limited and is not suitable for use as an extension to the classroom for planned activities.

## **PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT**

Provision for physical development is **good**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Children are taught to use a good range of tools and implements.
- Good use is made of the hall for movement lessons.



- Use of large apparatus is underdeveloped.

### **Commentary**

53. Teaching is good and children achieve well so that standards are above average by the time they enter Year 1. Children develop good skills through a very good range of activities such as sticking small sequins on giant glasses, steering beads round a wire maze, and cutting out shapes accurately. Children benefit from using the large hall in movement lessons. In a very good music and movement lesson children were encouraged to run, jump and turn and moved with control in time to the varied tempo of the music. Use of large equipment is less effective as children are not encouraged to explore different ways of moving under and through rather than just along the apparatus.

## **CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT**

Provision for creative development is **good**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The imaginative play areas are used well for children to express themselves in role-play.
- Teaching expertise is very effective in enriching children's musical experiences.
- Opportunities for children to explore colour and express their creativity through free painting are limited.

### **Commentary**

54. Teaching is good and children achieve well. Standards are broadly average by the time they enter Year 1. Adults join in role-play, and this considerably enhances the quality of children's play in the imaginative play areas. For example, a classroom assistant assumed the role of Jack's mother, requiring one child to explain why he had sold the cow for a handful of seeds, exercising his imagination and improving his speaking skills.

55. The musical expertise of one member of staff is used very well to enhance children's singing and music making. Children use a sound range of techniques to create pictures including collage and use clay to make models. However, adults largely direct these activities and there are limited opportunities for children to experiment with mixing colours or to express themselves through their own choice of painting.

## **SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGE 1**

### **ENGLISH and FRENCH**

#### **French**

The school has recently adopted a language course in consultation with its partner High School to teach French in Year 2. There is also a graduate language specialist in Year 1 who teaches spoken French to both Year 1 classes. This is a potentially exciting development, and the pupils already experience vocabulary and conversation about greetings, birthdays and simple counting. In a lesson seen, pupils in Year 2 had good opportunities to listen to tapes of native French speakers and repeat simple phrases, learn songs with good repetition, and play counting games.

The course they follow also includes reading printed French text. This is used too early in their learning, and has begun to affect their pronunciation adversely, as they say the words in the text as they would English. However, the school has the staff capable of continuing this development effectively, if the focus on practical and active oral work is extended. For example, in a Year 1 class, there is a role-play area set out as a bistro, with French posters and incidental text displayed. This provides a very effective way to promote spoken French and French culture for these pupils.

## English

Provision in English is **very good**.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- The subject is very well led and managed, and pupils make very good progress to achieve high standards by age seven in national tests because the teaching is very good.
- Pupils develop good speaking and very good listening skills, but opportunities to promote purposeful discussion are missed in some lessons.
- A specific focus on how letters sound (phonics), and form words, ensures that the pupils understand how to read very well.
- Pupils write for a very good range of purposes, helping them to develop very good literacy skills by age seven, but handwriting is less well developed.
- Assessment is very good, and informs the grouping arrangements that are very effective in helping staff to focus directly on pupils' needs.

### Commentary

56. Achievement is very good, and standards are high in national tests, improved well since the last inspection. By age seven in 2004, pupils attained well above average levels compared to the national average, and in the top five per cent in reading compared to similar schools. This is because the quality of teaching is very good, leading to very good learning for the pupils. Intrinsic to the high achievement are the staff's high expectations, skilled planning, very effective use of support staff, and very good use of assessment information.
57. Listening skills are promoted very well. The pupils achieve very well, and are patient and interested listeners. There are good opportunities for them to develop their speaking skills, and these skills are above average for the current Year 2, representing good achievement. However, some opportunities are missed for pupils to talk about their work with each other, or to comment on other pupils' work in discussion.
58. Pupils achieve well in reading across the school, often supported well by their parents. As well as the work in reading in general English lessons, the staff focus directly on teaching the pupils to work out how to read individual words from the sounds of the letters, individually and in combination. The staff have been specifically trained in using a particular short daily programme that they feel is very effective in achieving good results for the pupils. They are right.
59. Almost all the current Year 2 pupils read at the levels expected for their age, and an above average number of them achieve higher than expected levels. Last year almost half of the Year 2 group were assessed as achieving the level expected of children two years older. Their spelling skills are also improved by the staff's approach to teaching phonics, and in national tests pupils have achieved much higher levels than expected for their age. Both boys and girls achieve reading levels on average equivalent to eight months ahead of boys and girls nationally.
60. Writing is taught very well so that the pupils in Year 2 attained well above average results in last year's tests, achieving very well. The current Year 2 also achieve very

well, and attain above average levels. They write confidently in a range of styles and for different purposes. They retell stories with good style, write interesting letters, such as to Father Christmas, and make well-sequenced lists, sometimes word-processed on a computer. In a very good lesson, Year 2 pupils experimented with language creatively in response to their reading of 'The Iron Man'. This is a challenging text for pupils of this age, and they achieved very well in both understanding the complex language, and in writing their own version of a section of the story. Higher attaining pupils are working at levels expected of older children. Gifted and talented pupils discuss their work with very good understanding, and have written extended descriptive passages showing very good skills for their age.

61. Handwriting is satisfactory overall. Most pupils form letters accurately when printing, and distinguish lower and upper case effectively. However, although there is a guidance policy, there does not appear to be a common approach amongst the staff to the promotion of a good style, and there is a lack of clarity about when pupils should move from printing to using a joined script.
62. Leadership and management of the subject are very good. The subject leader also leads developments in assessment, and has initiated very effective systems that help the staff focus their planning very well on pupils' needs. The effective grouping arrangements are based on this very good assessment.

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

63. There are good opportunities for pupils to use their literacy skills in other subjects across the whole curriculum. Reading and writing are promoted well in history and geography, and ICT is used to extend pupils' skills. Speaking and listening are also promoted effectively across the curriculum, particularly in personal and social education. However, opportunities for paired discussion are missed sometimes in subjects such as physical education.

## **MATHEMATICS**

Provision for mathematics is **very good**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- There are excellent procedures for tracking pupils' progress.
- The quality of teaching is very good. Work is very well matched to pupils' needs and so all pupils achieve very well.
- The very good number of skilled classroom assistants make a significant contribution to pupils' learning.
- Very good use is made of ICT to enhance learning.

### **Commentary**

64. Pupils attain well above average standards in Year 2. This maintains the high standards identified in the last inspection.
65. A very strong feature is the excellent procedures for tracking pupils' progress across the school to ensure that individual pupils are able to meet their aspirational but achievable targets. The school makes very good use of regular assessments to

place pupils in the most appropriate teaching group to plan work that provides a very good level of support and challenge so that all pupils achieve very well. The very good provision for pupils with special educational needs and the early identification of pupils who appear to be gifted mathematically helps to ensure their very good achievement.

66. Teaching is very good overall as all lessons were judged to be good or better. A feature that distinguished the very good lessons was the very skilled level of questions posed by the teacher to encourage the pupils to think, solve problems and to suggest different ways of working things out. For example, pupils in Year 2 quickly realised that they could use their recently acquired skills in multiplication to work out totals of coins and how they might pay a bill.
67. This clear emphasis on children applying their knowledge follows directly from a very thorough analysis of previous test results, which identified this as an area for development. This focus is helping more pupils to attain the higher level expected for their age. In all the lessons seen the teachers made very good use of clear explanations and demonstrations and simple resources to help pupils to understand. Classroom assistants are well deployed to support groups or individuals in class and this is a strong factor in the very high proportion of pupils who achieve the expected level by the time they leave Year 2.
68. Teachers make very good use of ICT to enhance learning in mathematics. In one lesson the teacher used the interactive whiteboard in the computer suite very skilfully to illustrate equivalent values in coins. Pupils have regular opportunities to develop and practise their mathematical skills through a structured computer program in the computer suite and on the newly acquired laptops.
69. The subject has been led and managed very well over some time and this has led to the achievement and maintenance of high standards. The school has a very clear vision for the development of the subject based firmly on the analysis of previous results and on the ongoing monitoring of teaching and pupils' progress.

### **Mathematics across the curriculum**

70. Mathematical skills are used and developed very well in other subjects. Pupils draw graphs and tables in science to record their results. In ICT, pupils in Year 2 use their understanding of right angles to draw a path for the robot and to devise instructions for it to move.

## **SCIENCE**

Provision in science is **very good**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Pupils enjoy the subject, attain high standards and achieve very well because the quality of teaching is very good.
- Science is linked well with other areas of the curriculum.
- Pupils with special needs in learning are very well supported.
- Leadership and management are very good.

- Marking in Year 2 does not give pupils sufficient understanding of how they can improve their work.
- Not enough attention is given to developing pupils' independent working.

### **Commentary**

71. Standards are well above average. Throughout the school pupils make very good progress and achievement is very good.
72. The quality of teaching and learning are very good overall. Teachers give close attention in lessons to making sure that pupils are clear about what they are expected to do. Resources are used very well and lessons are stimulating and interesting. Pupils consequently enjoy the subject and complete their tasks enthusiastically. Teachers give increasing attention to developing the skills of investigation and experimentation. For example, in a lesson with Year 2 on forces, the teacher's effective use of questions developed the pupils' understanding of the equipment needed to test the effect of different surfaces on the distance a car would travel when going down a ramp. They showed a good understanding of the need to keep the slope of the ramp constant and to be accurate in their measuring of the distance travelled by the car in order for the experiment to be 'fair'. However, teachers do not give enough attention to developing pupils' ability to work independently and formulate their own experiments.
73. In lessons, the teachers' use of precise terminology develops pupils' scientific vocabulary well. The level of support in lessons is good and staff are deployed well so that pupils with special educational needs are fully engaged in lessons and achieve well. However, whilst teachers mark pupils' work regularly, not enough attention is given to the use of developmental points to give pointers for improvement. As a result, pupils do not always know how they can improve their work, or have targets to work towards.
74. The curriculum is well organised and teachers' planning shows good attention to linking science with other subjects. Effective use is made of pupils' mathematical skills to display results in tables and charts when sorting and classifying materials and graphs are used well to display results. Pupils' writing skills are developed when describing how they carried out an experiment. Reasonable use is made of pupils' ICT skills. For example, in a lesson on forces, Year 1 pupils used their ICT skills when programming a device to move in different ways.
75. The subject is very well led and managed. Monitoring and evaluation procedures are very good and pupils' progress is closely tracked and recorded. This ensures that the coordinator has a good awareness of standards in the school. An annual review of the subject is carried out and an action plan drawn up. This has led to an increased focus on investigative and experimental science. There has been good improvement since the last inspection.

### **INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY**

Provision for information and communication technology is **good**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Skills are taught systematically and well.
- The use of information and communication technology is incorporated routinely into planning for other subjects.
- The subject is led and managed very well.
- The suite becomes too crowded if the teacher tries to teach the whole class at once.

## **Commentary**

76. Standards are above average in Year 2. This good improvement since the last inspection is due to very good management of the subject; teacher training which has improved teachers' confidence; and an improvement in the curriculum so that all elements are now covered successfully.
77. Good assessments are used effectively to check pupils' understanding and the information is used effectively to plan future work for groups and individuals and to provide good support. This enables all pupils to achieve well.
78. Teaching is good overall. Teachers make very good use of the interactive whiteboard in the ICT suite to demonstrate new skills and programs. In a good lesson in Year 2, the teacher worked with half the class so that there was a good opportunity for all pupils to use the computer. The teacher used simple steps to demonstrate the link between the instructions given and making the robot on the screen move, so pupils made good gains in their learning about control technology.
79. Learning is less successful when the whole class is in the small suite as pupils spend a long time waiting for their turn to use the computer and so become restless. A strong aspect is the way teachers plan for pupils to use their computing skills in other subjects to enhance learning, for example using structured mathematics programs to improve arithmetic skills or using the laptops to search the website for information about the Victorians.
80. The subject is led and managed well by a very knowledgeable co-ordinator who leads by example. The clear emphasis on staff training to improve confidence and on improving resources has been successful in raising standards for pupils.

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

81. Computing skills are used very well in other subjects and this is a constantly improving aspect. The suite is used weekly by each class for literacy and numeracy in addition to specific ICT skills lessons. Pupils search for information on the Internet in history and geography and draw pictures in the style of Mondrian in art.

## **HUMANITIES**

No lessons were seen in geography and it is therefore not possible to judge the quality of provision. Three lessons were seen in history.

In **geography**, teaching is well organised and the subject is covered well. Pupils make good progress in developing their geographical skills and in increasing their understanding of maps and places. Good use is made of visits and town walks to develop the pupils' knowledge of their own locality and how it differs from others. Year 1 pupils learn about maps by creating and examining plans of the school and have a basic understanding of the

use of symbols to record different features. Year 2 pupils have a good understanding of their locality and recognise differences between locations when comparing the features and lifestyles of Leigh with those of Rivington. They follow routes to school well and carry out surveys of the local area, making good use of tables and charts to show their results. Pupils demonstrate very good levels of achievement when writing and talking about their work using appropriate geographical terms. The subject is effectively led and managed. Assessment procedures are well organised and enable pupils' progress to be closely tracked. There has been good improvement since the last inspection.

## **History**

Provision in history is **good**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Imaginative and challenging approaches to teaching engage pupils' interest so that they achieve well.
- There is a good emphasis on the development of writing skills.
- Pupils make good use of computers to research information.
- The subject is led and managed well.

## **Commentary**

82. Standards are above those generally seen, and have improved since the last inspection. Pupils enjoy their work in history, make very good progress and achieve very well.
83. The quality of teaching is very good. Teachers use a range of approaches to make the subject interesting for pupils and this develops very good attitudes to learning. For example, in an excellent lesson with Year 2, the teacher made very good use of drama to recreate the atmosphere of a Victorian classroom. Teacher and pupils dressed in costume and became immersed in the roles of the harsh teacher and submissive pupils. Pupils' historical enquiry skills were developed well when they subsequently used laptop computers to search the Internet and books to research information in order to compare and contrast their own classroom with that in Victorian times.
84. Teachers make good use of artefacts to stimulate pupils' interest and to help them to recognise differences between 'then and now', and to describe how and why things are different. Year 1 pupils were enthusiastic and highly motivated when examining Victorian toys and modern day toys. They subsequently showed a developing awareness of chronology when placing the toys on a timeline. The effective use of targeted questions in whole class discussions ensures that pupils of all levels of ability, including those with special educational needs and the higher attaining pupils, are challenged and participate fully in lessons. Teachers provide many opportunities for pupils to apply their writing skills and to support their learning in history.
85. Leadership and management of the subject are good. The coordinator has a clear understanding of strengths and the areas for development through her monitoring of the subject. Assessment procedures are well organised and pupils' progress is carefully monitored. The coordinator carries out an annual review of the subject in



order to produce an action plan and is developing a useful collection of artefacts. Improvement has been good since the last inspection.

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

Only part of one lesson was seen in art and design, no lessons were observed in design and technology, and only one lesson was observed in each of music and physical education. No overall judgements are possible, but the school has themed weeks at different times of the year with visiting specialists in art, music and sport. Past pupils report that these are very enjoyable and effective in helping them learn.

### **Art and design**

It is not possible to make an overall judgement on art and design as only part of one lesson was seen. Discussions with pupils now in the Junior School show that pupils thoroughly enjoyed working with an artist in residence when they were in Year 2 and describe how they worked together to complete a very good mural in the hall in the style of Lowry. Displays of pupils' work show that the subject makes a good contribution to pupils' cultural development through studying the work of famous artists and of different cultures, for example Aboriginal art.

### **Design and technology**

It is not possible to make an overall judgement on design and technology as no lessons were observed. Work on display would indicate that children are working at an appropriate level for their age. Pupils in Year 2 produce good models of cars with turning axles but there is little evidence of individual creativity in designs.

### **Music**

No overall judgements are possible in music. The subject is very well led by a talented coordinator, who teaches most of the lessons across the school, and leads singing practices and music in assembly. In the good lesson seen, Year 1 pupils learned to control the expressive elements of their playing of untuned percussion instruments, individually and as a whole group. A very good feature of this was the combined interpretation of the approach and retreat of a train. This sounded very effective, and showed how well the pupils were learning to control the dynamics and tempo of their playing. In singing in assembly and part of a lesson observed, many Year 2 pupils sing tunefully, and articulate the words well. However, most of these are girls, and a high proportion of the boys do not contribute effectively. There is a recorder club led by a teacher from the local authority music service after school that is well attended, and the choir sings in church regularly.

## **Physical education**

No overall judgements are possible in physical education. A newly qualified teacher is training to lead the subject, and has good ideas about its further development. In the one lesson seen, Year 2 pupils made good progress in developing throwing and catching skills. Teaching and learning here were good, and most pupils made good progress through a range of good practices. Higher attaining pupils were restricted, however, by the lack of space in the hall. Opportunities were missed for pupils to make up their own practices, and to discuss and evaluate each other's work. There are good facilities outside to support the subject, but the school hall is small, limiting pupils' progress in the lesson seen.

## **PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP**

Provision is made for pupils' personal, social and health education, including drugs and sex and relationships' education, both in specific lessons and through work in other subjects. Class discussions develop effectively pupils' understanding of themselves, their relationships with others and the world around them. This approach has a very positive impact on pupils' personal development. As a result, they become more confident and responsible members of the school community. Some good opportunities are presented for them to work independently and collaboratively in lessons, but in general this is a less well-developed aspect.

## 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>2</b>
Attendance	4
Attitudes	2
Behaviour, including the extent of exclusions	2
Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2
<b>The quality of education provided by the school</b>	<b>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	4
Pupils' care, welfare, health and safety	2
Support, advice and guidance for pupils	2
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	2
The leadership of the headteacher	1
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).*