

# INSPECTION REPORT

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

Standish, Wigan

LEA area: Wigan

Unique reference number: 106493

Headteacher: Mrs E J Somers

Lead inspector: Mr P M Allen

Dates of inspection: 21<sup>st</sup> - 23<sup>rd</sup> February 2005

Inspection number: 267857

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

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## **INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL**

Type of school: Primary  
School category: Voluntary aided  
Age range of pupils: 4 - 11  
Gender of pupils: Mixed  
Number on roll: 287  
School address: Avondale Street  
Standish  
Wigan  
Lancashire  
Postcode: WN6 0LF  
Telephone number: (01257) 422 975  
Fax number: (01257) 401 117  
Appropriate authority: The governing body  
Name of chair of Mr T A Rynn  
governors:  
Date of previous 7<sup>th</sup> June 1999  
inspection:

## **CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL**

This is an above average-sized Catholic primary school, located in an area of mainly owner-occupied housing. The vast majority of pupils live locally, with a small number being from the wider area. There are 287 pupils on roll with more boys than girls across the school. A very large majority of pupils are of white UK heritage background, with a very small number from Indian and mixed heritage backgrounds. There are no pupils with English as an additional language. Sixteen pupils are identified as having special educational needs, mainly concerned with moderate learning and behavioural difficulties; there are three pupils with statements of special educational needs. Both of these proportions are below the national average. The proportion of pupils taking free school meals is well below the national average. The vast majority of pupils have had access to pre-school education, most of them in the pre-school playgroup on the school's site. Children start in Reception in the September of the year in which they become five and attainment on entry is broadly in line with what could be expected. Since the previous inspection, there have been a number of improvements made to the accommodation. These include an extension to the car park, a new entrance area, an information and communication technology suite, a new classroom and a new outdoor play area. In 2004, the school was awarded the Healthy Schools Standard, an Investors in People Award and a Wigan Quality Standard in Early Years Award.

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
17531	Peter Allen	Lead inspector	Foundation Stage Mathematics Physical education
11474	Peter Berry	Lay inspector	
32636	Gill Hepworth	Team inspector	Science Design and technology History Music
29686	Stefan Lord	Team Inspector	English Information and communication technology Art and design Geography Special educational needs

The inspection contractor was:

Tribal PPI  
1 - 4 Portland Square  
Bristol  
BS2 8RR

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## PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

### OVERALL EVALUATION

St Marie's is **an effective school** that gives very good value for money. Pupils reach well above average standards in English, mathematics and science by the end of their primary school years. They achieve well because of the good quality of teaching and learning. Good leadership and management are helping the school to develop and improve at a good pace.

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

- The school is successful because of the very good leadership and management of the headteacher, with her clear commitment to providing the best for every child.
- Across the school, pupils achieve well, reaching standards at the end of Years 2 and 6 which are well above the national average in reading, writing, mathematics and science.
- Children are given a very good start to their school lives because of the very high quality provision in the Foundation Stage (Reception classes).
- The pupils' very good attitudes, behaviour, personal development and relationships have a significant impact on the quality of their learning.
- The very good provision for pupils' care, welfare and health and safety underpins the school's caring, Christian ethos.
- The role of the deputy headteacher is insufficiently developed.
- Although there are very good procedures for assessing pupils' work and monitoring their progress in English, mathematics and science, the quality of marking and the setting of individual targets lack consistency.
- Standards need to be higher in information and communication technology.

The school has made a good improvement since its previous inspection in 1999. The issues from the report have been successfully tackled, including the main one to develop and improve standards in data handling in information and communication technology across Years 3 to 6, and to make better use of data handling in the teaching of mathematics and science. The school's successful programme of improvement, including the accommodation, has led to it being more effective than previously.

### STANDARDS ACHIEVED

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

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

Across the school, **pupils achieve well** relative to their capabilities. A very good start is made in the Reception classes. The vast majority of children are likely to reach the goals children are expected to reach at the end of their Reception Year, and a significant minority are likely to exceed them. Pupils achieve well, and sometimes very well, in Years 1 and 2,

and standards at the end of Year 2 are well above the national average in reading, writing, mathematics and science. The same picture applies from Years 3 to 6, with standards at the end of Year 6 being well above the national average in English, mathematics and science; this continues a trend of very high standards. There are no significant differences in the achievements of boys and girls. Pupils with special educational needs achieve as well as their classmates because of the very good quality of the support they receive. Higher-attaining pupils, including those identified as gifted and talented, are given challenging work, enabling them to achieve well. Standards in information and communication technology are in line with those expected nationally at the end of Years 2 and 6 and need to be higher. Standards in art and design are good across the school. **Pupils' personal development is very good. Their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is very good.** Their very good attitudes, behaviour and relationships enhance both their learning and their aspirations to do well. Attendance and punctuality are very good.

## **QUALITY OF EDUCATION**

Pupils benefit from **the good quality of education** provided. **The quality of teaching and learning are good overall and sometimes better.** Particularly effective teaching was observed in the Reception classes. Reading, writing, mathematics and science are taught well across the school. Teaching assistants and nursery nurses provide very good support. Very good relationships underpin the teaching and learning and promote the positive attitudes and self-esteem of the pupils. Pupils become well engaged in their work and show very good levels of co-operation. There are very good systems for tracking pupils' progress in English, mathematics and science, but the setting of individual targets needs review to ensure a consistent whole-school approach. The quality of marking is inconsistent. The school provides a good curriculum which interests the pupils. It is enriched through the well-organised programme of extra-curricular activities. Appropriately, the school shows a firm commitment to continuing to develop the use of information and communication technology to support work in all areas of the curriculum. Pupils are given very good care, support and guidance. The school enjoys a good partnership with parents and a very good partnership with the local community, including the parish.

## **LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT**

The headteacher's very good leadership is a major factor in the success of this well-managed school. **The overall leadership and management are good**, although there is a need to significantly develop the role of the deputy headteacher across a number of key areas such as financial management and long-term planning for the future. The role of the curriculum co-ordinators has been well developed since the previous inspection, especially in English, mathematics, science and the Foundation Stage, each of these areas benefiting from very good leadership. Governance is good and meets statutory requirements. Governors, well led by an enthusiastic and knowledgeable chairman, are very supportive of the school.

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

The vast majority of parents are very supportive of the school and its staff; they are very appreciative of all it does for their children. A small number of concerns were raised by individual parents particularly about the organisation of consultation evenings for parents. The view of the inspection team is that these concerns are understandable; the school has firm plans to review the arrangements, partly through canvassing the views of parents.

Pupils speak very highly of their school and talk with affection about all the adults who help them. They love coming to school; they like their teachers and enjoy all the school has to offer, including the out-of-school activities.

## **IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED**

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

- Significantly develop the role of the deputy headteacher.
- Develop consistent whole-school approaches to marking and the setting of individual targets for the pupils.
- Raise standards in information and communication technology.



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

### **STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS**

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

Across the school, pupils achieve well. This is because of the good quality of the teaching they receive. They achieve best in the Reception Year. Pupils' level of performance rises significantly from being broadly in line with what is expected on entry to Reception, to standards which are well above national averages at the end of Year 2 and Year 6. The high standards identified at the time of the previous inspection have been well maintained.

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

- Children make a very good start and achieve very well in the Foundation Stage.
- Standards in reading, writing, mathematics and science are well above the national average at the end of Year 2 and Year 6.
- Pupils with special educational needs and those who are higher attainers achieve well because of the good support they receive.
- The school needs to continue to raise standards in information and communication technology.

#### **Commentary**

1. Children achieve very well in the Foundation Stage because of the very good teaching they receive from the teachers and the nursery nurses. They are able to make very good progress through the 'stepping stones' which lead to the Early Learning Goals for children of this age. The vast majority of children are likely to achieve the national goals in each of the six areas of learning by the end of the Reception Year and a significant minority are likely to exceed them. Children's progress is most significant in the areas of personal, social and emotional development, communication, language and literacy and mathematical development. These children are prepared well for their next stage of learning.
2. Judgements on current standards are based on work seen in lessons, on an extensive review of the pupils' work and on discussions with pupils. Judgements also take into account the school's own data, which include the tracking of pupils' attainment and progress in English, mathematics and science and predictions of future performance at the end of Year 2 and Year 6.

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
reading	16.8 (17.9)	15.8 (15.7)
writing	15.3 (16.5)	14.6 (14.6)
mathematics	17.4 (18.7)	16.2 (16.3)

*There were 49 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year.*

3. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 achieve well, and sometimes very well. Standards at the end of Year 2 are well above the national average in reading, writing and mathematics. Standards are higher in reading and writing than those reached in the 2004 tests by a lower-attaining year group; standards in reading were above average when compared

with all and similar schools nationally, whilst standards in writing were above the average for all schools and in line with the average for similar schools. Currently, standards in mathematics reflect those reached in the 2004 tests which were well above the national average and above those of similar schools. These standards in mathematics continue a trend of very good attainment; in 2003, the Year 2 results were in the highest five per cent nationally. Standards in science at the end of Year 2 are well above the national average, which shows an improvement on the 2004 teacher assessments when standards were above the national average.

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
English	29.7 (29.5)	26.9 (26.8)
mathematics	28.8 (28.7)	27.0 (26.8)
science	30.5 (30.1)	28.6 (28.6)

*There were 98 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year.*

4. Pupils achieve well, and sometimes very well, in Years 3 to 6. The higher-attaining pupils in Year 6 achieve very well because the quality of teaching is very good overall. This was markedly the case in mathematics. Standards at the end of Year 6 are well above the national average in English, mathematics and science. These standards are reflected in the 2004 results in the national tests. In English, the results were well above the national average for all and similar schools, whilst in mathematics and science, they were well above the national average and above the average for similar schools. Currently, standards at the end of Year 6 are continuing a trend of high attainment. Taking the three years from 2002 to 2004 together, national performance data indicate that the performance of pupils in English has been very high compared with the national median, whilst the performance of pupils in mathematics and science has been well above the national median.
5. There are clear systems for tracking progress in literacy and numeracy throughout the school. Each individual pupil's performance and potential is reviewed on a regular basis; this helps to identify pupils who are not achieving as well as they could and who need extra help. The school's analysis of data shows that most pupils throughout the school achieve well and make good progress. The tracking of progress leads to target-setting for individual pupils, but the strategies for target-setting are inconsistent across the school. Where this is done well, for example in mathematics in Year 6, pupils are closely involved and know exactly what it is they need to do to improve. In other year groups, the strategies vary slightly.
6. Since the previous inspection, when standards in data handling were judged as low, the school has targeted the raising of pupils' attainment in this and all aspects of information and communication technology. A number of improvements, including staff expertise through training and the development of the computer suite, have resulted in improved provision. Standards in information and communication technology are currently in line with those expected nationally at the end of Year 2 and the end of Year 6. Although this represents an overall improvement since the previous inspection, standards do need to be higher. Given the time constraints of the inspection, it was not possible to make secure judgements about standards in the other subjects, although a review of samples of work, including that on display, indicated standards across the school in art and design which were above those expected.
7. There are no significant differences between the achievement of boys and girls. School data indicates that over recent years, there have been no significant differences between the achievement of pupils of different ethnicity. Pupils with

special educational needs make good progress and achieve well, guided by the appropriate targets for development on their individual education plans. The school identifies those pupils who are higher attainers, including those who are gifted and talented, and teachers are generally successful in providing challenging work for these pupils. This enables them to achieve very high levels in English, mathematics and science.

8. The school's 'value-added' analysis of pupil performance shows that almost all pupils achieve well compared with their prior attainment and ability on entry to school. The school is clear and well focused in its aspiration to maintain and raise standards. The effectiveness of the school is evidenced in the well-above-average standards reached at the end of Year 2 and the end of Year 6. Challenging but realistic targets are being met well, such as those for the number of pupils in Year 6 to reach Level 5 in English, mathematics and science. The leadership of the school successfully fosters a shared commitment amongst the staff to continue to raise standards and to continue to improve the quality of education provided.

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

Throughout the school, pupils' attitudes and behaviour are very good. Pupils' personal development, including their spiritual, social, moral and cultural development, is very good. Attendance is very good.

### **MAIN STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES**

- PUPILS LOVE COMING TO SCHOOL AND ENJOY ALL THE ACTIVITIES THAT THE SCHOOL HAS TO OFFER.
- Pupils behave very well, both in and out of lessons.
- Relationships amongst the pupils and between pupils and adults are very good.
- Pupils are mature and confident, with a high degree of self-esteem.
- Pupils readily accept responsibility and they undertake many tasks.
- The level of attendance over recent years has consistently been very high.
- Pupils' punctuality is very good.

### **Commentary**

9. Pupils arrive at school punctually, eager to participate in all the school's activities. A large number arrive early, or leave late, joining in the before and after school clubs. Pupils settle into the school's routines very well, which allows a prompt and purposeful start to the school day. Despite the complex rotation of classrooms to reach their allotted numeracy and literacy sets, the pupils move around quickly in an orderly manner, which ensures that lesson time is not lost.
10. Pupils' attitudes to their work are very good. Throughout the school, pupils show a keen interest in their lessons and remain highly focused on their work. Pupils work very well independently and co-operatively. The pupils' enjoyment of school life is greatly enhanced by the wide range of extra-curricular activities. The school is fully inclusive for all its pupils, including the good provision being made for those pupils with special educational needs. All aspects of personal, social and emotional development are well promoted in the Foundation Stage classes and the children respond well.

11. Behaviour of pupils is very good, both in and out of lessons; there have been no exclusions. In every lesson observed during the inspection, the pupils' attitudes and behaviour were noted as at least good, the vast majority being very good and some noted as excellent. In a Reception class, for example, the children were observed behaving impeccably, engrossed by their interest in identifying the missing numbers in the sequences given by their teacher. Pupils' conduct in the playground and around the school generally is very good, even when they are not directly supervised by staff. Discussions with the pupils confirmed that there is rarely any bullying or oppressive behaviour but that when there is conflict, the school deals with it very effectively. The pupils feel safe and secure in school. Pupils of all ages integrate very well; there are very good relationships and there is a high level of mutual respect between the adults and the pupils.
12. Pupils' personal development is very good. The school provides very well for their needs; in particular, personal, social and health education is comprehensive and delivered to a high standard. The pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is very good, enriched by the carefully planned assemblies, the educational and residential visits, the school's community work and the excellent charity work. Pupils gain very good insights into their own culture and into the multi-cultural society in which they are growing up. Pupils readily accept responsibilities, such as the work in the school office at lunch times, where they answer telephone enquiries and take messages. Throughout the school, pupils are confident, polite and well mannered, showing appropriate respect for property and for the views of others.

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

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
School data	3.6	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.*

13. Over recent years, the school has maintained a very high level of attendance, being consistently well above the national average for primary schools. There is minimal unauthorised attendance and the school works hard with parents to ensure that pupils' education is not adversely affected by excessive holiday absence.

**QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL**

The quality of education provided by the school is good. The quality of the curriculum is good. The good quality of the teaching and very good levels of care and support mean that pupils are able to learn well. There is a good partnership with parents and a very good partnership with the local community.

**Teaching and learning**

The quality of teaching is good, and sometimes better, and consequently pupils' learning is good. The assessment of pupils' work is good.

**Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Teachers' high expectations and challenging lessons have a positive effect on the behaviour, concentration and productivity of the pupils.

- The good, and sometimes very good, teaching and learning is the main reason that standards at the end of Year 2 and Year 6 are well above the national average in reading, writing, mathematics and science.
- One of the main reasons for the positive start given to children in the Reception classes is the very good teaching they receive.
- Support staff are effectively deployed and make a significant contribution to the quality of teaching and learning.
- Although there are very good systems for assessing and monitoring pupils' progress and achievements in English, mathematics and science, marking and the setting of individual targets are inconsistent.

## Commentary

14. The quality of the leadership and management of teaching and learning is good. The headteacher's strong commitment to performance management has been instrumental in improving the quality of teaching. The introduction of a programme of structured monitoring of teaching and learning is having a positive impact. The school could usefully consider more 'modelling' of the very effective teaching and learning in the school.

### **Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 33 lessons**

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very poor
2 (6%)	10 (30%)	14 (42%)	6 (18%)	1 (3%)	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.*

15. The table above shows the quality of teaching seen across the school. Teaching seen in the Foundation Stage was very good overall. Teaching observed in Year 1 and 2 was slightly more effective overall than that observed in Years 3 to 6, with a higher proportion of good and very good teaching. Excellent teaching was seen in Reception and Year 1. Just one unsatisfactory lesson was observed. The quality of teaching and learning in information and communication technology lessons was satisfactory. Pupils achieve well because of the high proportion of teaching which is good or better. The proportion of teaching that is very good or better has increased since the previous inspection. At the parents' meeting, in the questionnaires and in discussions with inspectors, parents and pupils responded very positively when asked for their views about the quality of teaching.
16. The quality of teaching and learning in the Reception classes is one of the school's strengths. The two teachers, working in close and effective partnerships with the two nursery nurses, plan in great detail, ensuring a rich and varied curriculum with a very good match of adult-directed activities and self-directed activities in which children learn through practical experiences. Expectations of the children are very high and they respond well; they become well engaged in their learning and co-operate well with one another. This strong positive start for the children is laying the foundations for future learning. There are very good systems in place in the Reception Year to assess and monitor the children's progress as they move towards, and usually reach, the national Early Learning Goals in the six areas of learning.
17. Teachers are very committed to the school and its pupils and are keen to share good practice and improve their own work; they are supportive of one another. The quality of planning is very good and takes full account of the age and stage of learning of the pupils in the class or group. Very good relationships underpin the teaching and learning. Teaching assistants are well briefed and make effective contributions so

that all pupils, including those with special educational needs, achieve well and sometimes very well. The classroom support for pupils with statements of special educational needs is excellent. There are high expectations that pupils will behave well and the orderly atmosphere of lessons promotes the good, and sometimes very good, learning. In a significant majority of lessons seen, pupils were concentrating well on work which interested them and offered appropriate levels of challenge. Teachers are usually effective in providing appropriate work for those who are higher attainers, including those identified as gifted and talented.

18. At the start of most lessons, the learning objectives are shared with pupils. Most teachers then moving on to question-and-answer sessions which are briskly paced and successfully develop pupils' speaking and listening skills. Pupils are keen to participate and their contributions are valued. Homework, mostly English and mathematics, is given on a regular basis to extend and reinforce learning. Good use is being made of technology, including the interactive whiteboards, to support teaching and learning and the school has firm plans to continue to develop this aspect of its work.
19. A good proportion of very good teaching was seen during the inspection, with two excellent lessons. In these very effective lessons, teachers showed very good or excellent subject knowledge. The use of a range of teaching styles enables pupils to learn by listening, seeing and doing and pupils are very responsive. Expectations are very high and the pupils are enthusiastic and productive, doing their best work usually with neatness and care in presentation. In the small number of less effective lessons observed, pupils were less well managed, time was less well used and, as a consequence, the pupils did not work as hard or as carefully as they could, so that less progress was made in the time available. This was significantly the case in the one unsatisfactory lesson observed.
20. Under the guidance of the headteacher, the school has an ongoing review of its assessment, recording and marking procedures. It has developed very effective systems for monitoring attainment and progress in English, mathematics and science, partly through regular half-termly assessments. This is leading to the collection of useful data which show which pupils are exceeding expectations and which are underachieving, enabling particular groups of pupils to be targeted for extra help. Individual and group targets are set but the practice varies across the school. In Years 1 and 2, pupils usually have their literacy and numeracy targets displayed, a version of which is shared with parents. With older pupils, sometimes the targets are identified in exercise books, sometimes not; sometimes they are annotated, sometimes not. In English and mathematics in Year 6, pupils are given very clear insights into what they need to do to reach the next levels.
21. The overall picture is inconsistent and the school is aware of the need to review practice, leading to a coherent whole-school approach to the setting of individual and group targets; this can better enable the pupils to share the school's high aspirations for them. Similarly, the quality of marking, whilst being satisfactorily, varies across the school. At its best, it gives the pupils very clear insights into how they are doing and what they need to do to improve their work.

### **The curriculum**

The school provides a good curriculum which promotes achievement well. The curriculum is broadened and enriched by a very good range of after-school activities and promotes

pupils' personal development very well. Accommodation and resources are good and support the delivery of the curriculum.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Leadership and management of the curriculum in English, mathematics, science and the Foundation Stage are very good.
- Children in the Reception classes are provided with a very good curriculum.
- The carefully-planned provision for personal, social, health and citizenship is very good.
- The range of opportunities for pupils taking part in sports, the arts and other activities is very good.
- Provision for pupils with special educational needs is good.
- The computer suite is in need of improvement.

### **Commentary**

22. The school has a curriculum that meets statutory requirements. The school provides very effective personal, social and health education, including sex and relationships education and attention to education about the dangers of alcohol and drugs misuse. The curriculum prepares pupils effectively for the next stages of education. The quality of the curriculum has further improved from that seen at the previous inspection through the development of a more creative topic-based curriculum to make learning more consistent, motivating and challenging. This is reflected in the teachers' planning where they are developing very good links across the subjects to make learning interesting for all pupils. The school has successfully addressed the key issue from the previous inspection and ensured that the data-handling element of information and communication technology is fully developed. Appropriately, the school shows a firm commitment to continuing to develop the use of information and communication technology to support work in all areas of the curriculum. Classrooms are well organised and, along with the corridors, hall and entrance, are used to effectively celebrate pupils' work. This helps pupils to deepen their learning and increase their skills because they see a purpose to their activities and learning is enjoyable.
23. The curriculum for children in the Reception classes is very well planned to provide learning experiences both outdoors and indoors and promote very effective learning. Since the last inspection, resources, notably for outdoor play, have improved significantly and this has helped to improve the curricular provision. It is appropriate that this high quality of provision has been recognised through the award of the local education authority's early years quality standard.
24. The school provides a very good range of out-of-school activities which enrich the curriculum. This represents an improvement since the last inspection. These activities include art, music, languages and sport. Pupils take part in visits which enhance their learning, such as to the local arts centre; similarly, the range of visitors into school helps pupils gain an understanding of life in other cultures through activities such as demonstrations and practical work in drama. Theme weeks add further interest to pupils' learning. For example, 'Healthy Living Week' effectively linked many curricular areas and enhanced pupils' personal, social and health education and citizenship. To improve their achievement in numeracy, groups of younger pupils have access to the computer suite at lunchtime to work on a mathematics program. The residential visit for pupils in Year 5 and Year 6 makes a

good contribution to the development of their social and personal skills. Strong links exist with the secondary school to which most pupils transfer, helping to prepare pupils for the transition to a much larger school.

25. The school is inclusive in that it ensures that all pupils have equal access to learning opportunities. The school provides well for pupils with special educational needs, ensuring that they learn and achieve well. Very good communication between teachers and the skilled and committed teaching assistants and the good use of resources ensures that these pupils are provided with an appropriate curriculum. There is recognition in the school of the need to further develop contact and communication with the parents of these pupils. The school provides well for higher attainers, including those identified as gifted and talented, by consistently setting challenging work.
26. There are currently sufficient teachers to meet the demands of the curriculum. Teaching assistants and nursery nurses are deployed well and work effectively with teachers. They support group work and whole-class activities. There have been many improvements to the accommodation since the previous inspection, which have made the learning environment more stimulating and this good accommodation is used effectively to support the delivery of the curriculum. Learning resources are good, overall, except that the ageing computers in the computer suite are rather slow and in need of replacement; there are not enough seats to accommodate all the pupils in the larger classes, making working more difficult for some pupils. The school has firm plans to improve the situation through school and parents' association funding.

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

The school provides very good care and pastoral support for its pupils. Health, safety and welfare are given a high priority as are advice and guidance for the pupils. The school has effective procedures for consulting pupils about school life.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The school has very good pastoral policies and procedures.
- Staff provide a high level of caring supervision.
- New children are welcomed into a warm, friendly environment in the Reception classes.
- Safety and welfare matters are given high priority.
- Healthy lifestyles are very well promoted.
- The provision for personal, social and health education, including citizenship, is very good.
- The school listens carefully to the views of its pupils.

### **Commentary**

27. The school provides a high level of pastoral care for its pupils. This is underpinned by a comprehensive set of policies and procedures which are consistently applied. Apart from the staff handbook, the school has a series of helpful guides for the mid-day welfare assistants, for parent helpers and for student teachers. All staff know the pupils well and provide good supervision. There is a high level of consideration for the well-being of each individual child, within the school's caring Christian atmosphere. Each pupil has a trusting relationship with the teaching and support staff. The pupils know what is expected of them and they respond accordingly. There are very good



procedures for welcoming new starters into the Reception classes and for ensuring a smooth transfer of the older pupils to the secondary school.

28. The school celebrates the pupils' achievements in many ways. The most prestigious award is for a pupil to be chosen as the class representative for the weekly entry into the school's 'Golden Book', which is proudly displayed in the entrance hall. Throughout the school, high quality colourful displays celebrate pupils' work and promote their personal development. The provision of personal, social and health education is particularly strong; during the inspection week, displays and lessons were observed concentrating on the adverse nature of allowing smoking in public places. The school places a very high emphasis on healthy lifestyles and has been awarded the Healthy Schools Standard for its work. The school also boasts the Eco School Award for the pupils' contributions to improving the environment of the school grounds and of the local community in and around Standish.
29. Staff are appropriately trained in pastoral matters, including child protection procedures. The governing body fulfils its statutory responsibilities for health and safety. A meticulous health and safety inspection is undertaken each year for the whole site and the conscientious care-taking staff maintain the premises in a clean and tidy order. Appropriate risk assessments are undertaken, for example to give consideration to the potential hazards that may be encountered on any school trip. The school has an appropriate number of well-trained first aiders and all accidents are suitably recorded. The school benefits from appropriate assistance from the external agencies.
30. Regular assessment ensures that pupils' academic and personal development is monitored, such that work planned is sufficiently tailored to the pupils' individual needs. The pupils with special educational needs have good support and appropriate individual education plans. However, the use of marking and individual target-setting could be improved by more consistency throughout the school and, in the case of individual education plans, more involvement of parents.
31. Pupils' views are sought by means of questionnaires and via the successful School Council. A meeting of the Council was observed during the inspection, two pupil representatives from each year group meeting with several staff; one of the older pupils chairs the meeting whilst the other is responsible for recording the minutes. The high quality of the school's care, guidance and support enhances the pupils' education and underpins the standards that are achieved.

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

The school has a good partnership with its parents and very good links to its community. Parents are appreciative of the school and give good support. There are good links to other educational establishments.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- THE VAST MAJORITY OF PARENTS GAVE VERY POSITIVE VIEWS ABOUT THE SCHOOL.
- The school provides good information about its activities, including information about the curriculum.

- A number of parents expressed concern about the arrangements for the consultation evenings.
- The homework requirements are appropriate for pupils, and parents give good support to their children's learning.
- A significant number of parents provide valuable help within the school.

## **Commentary**

32. The high response rate to the pre-inspection questionnaire was indicative of the keen interest that the parents have in the school's affairs. The parents are very supportive of the school, with particular praise for the good teaching, for the expectations that pupils will work hard and for the academic standards that are achieved. Parents also praised highly the school's caring Christian ethos and the welcoming environment. Many parents were observed giving valuable help within the school. The school's Friends Association has been particularly successful, raising significant funds which have been used, for example, to supplement the resources for the younger children.
33. Most parents are of the opinion that the school staff are easily approached and that the school canvasses the parents' views appropriately. There were, however, a small number who raised individual concerns. One concern noted by several parents was the time limit for interviews at the parent consultation evenings and the lack of feedback from the literacy and numeracy teachers for those children whose class teacher did not take those lessons. The school has a policy where parents who wish to receive further information on their child's progress can make a separate appointment for this purpose, but not all parents are aware of this. The school provides good end-of-year reports for the pupils, although the targets given for improvement are sometimes too broad. The school has firm plans to improve the involvement of parents for those children who have special educational needs.
34. Overall, the parents are happy with the amount of homework given; they understand the school's requirements and the homework diaries are in regular use. The school provides very good general information about school matters, including a comprehensive brochure and weekly newsletters. Curricular information for each class is provided to parents each half-term and occasional evening events are held to keep parents up to date on the school's curricular work. The school also gives opportunities to parents to further their own education through the short course Family Learning Programmes, where up to ten parents can update their own skills in order to better support their children, for example in literacy and numeracy.
35. The school has strong links to other educational establishments, including the pre-school group and to the linked secondary school. The school has a good partnership with other primary schools, especially through a range of sporting events. Links to the local community, including the parish, are very strong. The pupils are regularly involved in events, for example the 'Standish Litter Strategy' and 'Standish in Bloom', which make a positive contribution to the environment. The pupils benefit from their involvement in many educational visits into the local area, such as one to Wigan Pier.
36. The school's good partnership with its parents and its very good links to the community enrich the pupils' education and this makes a significant contribution to the quality of education provided.

## **LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT**

Overall, the leadership and management of the school are good. The headteacher is providing very good leadership and management. Governance is good and meets statutory requirements.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The school is successful because of the very good leadership and management of the headteacher.
- The role of the deputy headteacher needs significant development across a number of key areas.
- Procedures for self-evaluation are very good, providing an accurate interpretation of the school's strengths and weaknesses.
- Governors' understanding of the strength and weaknesses of the school is particularly good; they offer a good level of challenge and support.

### **Commentary**

37. The headteacher's leadership is a clear strength of the school. She has created a unity of purpose and a clear vision for the development of the school. The staff are supportive of her vision for the school as an inclusive and caring community in which pupils can develop as individuals and fulfil their academic potential. The headteacher is central to these aspirations. She has a clear agenda for continuing improvement, using the well-organised school improvement plan to that end.
38. Great importance is given to empowering staff and allowing new ideas to flourish. Subject leaders have devised development plans to improve their areas of responsibility. They are clear about how their subjects fit into the school improvement plan and when their area will be the focus of attention.
39. The role of the deputy headteacher is insufficiently developed across a number of key areas, such as financial management, long-term planning and an overview of teaching and learning. Although the deputy headteacher's teaching function is undertaken satisfactorily, the deputy needs to become more pro-active in becoming involved in the leadership and management of the school as a whole. Development of this role can significantly strengthen the support that the senior management team provides and this can, in turn, further improve the effectiveness of the school.
40. The school is very well managed. Procedures for school self-evaluation are very good. These procedures ensure that all decisions are negotiated and planned in line with school needs, and monitored and evaluated against a well-structured programme of intent. Information from standardised tests and statutory and non-statutory assessment tasks and tests provides useful data for tracking and reviewing pupils' progress. Teachers make sure that this information is used to best effect to provide an appropriate level of challenge for all pupils. Performance management strategies are an integral part of the school improvement procedures. Targets are set and training needs identified in order to raise standards and improve the quality of teaching and learning. Induction procedures for new staff are good, with a well-organised level of support in place.
41. The governance of the school is good. The supportive governing body fulfils its statutory responsibilities effectively. The chair of governors has a good understanding of all the school issues and meets regularly with the headteacher to discuss school business. Other governors are kept well informed about the school because the headteacher shares a wide range of information with them at meetings. They are fully

aware of where the school's strengths lie and what can benefit from improvement. Governors have developed links with individual classes as a commitment to further improve their monitoring role.

42. The day-to-day administration of the school is well managed. The administrator and the clerical assistant make a significant contribution to the daily life of the school in addition to providing administrative and financial support.

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

Income and expenditure (£)		Balances (£)	
Total income	720,507	Balance from previous year	103,112
Total expenditure	761,161	Balance carried forward to the next year	62,458
Expenditure per pupil	2,580		

43. Financial planning is very good, with resources being carefully linked to educational priorities and longer-term aims. Spending is evaluated against its impact on raising standards. The principles of best value are central to the school's management of resources.

## **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, being one of the school's main strengths. It is better than at the time of the previous inspection and is better resourced, notably through the provision of a new secure outdoor play area.

When children start in the Reception classes, there is a wide range of ability, although overall attainment is broadly in line with what could be expected. Children achieve very well because of the very good teaching and the very good range of learning experiences provided; some of the teaching and learning is excellent. Very good teamwork amongst the adults ensures that assessment of children's progress and very focused planning for their learning are closely linked. Both of the two classes, which work in adjacent rooms, have virtually full-time nursery nurse support.

The enthusiastic staff create a very lively and stimulating environment for children which nurtures their interests and curiosity very well. Children have very good access to the new outdoor play area through doors from the two classrooms. Outside activities are carefully linked to the other areas of learning and are very well planned and managed. The parents spoken to expressed a high level of satisfaction with the provision in the Reception classes. The arrangements for transition from Reception to Year 1 are very well managed with very good liaison between the staff; parents feel very well informed.

A strong feature of the Foundation Stage is the very good leadership and management of the co-ordinator, who provides enthusiastic and knowledgeable leadership. She is very well supported by her teacher colleague and they work together very co-operatively, using their talents well. Planning is thorough and involves all the adults. Very effective assessment practices based on careful, structured observation of the children inform the planning of the work and lead to the careful, tracking of children's progress through the 'stepping stones' which lead to the Early Learning Goals and beyond. This helps staff to identify strengths

and areas for development. Good photographic evidence adds to the picture presented in the children's individual records. The high quality provision has been recognised by the local education authority through the award of its quality standard for early years provision. Children achieve very well and consequently, virtually all the children are likely to meet the Early Learning Goals identified as targets for the end of the Reception Year in each of the six areas of learning, and a significant minority (around a third) will exceed those targets. Children achieve particularly well in the personal, social and emotional development, communication, language and literary and the mathematical areas of learning.

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

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

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Children achieve very well and make very good progress.
- Adults provide many very good opportunities for children to work and play together.
- A stimulating and secure environment for children to learn has been created in both rooms and outdoors.

### **Commentary**

44. Children in Reception benefit from a very rich learning environment; they achieve very well because learning is made interesting and relevant to what they know. The children, including those with special educational needs, are very well supported and receive lots of praise. This promotes their self-esteem which has a very positive impact on their personal, social and emotional development.
45. Children gain confidence in a range of familiar and new situations; they establish very effective relationships with the adults. They learn to select and use activities and resources independently, for example when making and recording choices from a wide range of activities such as the computer, water and sand play, role play in the 'St Marie's Campsite', working in the 'post office', enjoying the reading corner or working on the interactive whiteboard to sequence numbers. Children learn to share and take turns such as when playing number bingo and letter and word recognition games.
46. Children learn to share equipment easily such as when they take turns in the 'car wash' in outdoor play. They are kind to one another and learn to co-operate very well, for example in 'circle time' when they express feelings and develop ways to understand their own and other people's feelings. The staff's expectations are high and teaching is very good. The children are enthusiastic about their learning and become well engaged. The adults encourage the children to become independent so that they become confident in making choices and making decisions. The excellent relationships reflect the ethos of care and the value of every individual. The children's enthusiasm is clear to see in the photographs which have been taken to record many of the children's activities, such as the visit to a local sports stadium and celebrating Diwali and the Chinese New Year. Children understand the class friendship code and the class target 'to help each other'.

## **COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY**

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

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- There are very good opportunities for developing speaking and listening skills through activities such as role play.
- The quality of teaching and learning is very good and children achieve very well.
- Thorough assessment arrangements mean that needs are well met.
- Children make very good progress in the acquisition of basic literacy skills.

### **Commentary**

47. A strong emphasis is placed on early reading skills. Most children make very good progress in this area which is given a very high profile, with very good parental involvement partly through 'reading diaries'. During the inspection, children were observed making very good progress in their development of word-building and sounding skills; most children have their own reading book. The promotion of speaking skills is a high priority and virtually all the children speak with very good confidence.
48. The children listen very attentively in both small and large groups, showing good understanding, such as when listening to favourite stories such as 'Elmer' and 'Goldilocks and the Three Bears'. They take part in imaginative play in the very good provision for role play in different situations such as 'the airport', 'the vet's' and 'the hospital'. Adults are very good at modelling language and children have a growing vocabulary which shows very good progress over time. They are learning to follow instructions, for example when playing letter recognition games. They enjoy sharing and choosing books from the very good selection, and benefit from good opportunities to take books home.
49. They begin to write independently and are given very good opportunities for writing, for example writing airline bookings, invitations, birthday cards and letters. They enjoy independent writing, for example writing a caption for a photograph, instructions on how to make a sandwich and favourite parts of stories, such as 'Little Red Riding Hood'. A good range of information and communication technology software helps the children to reinforce and practise their skills.

### **MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT**

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

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

- Teachers plan a wide range of activities to support learning which ensures that children achieve very well.
- The adults' high expectations lead to high standards.
- Every opportunity is taken in all activities to promote children's mathematical development, including the good use of number songs.

### **Commentary**

50. The children respond well and show enthusiasm for all the practical activities. Their books are well annotated, with very good use of photographic evidence. Children are encouraged to recognise and use mathematical and positional language confidently, for example words like 'bigger', 'smaller', 'above', 'below' and 'behind'; they measure one another to determine 'tallest' and 'shortest'. They can work out one more or one less than a number from one to ten and, in practical activities and discussion, can use the vocabulary involved in adding and subtracting. During the inspection, good use was

made of the interactive whiteboard to practise the sequencing of numbers. Very good teaching and learning was observed in this area.

51. At the time of the inspection, the children were benefiting from focused teaching as part of an introduction to the National Numeracy Strategy. The children work well across the various aspects of mathematical development. They are well able to sort two-dimensional and three-dimensional shapes. The children show great confidence in counting and there is evidence of very good attainment; the higher-attaining children can count and write numbers to 100, and are beginning to recognise above 100. They show a good understanding of ordinal numbers and most can write number sentences, for example in painting a ladybird with spots to show simple number sentences. They join in a good range of number rhymes and counting games such as 'Five little men in a flying saucer' and 'Five speckled frogs'.

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

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

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Children are given a good range of experiences to help them to find out about the world.
- Children make very good progress.
- The work benefits from a good range of visitors.

### **Commentary**

52. Children are given good opportunities to learn about their own and the wider world. They learn about their own history in the family, making use of photographs. They look at and consider differences between the past and the present, such as transport. They consider where they live as part of map-making of Standish. They learn about 'people who help us', partly through the effective use of visitors such as a police officer, members of the local mountain rescue unit, a dentist and a nurse.
53. Children enjoy baking, often topic-related, such as when they make gingerbread men. They enjoy using construction kits to make models such as towers. They gain a great deal of knowledge about plants, bulbs and living things. They learn about the seasons of the year and the characteristics of each one.
54. The work on computers is a strong feature of this area of learning. The children enjoy using the computer independently and show good levels of skill in controlling the mouse to play various games; many become very confident in 'dragging' and 'dropping' the clothes on the 'Teddy' in a dress-the-teddy activity. They are well able to use the 'paintbrush' tool to draw themselves and then use the 'fill' tool to colour any large areas. Children benefit from regular visits to the computer suite, with very good adult support. The teachers are beginning to make good use of the interactive whiteboard to support the teaching and learning.
55. The children learn about their own and other cultures and heritages partly through learning more about festivals such as Christmas, Diwali (when they learn about the story of Rama and Sita) and the Chinese New Year. All the evidence indicates that the quality of the teaching in this area is very good, capturing the children's

interest and enabling them to achieve very well. Books are well used in this area of learning and the children talk with great enthusiasm about what they have learnt.

## **PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT AND CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT**

56. Very little teaching was observed in these two areas of learning. As a consequence, it was not possible to make secure overall judgements, although the school's record-keeping and assessment procedures give clear indications of likely standards by the end of the Reception Year.
57. In the physical area of learning, children use equipment such as pencils, the computer mouse, paintbrushes and construction equipment to develop good manipulative skills, sometimes at the 'cutting and sticking' table. They are gaining much benefit from the school's new outdoor play area with opportunities to use large toys; staff work successfully to provide a good range of activities to support all areas of learning. During regular hall times, children develop skills of control and co-ordination; they learn different ways of travelling around the hall and on the equipment.
58. In the creative area of learning, children are given very good opportunities to work with a wide range of materials and to develop imaginative skills. There is evidence of very good use of imaginative play, including role play and 'small world' play, creative art and design and opportunities for dance and music-making. Very attractive displays celebrate the children's achievements.

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

### **ENGLISH**

Provision in English is **very good**.

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

- Standards are well above average at the end of Years 2 and 6.
- The good quality of teaching and learning enables all pupils to achieve well.
- Pupils have very good attitudes to learning.
- Assessment procedures and tracking of progress are very good but marking and the setting of pupil targets lacks consistency.
- The subject benefits from very good leadership and management.

#### **Commentary**

59. Over the last few years, pupils have maintained standards well above the national average in the national tests at the end of Year 2 and Year 6 in English, as were seen at the time of the previous inspection. The standards of work seen during the inspection, along with the school's assessments and formal testing, show that currently, standards at the end of Year 2 and Year 6 are likely to be well above the national average. Standards at the end of Year 2 are higher in reading and writing than those reached in the 2004 tests by a lower-attaining year group; standards in reading were above average when compared with all and similar schools nationally, whilst standards in writing were above the average for all schools and in line with the average for similar schools. Standards at the end of Year 6 are reflected in the 2004 test results which were well above the national average for all and similar schools.



Pupils with special educational needs make good progress and there is no significant difference in the achievement of boys and girls.

60. Very good opportunities are given to develop pupils' speaking and listening skills, such as paired discussion time and when reporting back to the rest of the class at the conclusion of lessons. Teachers use skilful questioning to extend pupils' language and level of understanding and pupils are taught the importance of listening and appreciating the views of others.
61. The co-ordinators have given much thought to the development and organisation of reading throughout the school and thoroughly evaluated it. As a result, pupils enjoy reading, are very well supported both at school and at home and achieve well. This contributes to good development of vocabulary to aid speaking and listening and writing. Younger pupils pick up key skills very quickly and this allows teachers to concentrate on meaning and understanding. The majority of pupils in Year 6 read challenging texts with expression to engage the listener's interest. They have developed a culture of valuing books which enables them to talk very well about a range of authors.
62. Throughout the school, pupils' handwriting is of a high standard which reflects the caring ethos of the school. The basic skills of spelling and punctuation are also emphasised. By the end of Year 2, most pupils' writing shows that they can develop their ideas into a sequence of sentences using interesting words, and punctuate with capital letters and full stops. The teachers' modelling of writing to encourage adventurous vocabulary and the provision of writing templates results in writing which is imaginative, vibrant, well considered and coherent and helps all pupils to achieve well. Good opportunities are provided for pupils to write in a variety of forms, often linked to other curriculum subjects. For example, Year 6 pupils were given a real purpose to their writing when they used their knowledge and understanding of the conditions Russian soldiers encountered in the Crimean War to write with empathy and imagination.
63. The quality of teaching is good overall, varying from satisfactory to excellent. Teachers show good subject knowledge and plan lessons very well, with clear learning objectives which are shared with pupils at the beginning of lessons and then used to review learning in very useful final review sessions. Where there is high quality of teaching, it has a significant impact on the standards pupils achieve. This was seen in a lesson in Year 1, where the teacher made learning interesting and fun through an imaginative use of resources and moved learning on at brisk pace with clear explanations and targeted questioning, resulting in pupils making very good progress in developing their spelling skills and use of descriptive words. Teaching assistants make a significant contribution to the overall quality of teaching. Teachers have high expectations of pupils' behaviour and their approach to work, which enables pupils to make the most of their learning opportunities.
64. The very good attitudes shown by the pupils towards their work also make a significant impact on the standards they achieve. Staff and pupils show a great respect for each other. Pupils are very well behaved, listen carefully and have the confidence to ask and answer questions, which enables them to make valued contributions during lessons. Pupils are good-humoured and friendly because they have high self-esteem. This atmosphere has a considerable effect on pupils' achievement in English.
65. Teachers carefully check how well pupils are doing and use the very good systems in place for formal assessment to organise teaching groups. This leads to every pupil being challenged and achieving success. Although positive and constructive comments contribute to the effective marking of some of the work, the quality of

marking is not consistent across the school. Pupils have their class target and their own well-chosen targets for improvement in literacy, but there is no common system throughout the school to give consistency of approach; this needs review. Regular homework is set for pupils to practise reading and improve their spelling skills. The leadership and management of the subject are very good and have a positive impact on teaching and learning and on the standards pupils achieve.

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

66. Oral sessions in lessons are used very effectively to develop speaking and listening skills. Pupils are given frequent worthwhile opportunities to practise their writing skills in such subjects as geography, history and science.

### **MATHEMATICS**

Provision in mathematics is **very good**.

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

- Standards are well above average at the end of Years 2 and 6.
- The quality of teaching is good overall, and sometimes very good.
- Pupils have very good attitudes to learning.
- Although there are very good procedures for tracking pupils' progress, the quality of marking and the setting of individual targets are inconsistent.
- The subject is led and managed very well.

#### **Commentary**

67. Attainment is very good in mathematics, as it was at the time of the previous inspection. Pupils across the school achieve well, and sometimes very well, because of the overall good quality of teaching they receive. Standards at the end of Year 2 are well above the national average. These standards are reflected in the school's 2004 national test results which were well above the national average for all schools and above the average for similar schools. This follows a trend of very commendable results; in 2003, the results were in the highest five per cent nationally. Standards at the end of Year 6 are well above the national average; in 2004 in national tests, standards were well above the national average and in line with those of similar schools. The well-above-average standards continue a trend of high performance over recent years. The staff are very clearly focused on maintaining and improving these standards. All the available evidence indicates that there are no significant differences in the achievement of boys and girls.
68. Pupils in Year 2 have a good understanding of numbers. They add and subtract confidently in hundreds, tens and units. Pupils are aware of number sequences such as odds and evens and halves and doubles and use two, four and five times tables successfully. Pupils successfully interpret mathematical problems expressed in words, for example when dealing with money. They successfully construct block graphs from information contained in tally charts and understand how to interpret the information that they contain. Pupils in Year 6 have a very good understanding of the different areas of mathematics. They use the four rules of number, addition, subtraction, multiplication and division confidently in numbers up to six figures. Pupils understand that decimals, fractions and percentages are different ways of expressing the same concept and move successfully between them. They have a clear

understanding of the properties of two- and three-dimensional shapes. Pupils have a good understanding of how to approach and solve mathematical problems expressed in words.

69. The quality of teaching and learning is good overall, with very good teaching and learning seen in Years 1, 2, 5 and 6. Lessons are well planned, with clear learning objectives which are shared with the pupils at the outset and reviewed at the close of each lesson. Teachers have a very good level of subject knowledge and understanding and this is reflected in the very good quality of questions, which are clear and well focused. In the more effective teaching, which made up the vast majority of that observed, the teachers' enthusiasm and a brisk pace engaged the interest of pupils so that they worked with sustained interest and concentration and achieved very well. Mental skills are being well developed and the pupils are enthusiastic about practising. Although marking is at least satisfactory, there is some variation in its quality from that which is very cursory to that which gives very helpful feedback on the pupils' work. Very good relationships between adults and pupils underpin the teaching and learning and promote the pupils' confidence and self-esteem. The most effective teaching was seen with the higher attaining Year 6 pupils. This very focused high quality teaching with its use of challenging vocabulary and high expectations is the reason why a very good proportion (over three-fifths) of the pupils are likely to reach Level 5 in the 2005 national tests.
70. Good support by the good quality teaching assistants ensures that the needs of pupils with special educational needs are well met, so that they are fully included and achieve well. Challenging work is set for the higher attainers, including those identified as gifted and talented. Pupils in Years 1 to 6 are grouped by attainment for their daily lessons. Overall, this has a positive impact on attainment and progress because teachers can plan work of the same subject matter that is closely matched to individual needs; this was particularly successful in the Year 3 to Year 6 sets where the groupings are more clearly defined. Interactive whiteboards are having a very positive impact on the good quality of teaching and pupils respond to them positively and enthusiastically. The learning is enhanced by good use of computer programs for pupils to practise and reinforce skills. The provision for homework is appropriate, supporting and extending what has been learned in lessons.
71. The subject is well resourced and well led and managed by its two enthusiastic and knowledgeable subject leaders. Self-evaluation has included observation of teaching and learning, monitoring of planning and recent reviews of the pupils' work. There are very good systems for assessing, with regular testing and 'levelling' of pupils. Tracking of pupils' attainment and progress throughout the school is becoming well developed. Although information gained is used to set targets for whole-year groups, the setting of individual targets is somewhat inconsistent across the classes and the year groups. In Year 6, this works very well because pupils are so involved in their own targets with clear and 'pupil friendly' guidance on what they need to do to reach the next level. There is recognition on the part of the co-ordinators of the need to develop more coherent whole-school practices in target-setting. The co-ordinators have clear ideas on how to develop the subject further with very clear aspirations to maintain and build upon the high standards.

### **MATHEMATICS ACROSS THE CURRICULUM**

72. Increasingly, the staff are enabling pupils to make effective use of mathematics as part of their work across all areas and this helps them to begin to develop an appreciation of the practical uses of their skills. They use graphs and tables to record data in science. They use spreadsheets to collect information. In geography, they use co-ordinates and scale and in design and technology, they practise measuring skills.

## SCIENCE

Provision in science is **very good**.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards in science are well above average at the end of Year 2 and Year 6.
- The very good quality of teaching enables all pupils to achieve well, and often very well.
- Pupils have very positive attitudes that make a significant contribution to their achievement.
- There are good links with other curriculum subjects that support the teaching of science.
- Science is well led by the subject leader.

### Commentary

73. Standards in science are as high as they were at the time of the previous inspection. Standards at the end of Year 2 are well above the national average, which shows an improvement on the 2004 teacher assessments when standards were above the national average. Standards at the end of Year 6 are well above the national average. These standards are reflected in the 2004 results in the national tests which were well above the national average and above the average for similar schools.
74. Across the school, pupils achieve well and often very well. They work well collaboratively, are enthusiastic and willingly share ideas. This makes a significant contribution to their achievements. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress, well supported by the teaching assistants.
75. From Year 1, pupils learn how to record information in different ways, including the use of carefully-labelled tables. By Year 6, they accurately use a range of measuring instruments. Pupils frequently use line or block graphs in their work to represent their recorded data and understand the importance of labelling axes and writing headings. Teachers manage practical work and behaviour very effectively because there are well-established class routines and very good relationships between all adults and pupils.
76. The quality of teaching and learning is very good overall; it is very effective in the way pupils are challenged to learn independently. This quality is reflected in pupils' work. It shows the very good depth of pupils' knowledge and understanding of science and the skills they develop to record their work. Teachers have good subject knowledge and plan lessons very well to take account of the different levels of ability within the class. A particularly strong feature is the well selected and challenging range of activities provided, which result in pupils being interested and engaged in their learning. Lessons are characterised by their practical nature. Pupils are engaged in forming hypotheses and predicting outcomes before deciding on their own methods of investigating and recording. The pace of lessons is very good and pupils' attention and interest is maintained. For example, in two Year 5 lessons, question and answer techniques were used very well to engage the pupils and help to clarify their thinking. Another very good feature of teaching is the use of 'mind maps' whereby pupils share

what they know about a topic before deciding what they need to know. This ensures that learning is based on prior knowledge and gives pupils more ownership of their learning and achievements.

77. Leadership is very effective and the subject is managed very well. The very good assessment procedures enable rigorous monitoring and tracking of pupils' performance. The science leader has very good knowledge of standards across the whole school and has high expectations. Lesson plans and pupils' books are monitored and teachers are given helpful feedback. The subject is well resourced. Good links are made with other subjects such as design and technology, geography and mathematics, and science is well used as a vehicle for developing writing skills. This is making a positive impact on pupils' understanding of science in everyday life.

#### **INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY**

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

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

- Standards are in line with those expected nationally at the end of Year 2 and Year 6, but need to be higher.
- Pupils' independent tasks sometimes lack pace.
- There is an effective system for assessing pupils' progress.
- The computer suite is used well but the computers are in need of upgrading.

#### **Commentary**

78. Since the previous inspection, when standards in data-handling were judged as low, the school has targeted the raising of pupils' attainment in this and all aspects of information and communication technology. A number of improvements, including staff expertise through training and the development of the computer suite, have resulted in improved provision. Standards in information and communication technology are currently in line with those expected nationally at the end of Year 2 and the end of Year 6. This represents an overall improvement since the previous inspection, but more remains to be done. Pupils' achievement is satisfactory.
79. All pupils from Year 1 onwards are able to use paint and drawing programs to make images, sometimes associated with work in other curriculum areas. For example, Year 2 pupils study the work of Mondrian in art and use their information and communication technology skills to carefully create computer images in the style of the artist. In Year 4, pupils use a variety of presentation techniques and reorganise text to make it meaningful and clear. By the time pupils are in Year 6, they are able to set up their own multi-media presentations which incorporate text, images and sound.
80. In the lessons seen, teaching was satisfactory overall. All pupils, including those with special educational needs, are fully included because of the good help they receive from teachers and teaching assistants. The subject knowledge of the teachers is good overall. They effectively re-cap what pupils have learnt previously at the beginning of each lesson which helps consolidate what pupils already know and give clear explanations of what it is pupils are going to learn next. Most teachers are confident in presenting new ideas to pupils, often through demonstration, making appropriate use of the digital projector and whiteboard. Lessons conclude with an opportunity for pupils to evaluate their own learning which helps them to understand how they can improve. However, sometimes the pupils' activities observed lacked

planned teacher intervention to give a brisk pace to pupils' learning to help them progress at a faster rate. The school has developed a good system to check pupils' attainment and progress by recording achievements succinctly according to whether individual pupils are below, in line or above average level for their age in each unit of work.

81. The information and communication technology suite enables pupils to have instant access to the computers and this is helping the learning process and provides good opportunities for collaborative learning. However, there are not enough seats to accommodate all the pupils in the larger classes, making for difficult working arrangements with some pupils losing concentration. The school is aware that the bulky ageing computers are rather slow and coming to the end of their life and has firm plans to replace them in the very near future.
82. Leadership and management are satisfactory; the co-ordinators are enthusiastic about developments in this subject. Staff training is well established and helping to develop teachers' and teaching assistants' confidence and skills, especially in the use of interactive resources.

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

83. Despite pupils' skill levels being in line with age-related expectations, the use of information and communication technology across the curriculum is currently underdeveloped but is emerging. There are attempts made to link ongoing work with information and communication technology, for example in literacy, numeracy, art and design and history, but this is not yet consistent throughout the school. Appropriately, this is something that the school has identified as an area for development.

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

The work in geography and history and in art and design, design and technology, music and physical education meets statutory requirements. These subjects were not specific areas of focus for the inspection and only a limited range of evidence was sampled. As a consequence, there is insufficient evidence to make overall judgements on the quality of the provision.

#### **Geography**

84. No lessons were seen in geography, therefore it is not possible to form secure judgements about teaching and learning and provision in the subject. The way the school organises the curriculum into topics successfully links work in geography with other subjects and provides good opportunities for pupils to develop their literacy skills.
85. A scheme of work is in place, based on national guidelines, which helps teachers to plan continuity and progression in the teaching and learning of geographical skills. Pupils in Year 2 are developing an awareness of localities beyond their own through the topic based on 'Island Homes' which effectively develops links with literacy, science and art to make learning interesting and meaningful. Year 4 pupils demonstrate an understanding that different places may contain different weather and climate conditions through an examination of the conditions in desert, polar and rainforest environments. Within the Year 6 work, pupils develop an understanding of how people can cause damage and improvement to the environment through a local

issue such as the siting of a proposed by-pass. This effectively helped pupils to respond through extended writing to help them develop and adapt their writing skills for a greater range of purposes.

86. The co-ordinator is well informed and enthusiastic but new to her role. She has not had an opportunity to monitor teaching and learning and is aware that this is an area for development, along with implementing a system for assessing pupils' attainment and progress in the subject.

## **HISTORY**

87. No lessons were seen during the inspection and, as a consequence, there is insufficient evidence to make secure judgements about the quality of teaching and learning or about standards. A scrutiny of pupils' work and planning documents indicate that pupils are receiving an interesting curriculum. The series of topics, which follow national guidance, are taught to two year groups at the same time. Continuity across the parallel classes has been made possible because ideas are shared and planning is undertaken by one of the teachers. Good use is made of the local environment, together with visits further afield to enhance the work done and make lessons more exciting.
88. Some good links are made with other areas of the curriculum, such as art and design, geography, personal, social and health education and English. Pupils make use of information and communication technology to research projects. Literacy skills are being developed particularly in Years 5 and 6 where writing in a historical genre has been a focus. Very good examples of this are seen in the letters written by pupils from the viewpoint of soldiers in the Crimean War.

## **Art and design**

89. No lessons were observed in art and design during the inspection. However, evidence, including work from portfolios and work on display, indicates that art and design has a secure place in the curriculum and that pupils produce work that is often of a high quality compared to that seen in other schools. The school celebrates pupils' work in careful displays which help to create a rich learning environment which reflects the school's caring ethos.
90. A review of pupils' work, together with a review of teachers' planning, shows that pupils are introduced to a wide range of skills in a systematic way so that as they grow older, their work becomes increasingly more detailed and confident. They sample a very good range of techniques and materials, including drawing, painting, printing, sculpture and working with textiles. In Year 2, for example, pupils created vibrant and animated self-portraits, mixing their powder paints carefully to achieve accurate skin tones. Very good use is made of exhibitions of artists' work at the local arts centre to inspire pupils in their own work. For example, samples of work from pupils in Year 6 depict the style of Roger Hampson to a very good standard, showing skill in the use of printing techniques to create subtle variations in tone and texture with careful attention to fine detail.
91. The school successfully links learning in art and design together with other subjects; for example, Years 1 and 2 study the work of the artist Mondrian and use their information and communication technology skills to carefully create computer images in the style of the artist. Similarly, a study of the Aztecs in history in Years 5 and 6 led to pupils exploring weaving techniques with a range of materials and symbolic patterns

in the style of the ancient civilisation. Their work drew effectively on the art of another culture.

92. The subject is very well led and managed by an enthusiastic subject leader who has implemented an art and design curriculum which effectively promotes high standards and ensures all pupils achieve well. The subject makes a significant contribution to the spiritual and cultural development of the pupils.

## **DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY**

93. As just one lesson was observed during the inspection, there is insufficient evidence to make secure judgments about the quality of teaching and learning and standards. The work in books, teachers' planning files and photographic evidence indicate that pupils are receiving an appropriate curriculum which is well planned and provides pupils with opportunities to use a wide range of materials to develop their skills in the subject.
94. The one lesson seen was with a Year 1/2 class on mask designing and making. The good teaching and learning enabled the pupils to achieve well and produce work of a good standard. Good links were made with literacy and personal, social and health education and citizenship. All pupils were fully included in the lesson. Work on display indicated that Year 6 pupils have designed and made good quality 'moon buggies'. The accompanying written work shows that pupils are able to describe how they have designed and constructed their models, tested the structures and evaluated the processes.
95. The subject leader is well informed and has a clear view of what needs improvement. She has developed an appropriate method for assessing and recording pupils' progress. The work is well resourced and good links are being made with other subjects.

## **Music**

96. It was possible to see just one lesson during the inspection. In that lesson, the quality of teaching and learning were satisfactory; the pupils were enthusiastic and learned the skills to help them develop good standards of singing and understand the different moods in music. Pupils sing tunefully and enthusiastically in assembly. Brass, woodwind, violin, keyboard and guitar tuition is currently provided in school by the local education authority music service. A number of pupils achieve good enough standards to join the Wigan Youth Orchestra.
97. There are very good cross-curricular links made with other subjects. For example, in a geography topic, pupils in Years 1 and 2 'travel' to many strange places, with each new place making a different sound. The subject co-ordinator is enthusiastic and gives good support to staff and to the musical activities within school. Procedures for monitoring and evaluation are not fully developed but what is in place is making a positive impact on the overall provision for music.

## **Physical education**

98. No lessons were observed during the inspection and, as a consequence, there is insufficient evidence to make secure judgements on standards and the quality of teaching and learning. The work is following a scheme of work which ensures that



pupils receive an appropriate balance of dance, games and gymnastics. The school benefits from a good-sized hall, good play space and a good playing field.

99. Valuable opportunities are provided at the pool of a local school for swimming, with Year 3 and 4 pupils having weekly lessons from September to Easter and pupils from Years 5 and 6 having four-weekly blocks of time up to the summer term. There are a good number of sporting activities provided outside the school day, run by teachers and outside agencies. Many of these are seasonal and include football, netball, judo, cricket and athletics. Coaching is provided through the local professional football and rugby league sides. Boys and girls are enthusiastic about these activities as they are about competitive events with other schools in rounders, netball, gymnastics, football and swimming.
100. The enthusiastic co-ordinator is providing positive leadership and helping the school to begin to raise the profile of physical education. Her current involvement in a school co-ordination project with the local cluster of schools is enabling the school to enlist support in the teaching and resourcing of hockey. The subject is well resourced. Good use is made of a system of simple assessments. There are firm plans to raise the profile of sport and dance and for staff to further their knowledge through professional development training.

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

The quality of provision is **very good**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Personal, social and health education and citizenship permeate all aspects of school life and reflect and reinforce the school's caring, Christian ethos.
- Skills of independence and responsibility are nurtured well.
- The School Council is having a positive impact on the life of the school.
- A very positive start is made through the provision in the Foundation Stage for personal, social and emotional development.

### **Commentary**

101. A very positive start is made through the provision in the Reception classes. There is very strong staff commitment to this area of the school's work which is taught through a carefully considered scheme of work which guides the work for each year group. The emphasis on responsibility and independence promotes the pupils' very positive attitudes and other personal qualities. The work is timetabled weekly and covers areas such as drugs education, citizenship and personal safety. The school has received the Healthy Schools Standard based on provision for drugs, alcohol and tobacco education.
102. The work offers a wide range of interesting and enjoyable experiences for the pupils, making good use of 'circle time', mainly for Reception, Year 1 and Year 2. It sets a firm foundation for the development of very good relationships through respect for others.
103. The School Council is very well organised and makes a valuable contribution to the life of the school; it gives pupils good insights into the democratic process, helping them to make their own views known. Years 3 to 6 representatives (one boy, one girl per class) are elected through a ballot and meet monthly along with the headteacher and two other staff members. The School Council has been instrumental in the

development of an amphitheatre, playground markings and a 'tyre park'; future plans include a consultation on school meal preferences. The school offers many such opportunities for pupils to take responsibility such as the role of house captains; many have specific jobs to do around the school such as helping to serve lunch and looking after younger children.

104. The leadership of the school has a positive impact on the high profile given to this work. The enthusiastic co-ordinator provides very good leadership and management. The school's programme makes a positive contribution to its strong, caring, Christian ethos where every child is valued. Co-operative relationships are encouraged throughout the school. Pupils develop a good awareness of how to behave in a community and they work well together in a supportive and caring way. The provision for personal, social and health education and citizenship is one of the many features which make this a good school.

## PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

### *Inspection judgement*

### *Grade*

<b>The overall effectiveness of the school</b>	<b>3</b>
How inclusive the school is	2
How the school's effectiveness has changed since its last inspection	3
Value for money provided by the school	2

<b>Overall standards achieved</b>	<b>2</b>
Pupils' achievement	3

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

<b>The quality of education provided by the school</b>	<b>3</b>
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	2
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

<b>The leadership and management of the school</b>	<b>3</b>
The governance of the school	3
The leadership of the headteacher	2
The leadership of other key staff	4
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).*