

# INSPECTION REPORT

## **CROXTETH COMMUNITY PRIMARY SCHOOL**

Croxteth, Liverpool

LEA area: Liverpool

Unique reference number: 104612

Headteacher: Mrs. F. Harrison

Reporting inspector: Mr C. Kessell  
20695

Dates of inspection: 20<sup>th</sup> – 23<sup>rd</sup> November 2000

Inspection number: 224891

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

© Crown copyright 2000

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

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

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school: Infant and junior

School category: Community

Age range of pupils: 3 to 11

Gender of pupils: Mixed

School address: Moss Way  
Croxteth  
Liverpool  
Merseyside

Postcode: L11 0BP

Telephone number: 0151 546 3140

Fax number: 0151 546 3809

Appropriate authority: The Governing Body

Name of chair of governors: Rev. I. Brooks

Date of previous inspection: 4<sup>th</sup> March 1997

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members		Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
Mr C. Kessell 20695	Registered inspector	Mathematics	The characteristics and effectiveness of the school
		Design and technology	The school's results and pupils' achievements
			Teaching and learning
			Leadership and management
			Key Issues for action
Mrs. A. Taylor 19743	Lay inspector		Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development
			Pupils' welfare, health and safety
			Partnership with parents and carers
Mr B. Duckett 27592	Team inspector	Science	
		Music	
		Physical education	
Mr W. Jefferson 25577	Team inspector	Geography	
		History	
		Religious education	
		Provision for pupils with special educational needs	
Mrs. P. Richards 25433	Team inspector	Information and communication technology	Quality and range of opportunities for learning
		Areas of learning for children in the foundation stage	
		Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	
Mrs. L. Simmons 8073	Team inspector	English	
		Art and design	
		Equality of opportunity	

The inspection contractor was:

Power House Inspections

Grasshoppers  
1 Anglesey Close  
Chasetown  
Burntwood  
Staffordshire  
WS7 8XA

Any concerns or complaints about the inspection or the report should be raised with the inspection contractor. Complaints that are not satisfactorily resolved by the contractor should be raised with OFSTED by writing to:

The Registrar  
Inspection Quality Division  
The Office for Standards in Education  
Alexandra House  
33 Kingsway  
London WC2B 6SE

## **REPORT CONTENTS**

	Page
<b>PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT</b>	<b>7</b>
Information about the school	
How good the school is	
What the school does well	
What could be improved	
How the school has improved since its last inspection	
Standards	
Pupils' attitudes and values	
Teaching and learning	
Other aspects of the school	
How well the school is led and managed	
Parents' and carers' views of the school	
<b>PART B: COMMENTARY</b>	
<b>HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?</b>	<b>11</b>
The school's results and achievements	
Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development	
<b>HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?</b>	<b>14</b>
<b>HOW GOOD ARE THE CURRICULAR AND OTHER OPPORTUNITIES OFFERED TO PUPILS?</b>	<b>16</b>
<b>HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?</b>	<b>18</b>
<b>HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS</b>	<b>21</b>
<b>HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?</b>	<b>22</b>
<b>WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?</b>	<b>25</b>
<b>PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS</b>	<b>26</b>
<b>PART D: THE STANDARDS AND QUALITY OF TEACHING IN AREAS OF THE CURRICULUM, SUBJECTS AND COURSES</b>	<b>30</b>

## **PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT**

### **INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL**

The school has 272 pupils and is bigger than the average sized primary school. There is nursery provision for 26 part-time pupils who are admitted into the nursery when they are three. The ethnic background of all of the pupils is white United Kingdom heritage. The number of pupils speaking English as an additional language is very low. The percentage of pupils entitled to free school meals is well above the national average and the proportion of pupils identified as having special educational needs is above average. Attainment of the children when they start school is well below average. Their language skills are often poor. The school will be part of a mini Education Action Zone in 2001.

### **HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS**

This is an improving school where standards are rising. It provides a safe and very caring environment for its pupils. The quality of teaching is good overall and pupils learn effectively. Although standards are well below the national average at the end of Key Stage 2, there is a commitment amongst the staff and governors to continue improving pupils' attainment. The school is very well managed by the headteacher, is effective in what it does, and provides good value for money.

#### **What the school does well**

- The headteacher provides very good leadership.
- Teaching is consistently good and pupils learn well.
- Provision for pupils with special educational needs is very good.
- The attitudes and behaviour of the pupils are very positive. Relationships throughout the school are good.
- The school is effectively involved in community initiatives such as the Parent School Partnership.

#### **What could be improved**

- Standards in English, mathematics, science and information and communication technology (ICT)
- Pupils' attendance.
- The school accommodation.

*The areas for improvement will form the basis of the governors' action plan.*

### **HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION**

The school has improved well since it was last inspected in March 1997. All of the positive features identified at the previous inspection have been maintained. Although standards are still not high enough, there has been a trend of improvement since the previous inspection. Attendance has also improved since 1997 but could be better. The pupils' behaviour is now good and a strength of the school. The school has appropriate financial and strategic plans in place. Although the school and governors have worked hard to improve the accommodation, it is still very poor in places.

## STANDARDS

The table shows the standards achieved by 11 year olds based on average point scores in National Curriculum tests.

Performance in:	compared with			
	all schools			similar schools
	1998	1999	1999	2000
English	E	E	E	C
mathematics	E	E*	E	C
science	E	E*	E	C

**Key**

well above average    A

above average        B

average                C

below average        D

well below average    E

Results of the 2000 national tests indicated that standards in English, mathematics and science were well below the national average. However, when compared to similar schools, standards in these three subjects were average. Although standards are not high enough, they are improving and the percentage of pupils that achieve appropriate levels in English, mathematics and science has been increasing since the previous inspection. In 1999, the results in English and mathematics were amongst the lowest five per cent of all schools. Evidence from inspection would indicate that standards in English are well below the national average in Key Stage 1 and 2. Standards in mathematics and science are below the national average in Key Stage 1 but well below the national average in Key Stage 2. Standards in ICT are below national expectations at the end of both key stages. However, the majority of pupils make good progress in these subjects in relation to where they start. The targets set by the school in English and mathematics for 2001 are very challenging but reinforces the school's commitment to raising standards.

## PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Most pupils are keen to learn and enjoy their lessons.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Pupils' behaviour in the classroom and playground is good.
Personal development and relationships	Pupils enjoy responsibility. They carry out jobs or duties reliably and efficiently. Relationships are good.
Attendance	Attendance is very low when compared to other schools.



## TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils:	aged up to 5 years	aged 5-7 years	aged 7-11 years
Lessons seen overall	Good	Good	Good

*Inspectors make judgements about teaching in the range: excellent; very good; good; satisfactory; unsatisfactory; poor; very poor. 'Satisfactory' means that the teaching is adequate and strengths outweigh weaknesses.*

Teaching, in all of the stages through the school was judged to be good overall. No unsatisfactory teaching was observed. This is an improvement on the previous inspection. Fourteen per cent of lessons were very good. Classroom management is consistently good and there is a noticeable shared commitment amongst the staff to challenge and get the best out of the pupils. Literacy and numeracy lessons are particularly good. They are well planned and organised and are having a significant impact on raising standards. Because of the good teaching, pupils learn effectively and achieve well. However, the teachers' subject knowledge in ICT is underdeveloped and the school has organised staff training for January 2001.

## OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	The school provides a broad and balanced curriculum. There is a good range of learning opportunities.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	There is very good provision for pupils with special educational needs and they make good progress.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	The school provides well for pupils' spiritual, moral and social development. Cultural development is sound.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Croxteth Community Primary School takes very good care of its pupils.
Partnership with parents and carers	Parents hold the school in high regard. The school's relationship with parents has improved since the previous inspection.

## HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	The school has a very positive ethos. Both pupils and staff are happy. The headteacher provides very good leadership and has contributed much to the improvement since the previous inspection. There are good monitoring procedures.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Governors are very supportive and are well informed about the school. They fulfil their statutory requirements.
The school's evaluation of its performance	The school makes good use of data and assessment information. This contributes to the improving standards.
The strategic use of resources	The school has a good number of teachers who are well supported by the non-teaching staff. The condition of the accommodation is very poor in places although there is a programme for development. Many of the subject areas are well resourced, for example, ICT. Staff, time and accommodation are used well by the school. The school achieves good value for money.

## PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Friendly atmosphere.</li> <li>The school has an open door policy and is welcoming to parents.</li> <li>Staff are very approachable.</li> <li>The school is very well run.</li> <li>Children like the school.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The school building.</li> <li>The amount of work that pupils are given to do at home.</li> </ul>

The above views are taken from the pre-inspection meeting that was attended by 5 parents and the 68 responses to the parents' questionnaires. Evidence from inspection supports the parents' positive views. The school has recently introduced a new homework policy and the quality of homework is satisfactory. However, the school is planning to consult with parents to find out more about their concerns. The inspection team would agree that the school building needs to be improved. Some areas, for example the toilets and kitchen, are in a very poor condition.

## **PART B: COMMENTARY**

### **HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?**

#### **The school's results and achievements**

1. Pupils enter the school with levels of attainment that are well below average. Their language and literacy skills are often poor. This is confirmed by the school's assessment of the pupils and inspection findings. Although the pupils make good progress overall in the Foundation Stage the majority of children do not attain all of the expected early learning goals by the end of their reception classes. The children's personal and social skills are well below average when they join the nursery but because of the particular emphasis the school puts on this area of learning, they make rapid progress. The children enjoy coming to school and are eager to learn. They lack confidence when joining the nursery and have low self-esteem but quickly learn class routines and gain confidence. The children listen attentively to their class teachers and other adults but their limited vocabulary restricts their response to questions. Although books are treated respectfully the children's pre-reading skills are very weak. Some children are beginning to recognise a few written numbers but their counting is poor and a few children are unable to count at all. They are beginning to learn the names of some common two-dimensional shapes such as circles and squares and with adult support use money to 'buy' items from the class shop. The children have a limited view of the world around them particularly when they enter the nursery. They start to discuss the weather every morning and children in the reception classes talk about past and present events and recognise the features associated with living and non-living things. The children's skills in ICT are weak. As part of their creative development the children gain a repertoire of nursery rhymes and action songs. They enjoy playing with musical instruments. Reception children take part in activities that involve painting, printing and sticking. Although the children's physical development is in line with the standards set nationally, the development of these skills is restricted as there is no designated play area for the children in the Foundation Stage and the playground is in a poor state of physical repair. However, the children are developing their manipulative skills and show an appropriate awareness of space and others when running and jumping.

2. Although most of the pupils fail to achieve the standards set for them nationally in all of the areas of learning, the pupils do learn effectively and over time make good progress. Given their low starting point the pupils' achievements are good in the Foundation Stage. This is the result of consistently good teaching. However, at times the minority of more able pupils could be given work that is harder

3. National tests for 2000 at the end of Key Stage 1 show that standards in reading and writing were well below average and in mathematics, below average. However, there is a far more positive picture when the results are compared with similar schools. Standards in reading and mathematics were above average, whilst writing was average. National test results for the same year at Key Stage 2 show well below average standards in English, mathematics and science although when compared to similar schools, standards in these three subjects were average. Although these standards are not high enough in terms of national averages, standards at the end of both key stages are improving over time and the proportion of pupils that achieve the expected levels at the end of both key stages, has improved significantly since the previous inspection. The school is not complacent about its results and the headteacher, teachers and governors share a commitment to continue raising standards. The school's statutory targets for English and mathematics in 2001 are extremely challenging and indicate the school's desire to improve standards.

4. Evidence from inspection indicates that standards in English of the oldest pupils are well below average in Key Stage 1 and 2. Standards in mathematics and science are below average at the end of Key Stage 1 but well below average at the end of Key Stage 2. Standards in ICT are below national expectations at the end of both key stages. In the remaining subjects, standards are in line with those expected nationally and the locally agreed syllabus for religious education with the exception of music at Key Stage 1. However pupils' progress in music is often good in Key Stage 2 and standards are average by the time pupils are eleven.

5. By the age of seven pupils' speaking and listening skills are well below average. Although pupils listen carefully they lack confidence and fluency with their speech. Reading is well below average although reading skills are developed through a well-structured programme. Standards in writing are also below average. Pupils' writing is limited and not always accurate. The majority of pupils can count accurately and identify simple odd and even numbers. They are beginning to look at groups of objects and estimate how many there are and identify the features of two-dimensional shapes. However, there are a significant number of pupils who have a limited mathematical knowledge and understanding. In science pupils investigate how colour and light can affect eyesight, are aware of the human senses and know the main parts of a plant in simple terms. By the age of eleven although the pupils' speaking and listening skills have developed they are still limited in terms of exploring ideas, questioning and arguing rationally. Their restricted vocabulary impacts on their comprehension skills and they are unable to give more complex opinions about what they have read. Most pupils write accurately and the standard of handwriting in the pupils' handwriting books is good. In mathematics the pupils understand place value and are beginning to see the relationship between decimals, fractions and percentages. Many of the pupils can discuss scientific concepts and facts but are unable to relate these to the world in which we live.

6. Although standards are still well below average by the time the pupils are eleven, their achievement is good overall particularly in the core subjects of English, mathematics and science. The high percentage of good teaching and the impact of the literacy and numeracy strategies ensures that the pupils learn effectively and make good progress against their prior attainment. This is well illustrated in the most recent Key Stage 2 national test results where 62 per cent of the pupils made better than expected progress in either English or mathematics, or both. This is also against a background of circumstances that makes teaching very challenging in Croxteth. Non-attendance is still too high, although the school has done much to improve this situation. Poor attendance has a negative impact on standards. Many of the year groups in the school have high percentages of pupils identified with special educational needs. In one current Year 6 class the proportion is identified as 58 per cent. In other year groups there is a gender imbalance with significantly more boys than girls. Against these difficulties the pupils achieve well and standards are continuing to improve. Pupils' attitudes to learning are also much better than at the time of the previous inspection when school disaffected a number of older pupils. However, in a minority of lessons higher attaining pupils are not always sufficiently challenged or extended in their work. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress in relation to the clear targets set in their individual education plans.

## **Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development**

7. Pupils have good attitudes to their work, their behaviour is good and the quality of relationships, especially those between pupils and the adults who work in the school, is very good. These are important school strengths that are helping pupils to learn.

8. There has been much improvement in pupil's approach to school and their attitudes to learning since the previous inspection, as a result of the school's hard work in valuing and encouraging success and in helping to raise pupils own expectations of what they are capable of achieving. Pupils attitudes and behaviour in lessons were always satisfactory; they were good in over half of lessons seen and very good in almost one in five lessons. Parents agree that the children enjoy their lessons and being at school.

9. Sheer enjoyment in learning was typified in a mathematics lesson for older pupils, where despite distractions and noise from builders on the roof overhead, pupils were keen to finish their work and to be successful in a mathematical challenge set at the start of the lesson. It took some encouragement to draw them away from their books and come together as the lesson ended, so intent were they on their work. Good attitudes and enjoyment were clearly evident in an art and design lesson on shape patterns, where the teacher was showing pupils the work of the artist Piet Mondrian. Here, her own interest and confidence in art and design was transmitted to the Year 2 pupils, who were curious about the artist and his life. They set to work with single-minded determination and perseverance, sticking well to the instructions just to use one colour, and producing some interesting and attractive pieces of work.

10. Pupils wear their badges and stickers with pride and especially value the schools comprehensive systems of rewards for good work, behaviour and attendance. They enjoy being 'Child of the Week' and 'Child of the day' and the status it affords them. Pupils enjoy talking to visitors and are helpful and generally polite. They are proud of their school and take good care of school property. They enjoy working in the new ICT suite and appreciate the new equipment.

11. Behaviour is good and pupils have a clear understanding of what is and what is not acceptable. This is due to the teachers consistent re-inforcement of what is expected from them, and what is not. Some pupils do not find behaving well easy, but, to their credit, they do work hard at following the correct path. Very often, they have to cope with adults' differing expectation of the standard of behaviour in school and that outside the school gates. Some pupils find playtimes are often difficult, especially in terms of controlling anger and walking away from confrontational situations. There were five temporary exclusions over the previous academic year and the school's rate of exclusions is stable, although higher than that seen in most primary schools. Exclusions are only used in cases where the safety of pupils and staff is in threat. The school monitors closely any cases where pupil's behaviour is deteriorating, to try and prevent the need for exclusions.

12. The relationship between pupils and staff is very good. There are some very supportive teachers who spend much time in talking to individual pupils about their problems. Pupils interviewed during the inspection were happy that teachers helped them and listened to them. This is clearly the case.

13. Some classes have their own supportive relationships; for instance the teacher will say to pupils that "our class is special" and "our class is a happy one" which is creating some strong teacher and class bonds. Pupils are learning how to look out and support each other, especially at play and lunchtimes. Some of the pupils spoken to have been helped by the older Year 6 pupils who act as 'buddies' and those designated as 'buddies' take their role

seriously. 'Buddies' are Year 6 pupils who make sure that everyone has someone to play with and help pupils if they are unhappy, in liaison with teachers if necessary.

14. Pupils carry out a range of responsibilities around the school with care and pride. Year 6 prefects help to maintain an orderly atmosphere at lunchtimes by handing out stickers to others who are walking sensibly along corridors. Pupils are growing in self-confidence and the fact that some Year 5 pupils have met with the Headteacher to request a school council, is a sign of this. For younger pupils, jobs such as apple and milk monitors and weather recorders are eagerly sought and carried out diligently. Pupils rise to the challenge in raising money for others. They were handing in money during the inspection week for a 'mufti' day on the Friday for Children in Need, they raised a good sum of money to help a local child and brought in Harvest Parcels for the Barnardoes charity in the autumn.

15. The school have worked hard and made good progress since the previous inspection in raising the attendance rate from 87.5 per cent to 90.3 per cent. They have been very successful in almost eliminating unauthorised absence. However, the attendance of pupils is still very low when compared to that seen in primary schools nationally and remains a specific cause for concern, as some pupils have large gaps in their education that is having a severe effect upon their levels of attainment.

16. Poor attendance is due to the lack of importance a significant number of parents attach to their child's regular attendance at school, and their willingness to condone absence. For example, events such as poor weather, easily deters some parents from bringing their child to school. The school has identified one Year 6 class with particular attendance problems, which is having noticeable effect upon the attainment of this group. They predict this will negatively influence the results in statutory tests next year.

17. Punctuality to school in the mornings has improved. There is still a number of pupils who are consistently late, between 9 and 9.15am, but overall, levels of timekeeping are satisfactory.

## **HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?**

18. The quality of teaching has improved since the previous inspection and is contributing to the good achievement that many pupils now make in relation to their prior attainment. Of the lessons observed during the inspection period, 14 per cent were very good, 49 per cent good and 37 per cent satisfactory. No unsatisfactory teaching was observed. At the time of the previous inspection only 6 per cent of lessons were judged to be very good and 6 per cent were unsatisfactory. The quality of teaching is consistently good in the Foundation Stage and in literacy and numeracy. Inspection findings would support the views of parents in their responses to the pre-inspection questionnaire where 97 per cent agreed with the statement that teaching is good.

19. Pupils learn effectively and since the previous inspection the quality of teaching and learning through the school has been well monitored particularly in literacy and numeracy. Reports and feedback are given on lessons that are observed and the ensuing discussion identifies areas of improvement. The National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies have been well introduced and are effective in raising standards in English and mathematics. The basic skills of literacy and numeracy are well taught to the pupils and have had a favourable impact on the pupils' learning. It comes as no surprise that the school has two leading teachers for mathematics and one leading English teacher who are able to provide examples of good teaching not only to the staff of Croxteth but also other teachers in the local education authority.

20. Literacy and numeracy lessons are well planned. Lesson objectives are clearly identified and shared with the pupils. Lessons follow the recommended patterns suggested by the literacy and numeracy strategies and a range of work is prepared for the different attainment groups that are found in the classes. This was clearly illustrated in a Year 6 numeracy lesson where during the mental mathematics session questions were directed to different groups of pupils that were related to their ability. This ensured that all pupils were given appropriate work and understood what they were doing. This range of work was then continued into the main lesson activity with pupils using protractors to measure angles. In a very good Year 2 literacy lesson based on *Mauba and the crocodile* the pupils' group work was very well matched to the pupils' needs. The teacher worked well with the lower attaining pupils giving quality support whilst the other pupils worked well independently, secure in the well organised activities provided by the teacher. When lessons are this well organised and there is a good range of tasks, the majority of pupils learn effectively and make good progress. However, this good practice is not always extended into other areas of the curriculum. This means that some tasks are too difficult for lower attaining pupils and they become frustrated and restless and pupils who are more able finish work quickly and are not sufficiently challenged. In these lessons learning is not so effective. Even in the well organised literacy and numeracy lessons more able pupils are not always given time targets in which to finish their work. This can lead to them achieving less work than they are capable of.

21. In general teachers have secure subject knowledge. In many instances, it is good and this impacts on the quality of teaching. A Year 5 music lesson on rhythm, a Year 2 religious education lesson about Diwali and a Year 1 physical education lesson developing ball skills are all examples of very good teaching that included good subject understanding. In lessons where subject knowledge is less secure although teaching is satisfactory, it can be uninspiring. An example of this is the use of commercial tapes in music. Teachers' subject knowledge in ICT is underdeveloped, and this is recognised by the school and training starts in January.

22. Teachers manage the pupils very well in lessons. There is a good framework for discipline that ensures that the majority of pupils behave well and settle to tasks quickly. Relationships are very good and pupils are interested in their activities and encouraged to apply maximum effort to their work. Teachers have a good understanding of the needs of their pupils and adjust their teaching methods well to class circumstances. A good example of this was seen in Year 3, where the class teacher, read a chapter of *James and the Giant Peach* to ensure a quiet and calm start to an art and design lesson after a 'lively' lunch break. This good practice of adapting to varying class circumstances is regularly seen through the school as teachers respond well to challenging pupil behaviour. Lessons usually move along at an appropriate pace and pupils listen and concentrate well. Levels of learning are good and pupils often make good gains in their depth of knowledge and understanding. Pupils understand what they are learning and talk confidently about their work.

23. Resources are generally used appropriately and are well prepared for lessons so that no time is wasted. A good example of this was seen in a Year 1 design and technology lesson where pupils were studying the materials used for housing and building stability. Resources were organised so that pupils moved straight into their activity groups after the teacher's introduction and got straight on with their work. Learning support assistants are effectively deployed and contribute well to pupils' learning particularly in the Foundation Stage and in many literacy lessons. However, on occasions support staff can be too passive during class teachers' introductions to lessons. The marking of pupils' work is undertaken thoroughly by teachers. There were some good examples of teachers writing detailed and pertinent comments about completed work that gave pupils a clear indication of what errors were made and what might improve the quality of work. The use of homework is satisfactory

overall. It is used appropriately to reinforce work undertaken in lessons.

24. The teacher of special educational needs is a very good teacher. She works very well with small groups. When they are withdrawn from class these pupils work on areas that are being covered by the class but at a level appropriate to their abilities. All teachers and the trained classroom assistants give good support to pupils with special educational needs.

## **HOW GOOD ARE THE CURRICULAR AND OTHER OPPORTUNITIES OFFERED TO PUPILS?**

25. The school provides a broad and balanced curriculum for the Foundation Stage and in Key Stages 1 and 2. This was the position at the time of the previous inspection. All National Curriculum subjects are taught and religious education conforms to the locally agreed syllabus. There is a good range of learning opportunities to support pupils' academic and personal development. The school has ensured that there are policies and schemes of work in place for all National Curriculum subjects and religious education and has made good progress in adapting its schemes of work to the changes in the new National Curriculum. The scheme of work for ICT is currently being reviewed in the light of these changes and the improved resources.

26. The school has justifiably placed a great deal of emphasis on literacy and numeracy and the timetable reflects this in its allocation of teaching time for each subject. This has narrowed the time available for other subjects of the curriculum, but the school manages the timetable well to ensure that the National Curriculum is covered appropriately by the efficient use of time and by developing clear and effective links across the various subjects. For example, opportunities to develop literacy skills are included in history lessons when Year 6 pupils write letters to Croxteth Hall, applying for servants' jobs. Similarly, pupils' mathematical skills are enhanced through geography lessons where pupils in Year 5 develop their mapping skills by calculating bearings between cities and working with compass points and grid references. However the development of literacy and numeracy skills is not consistently planned for, in other areas of the curriculum. Until recently, opportunities for pupils to develop their ICT skills have been very limited and there have been too few opportunities for them to use computer software to control events. However, the school is now in a strong position to develop this area of the curriculum.

27. Curriculum provision for Foundation Stage children in the reception classes is matched well to the six areas of learning for this age group. Teachers in the nursery and reception classes plan closely together for progression along the 'stepping stones' of the new curriculum for early years children. Although the new curriculum is not yet securely in place, it is an improvement on the previous inspection, when teachers in the nursery and main school planned separately. The early years curriculum is particularly well designed to develop the children's personal and social skills and due emphasis is placed upon the development of their language and mathematical skills. However, opportunities for the nursery children to develop their physical skills through access to climbing and balancing activities in a designated play are unsatisfactory. The school is aware of this weakness and plans are in hand to develop this aspect of the curriculum. In spite of this, the school is well placed to adapt the under-fives curriculum to the changes needed for the Foundation Stage curriculum and has already made good progress.

28. Long and medium-term planning is of a good quality and makes provision for pupils to make systematic progress as they move through the key stages. The school's curriculum is fully inclusive and promotes equal opportunities well. All adults observe the school's policy conscientiously and each aspect of school life is accessible to everyone. Staff make every effort to ensure that pupils have equal access to the curriculum, irrespective of ability,



linguistic background or gender.

29. There is good provision for personal, social, and health education and the school is justly proud of its success in winning a Safe School award. Issues such as healthy eating and drugs awareness are explored effectively through science. The school nurse is involved in discussions about physical and sexual development. Parents are invited to attend evening meetings dealing with these issues and they fully appreciate the school's willingness to involve them in these aspects of their children's education.

30. The quality of learning opportunities provided for pupils with special educational needs is good. These pupils are provided with a broad and balanced curriculum and they are well supported in their learning. All have well-constructed individual education plans that are closely matched to their needs and lessons are generally well planned to enable them to succeed. The small percentage of pupils for whom English is an additional language is well supported by teachers.

31. The wider community makes a very good contribution to pupils' learning, particularly through the strong links with the parish church and the Croxteth Child Development Centre. The school is involved in a wide range of educational initiatives, aimed at raising pupils' attainment. Links with industry through the local education authority have resulted in a very significant improvement in resources that has enabled the school to make far better provision for ICT and this has had a significant impact on pupils' progress. A representative from the Royal Mail has visited to talk to the pupils and is helping them to develop their own web site. Pupils regularly visit nearby places of interest such as Croxteth Hall in links with their history project. Visitors to the school, such as a local builder, road safety officers and travelling theatre groups, make positive contributions to pupils' learning.

32. Links with the local secondary school are satisfactory, with good opportunities for pupils to gain 'hands on' curriculum experiences with their future teachers. Subject co-ordinators from the local cluster of schools meet regularly to share ideas and keep up-to-date with their areas of responsibility. The school makes satisfactory provision for out-of-school activities, that include self-funding sports and drama clubs. A computer club and choir also enhance the curriculum. This is clearly reflected in the very good relationships and strong sense of community that exist throughout the school.

33. The school provides well for pupils' spiritual, moral and social development. Cultural development, which was a weakness in the previous report is now satisfactory. Whole-school and key stage assemblies make a significant contribution to all four elements but some class assemblies do not allow for prayer or personal reflection and do not always meet statutory requirements. The *Heartstone Project* plays an important part in spiritual development and in assemblies there is a warm feeling of a family community. Good opportunities are created for quiet thought and celebration of the joy of life. Staff work hard to provide an attractive learning environment, within an unprepossessing building, which is encouraging an appreciation of the beauty of nature and care of the environment. The school has created a remembrance area in the quadrangle and a commemorative mural in the playground where pupils can think about their school friends sadly lost through traffic accidents. The good provision for spiritual development is an improvement on the previous inspection.

34. Good provision for moral development has been maintained. The comprehensive system of rewards for achievement is successfully promoting good behaviour. Pupils, even the youngest, are effectively learning the difference between right and wrong and understanding the consequences of unacceptable actions. The 'child of the day' and further rewards given in the achievement assembly, reinforce the moral values promoted by the

school consistently.

35. The school provides good opportunities for social development and this is a further improvement since the last inspection. This is a warm and caring community in which all staff demonstrate their high expectations of good social behaviour and this promotes a high level of co-operation and friendship between pupils. Caring for and respecting each other is a cornerstone of the school's philosophy and all staff are very good role models. Most pupils are polite and friendly towards visitors. The school has worked very hard to foster a sense of belonging to the community and pupils accept responsibility within that community readily. Residential visits offer very good opportunities for personal and social developments as do the public performances in music and drama.

36. Since the last inspection the school has made considerable efforts to improve provision for cultural development and this is now satisfactory. Pupils are given a sound understanding of their own and other's cultures through the *Heartstone Project* and this will be extended next year by contact with four other countries through the Internet. In religious education, pupils study the Christian faith and other major world religions. Pupils visit their local churches and have close contact with the local Church of England minister who is a frequent visitor and plays the piano for assemblies and productions. The oldest pupils enjoyed preparing searching questions to ask him on a visit arranged to explore the scriptures and their meaning. Festivals from other faiths and cultures are studied and make positive contributions to pupils' knowledge and understanding of the richness and diversity of our multi-racial community. The school does not arrange visits to non-Christian places of worship and there is a shortage of religious artefacts that could enrich pupils' understanding.

## **HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?**

37. The school provides a very good level of pastoral care, within an atmosphere that firmly focuses on raising academic achievement. Staff have a good understanding of the circumstances of pupils and the provision they offer, in terms of support, guidance and encouragement for learning, is skilfully and sincerely given. This is a strength of the school.

38. Overall, the school has made good progress on the key Issues for action from the previous inspection report. The management of behaviour was inconsistent and the improvement of behaviour was a key issue. There is now consistency in the way staff handle behaviour and pupils' behaviour is good. Improving attendance and punctuality was a key issue and the school has also made good progress with this, although there is still much work to do.

39. The school has good systems in place for encouraging and rewarding regular attendance, on a school to pupil basis. A wide range of rewards, recently revised in order to remain appealing to pupils are on offer, including several innovative systems such as individual attendance charts using school tokens, badges presented in assembly, a class cup, all of which are eagerly sought after and valued by pupils and some parents. The school has been successful in raising pupils' attendance since the previous inspection, although it remains well below national averages.

40. The procedures for monitoring attendance in terms of liaison and encouragement for parents, is satisfactory overall. However, whilst the procedures for recording attendance now comply with legal requirements, there is insufficient use of the computerised data the school has, in order to identify those pupils and families causing concern. The current arrangement whereby two letters are sent to parents, asking them to come in to school to talk over attendance concerns elicits a virtually nil response. The very recent involvement of staff from the Parent School Partnership telephoning parents at the beginning and end of the week is a positive move, but it is not regular and systematic enough to increase the attendance of a hard core of parents whose children attend only sporadically. There is currently no school-based and effective system to establish meaningful contact with parents who cannot be reached by telephone and who do not respond to the letters the school sends out.

41. In addition, the past history where the school has been involved with a number of different Educational Welfare Officers and the resultant lack of consistency have not helped in building up relationships between those concerned. The school is currently planning for initiatives connected to the Education Action Zone involvement, one of which is to develop a "First day Call" system and to develop the current use of attendance data stored electronically. This is entirely appropriate.

42. Serious health and safety issues remain in the school, despite being highlighted in the previous inspection report. Although the headteacher and governors have taken all available action to try and resolve the problems with the buildings in order to ensure the safety of the children, improvement is unsatisfactory. The building is currently being re-roofed which should go a long way towards removing the problem of water leaking into the school. Pupils' toilets are in an appalling condition. The yard is unsafe as the surface is uneven and breaking up. This is resulting in a high number of minor injuries to pupils and both pupils and parents voiced their complaints to inspectors. In addition, the ventilation system in the kitchen is inadequate, and condensation is causing paint and plaster to fall from the walls onto food preparation areas.

43. The schools' day to day procedures for health and safety are thorough and the health and safety policy is a comprehensive document, which is annually revised. Recent whole-staff training is helping to maintain a good level of awareness.

44. Child Protection procedures are very good and there are three staff members trained to Named Person status. This is an area staff are particularly experienced in and the guidelines in the school policy are closely adhered to. Pupils spoken to during the inspection, when inspectors asked them about several areas connected to their welfare and happiness at school, confirmed there were always adults in school who listen to them if they need to talk. For older Year 5 and 6 pupils, involvement in the *Heartstone Project*, an initiative set up to help pupils solve the problems of society, is important in helping them to realise they have the power to make the right choices and not to be influenced by others.

45. The school's procedures for monitoring and supporting pupil's personal development are very good. Staff take an active interest in pupils and know them well. Comments written on pupil's annual report, concerning how pupils have developed and matured in their

approach over the year, plus comments about attendance and punctuality, show this to be the case.

46. The school employs some very good behavioural management strategies that are successful in encouraging positive behaviour from pupils. The school is moving from a system based on 'assertive discipline' to one where rewards are the key methods employed. There is a comprehensive range of rewards for good work and behaviour, which pupils enjoy receiving, and which are carefully monitored to ensure consistency and fairness. For example, Child Of the Week, Child of The Day, merit badges, 9\* and 3\* badges, class charts for good work all demonstrate the schools' pleasure when pupils behave well and work hard. An Achievement Wall strategically placed outside the headteacher's office, makes it very clear how much the school values what their pupils are doing.

47. A very new position within school, that of a Learning Mentor funded, by external grants, is another useful strand to the schools range of approaches. Early signs in terms of providing someone for pupils to talk to about a wide range of barriers preventing them from learning are encouraging.

48. The school is good at taking advantage of agencies based within school, to help support pupils. For instance, the Croxteth Child Development Service provides useful lunchtime play opportunities for groups of pupils on a rota basis. This is helping to keep pupils purposefully occupied and is another way of encourage a consistently good level of behaviour at the 'free' times which some pupils find it more difficult to cope with. Any cases of bullying are carefully recorded and handled appropriately. Pupils are happy this is the case.

49. The school has good and firmly established procedures for assessing pupils' attainment and progress in English and mathematics. The quality of assessment in all other subjects is satisfactory, apart from in ICT, which is unsatisfactory. Overall, they have made good progress since the previous inspection in improving both the quality and use of assessment, especially in relation to the teaching of literacy and numeracy.

50. The school's new assessment policy is a comprehensive document that clearly details the wide range of assessment strategies in place. The school makes very good use of assessment data, including National Curriculum test results, to consider trends in performance. Test data is individually analysed by a skilled and enthusiastic co-ordinator, who provides teachers with a year group analysis together with a suggested area to develop. For example, in focusing on the areas of under-performance by girls, which is an area where the school has improved.

51. The school has a clear understanding of how pupils are performing when compared both locally and nationally. They are using this information to set themselves targets for improvement, such as providing pupils with more work on narrative writing skills and greater emphasis on improving the quality of their handwriting in English.

52. Assessment of pupils with special educational needs is very good. Effective targets are set, progress towards them is assessed and the outcomes of such assessment are used successfully to plan the next stage of learning. Assessments made by the special educational needs co-ordinator are also used well to select pupils for specific extra work in English during the Additional Literacy Support. The pupils' individual education plans are clear and are reviewed termly by the class teacher and the co-ordinator. The pupils with special educational needs are well accepted by their peers. Pupils' assessments are well supported by a good number of outside specialists who visit on a regular basis and know the pupils well.

## HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

53. The school has a good relationship with parents who hold the school in high regard. The school's relationship with parents has improved since the previous inspection, and this is largely as a result of the ideas and friendly approach from the new headteacher, together with the positive way in which staff communicate with parents. Parents recognise and appreciate the way the school has steadily improved over the years.

54. The results of the pre-inspection questionnaire show that parents are generally happy with most aspects of school life. There are many more positive views expressed now, than at the time of the previous inspection. Parents are especially positive about their child liking school, about the good teaching and the way their child is encouraged to work hard, achieve and thus make good progress. Inspectors endorse all of parents' positive views of the school.

55. Twenty per cent of parents who replied to the pre-inspection questionnaire did not feel their child received the right amount of homework. The school has recently introduced a new homework policy and parents were informed about this at the start of the term. The quality of homework is satisfactory and in line with that seen in many primary schools, although there are some inconsistencies between year groups. The school is planning to consult parents to find out more about their concerns. A smaller number of parents do not feel that they are kept well informed about how their child is getting on at school. There are a good number of termly opportunities for parents to attend parents evenings and teachers are very willing to see parents at other times, for informal discussions.

56. There is an effective relationship between the school and the Parent School Partnership, with good liaison to ensure activities are specifically targeted to the year groups of pupils who need the most help. The Parent School Partnership is a school-based outside agency working hard to help raise standards in numeracy, literacy and ICT by equipping parents with the skills and confidence to help their child. There are some very good initiatives in place, making clear in-roads by breaking down barriers between home and school. For example the Readathon project, where parents come into school and work with their children on reading-based activities, is helping them to understand more about the work their child is doing and encouraging them to share books at home. The Parent School Partnership is especially proud of the success of its Specialist Teachers Assistant course, which has seen three parents qualify and now employed in the school.

57. Pupils' annual reports for parents focus appropriately on how their child is progressing in numeracy and literacy, and comments are clear and helpful, with acknowledgement and thanks when support from home is making a difference. Reports include targets that parents can work on with their child which are discussed at the autumn term's parents' evening. The language used in some targets is more easily understood and 'parent friendly' than in others, for example, 'learn doubles and halves to a 100' contrasting with 'learn more consonant blends, record simple addition and subtraction sentences'. Overall, the reports are good.

58. The impact of parental involvement in the school is growing as parents become more confident in their own skills and realise the friendly welcome they will receive once they have made the initial move to come in. Currently, parent's involvement is satisfactory. A few parents help in the nursery and parents help to change the children's Readathon books. There is always a large number of parents who come to sports day and the Nativity play evenings, whilst just over half attend parents' evenings. The school is benefiting from a full complement of parent governors who are making a positive contribution to the management of the school. The Parent and Friends Association is a very active group of parents who organise events such as the Christmas Fair and raffles, to raise money. This is a valuable source of income for the school as it is used to help ensure that all pupils can take part in

school trips and visits.

59. Parents of the pupils with special educational needs are invited to, and sometimes attend, reviews. They are kept well informed.

## **HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?**

60. The headteacher provides very good leadership. She has been a key appointment since the previous inspection and has contributed much to the significant improvement the school has made. At the pre-inspection meeting with parents it was commented that the school 'was very well run' and 91 per cent of parents agreed with the statement that the school is well led and managed in the parents' questionnaires. Inspection evidence supports the parents' views. The headteacher has a good understanding of the community that the school serves and has high expectations. She has a clear vision about what can be achieved and has developed a very positive school environment. The pupils and staff are very happy despite the difficult working conditions caused by the very poor school accommodation and the challenging socio-economic circumstances of the local area. Teaching and non-teaching staff, support each other well and the 'team approach' is noticeable in the work of the school. There is a total commitment to continue to improve. It comes as no surprise that when the school was reassessed it continued to meet the standards set by Investors in People. The headteacher has a significant presence around the school that contributes to the good behaviour seen at lunchtimes and in the corridors. The pupils welcome an opportunity to speak to her, knowing that she will be interested in what they have to say, and towards the end of the school day many pupils are proud of the opportunity that they have to show their good work to the headteacher in her office. The school's mission statement, *Working together to make a difference* is well reflected in the life of the school.

61. The role of the deputy headteacher could not be judged as he was absent during the inspection but the school has a good senior management team who support the headteacher well. With the headteacher they have maintained the focus of moving the school forward particularly in terms of raising standards and developing the quality of education. The school has good systems for monitoring the curriculum and teaching. The most recent focus has been on literacy and numeracy and both the English and mathematics co-ordinators have a day every half-term to monitor teachers' planning, observe lessons, talk to pupils and look at their books. This process highlights areas for development that the school then addresses with individual members of staff or all teachers. This good practice means that the national strategies for literacy and numeracy have been well implemented in the school and are having a positive effect on raising standards. The headteacher undertakes one formal lesson observation per teacher a year and these have also focused on literacy and numeracy. Although other co-ordinators are provided with time for monitoring the school would acknowledge the need to develop the good practice seen with literacy and numeracy to other subjects. There is good analysis of data and pupils' performance is monitored very thoroughly. The statutory targets in English and mathematics for 2001 are very challenging. They exceed the recommendations of the local education authority which are based on the pupils' results at Key Stage 1 and another example of the school's drive to raise standards and the confidence that they have in 'adding value' to the pupils' achievement.

62. The governing body is very supportive of the school. They were criticised by the previous inspection but current inspection evidence indicates that they know the school's strengths and weaknesses and fulfil statutory requirements. Governors are well informed about the school and have a good understanding of the standards the pupils achieve and the community that the school serves. Inviting pupils to governors' meetings to share and discuss their work helps the governors' perspective. This process is enjoyed by both the pupils and governors and is helpful in developing an understanding of what is happening in

the school. They want the school to continue improving. Performance management objectives have been set by the governors for the headteacher and they have continued to try and develop the school accommodation over a number of years. The governors operate an appropriate range of committees to ensure the smooth running of the school. The staffing and finance committee is involved in the budget setting process before a new budget is put before the full governing body. Once the school has some understanding of its new budget the headteacher and school administrative officer put together a number of financial options for the staffing and finance committee to consider. This is good practice and provides an opportunity to focus on the priorities identified in the good school development plan and other issues that impact on the school. As the school numbers have fallen quite considerably since the previous inspection, through no fault of the school, budget management has had to be quite rigorous. Imaginative use of staffing resources has allowed the school to operate within budget when predictions several years ago were not so healthy. This is also one of the reasons that the governors opted for a staffing and finance committee because the areas were linked. Evidence would now indicate that the school numbers should remain stable over the next few years. The school achieves good value for money and applies the principles of best value.

63. The management of special educational needs is very good. The school has invested substantially in this area by employing a full-time, special needs co-ordinator without class responsibility. Consequently, pupils with special educational needs receive very good support although in a small number of lessons, she spends some considerable time, sitting with her group of pupils, listening to the class teacher. This is not a good use of her time. The pupils' individual educational plans have specific short-term targets and teachers use these well when planning class work. When they are withdrawn from class for special work, care is taken to ensure that pupils do not miss important parts of the curriculum. The special education needs register is up to date, reviews take place regularly and good efforts are made to keep parents fully informed. Reviews show that pupils make good and sometimes very good progress. A governor is appointed with responsibility for special educational needs and understands the school's systems and procedures.

64. There is a good match of teachers and support staff to meet the demands of the curriculum. In addition, there is a good pupil to teacher ratio that is well below the national average. Trained classroom assistants are well briefed and suitably deployed across the school to give support where it is most needed, mainly in the area of language development. The school has a good staffing structure. Wherever possible curriculum co-ordinators are appointed on the basis of subject specialisms. The organisation and distribution of classes and other specialist areas, such as the computer suites, libraries and special educational needs centre, together with community areas provided by the school, are carefully considered to ensure the most efficient and effective use of available space and the maximum impact on standards.

65. Good procedures are in place to ensure adequate cover for staff absences that are few, and to minimise any disruption to the quality of education provided. In addition, the school employs one full-time and one part-time administrative staff who, with a school assistant, ensure the effective management of the educational, financial and daily systems of the school. There is a cheerful team of cleaning staff who maintain the building to a satisfactory standard.

66. Accommodation is in an extended, partial two-storey building which provides large classroom areas for the effective education of pupils. There are two halls which double as dining areas, two open-plan libraries, computer suites for each key stage, resource areas, special educational needs centre and a number of rooms designated for community use. In most classrooms, communal areas and community rooms, the quality of display is good and

contributes significantly to the pupils' learning. School buildings are safe and secure. However, both internally and externally, the fabric of the building is in an very poor state of repair and is prone to vandalism. The kitchen and pupils' toilet areas in particular, together with the poor playground surface and the entry of water into the building constitute a significant health and safety hazard and require urgent attention. It is a potential drain on finances, which could be more usefully deployed and is a significant area of parental concern. There is large outside accommodation, comprising an extensive playing field and four separate designated playgrounds but there is no designated outside play area for children in the foundation stage. All areas are secure and adequately supervised by teaching and support staff. The appearance of the school does not give a true reflection of the good work exhibited inside which the school works hard to promote.

67. Throughout the school, the overall quality and range of resources are satisfactory and contribute positively to the quality of learning. This is especially so in mathematics, music, science and ICT. Resources in art and design, physical education and literacy are adequate. Resources in the humanities, religious education and the school libraries, however, do not contribute fully to the enrichment of pupils' knowledge.

68. With the improving standards, the good teaching and positive attitudes of the pupils and the very good management of the headteacher, the school provides good value for money.



## WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

69. The inspection team recognise the school's continued desire to improve, but to raise the standards achieved and the quality of education the headteacher, staff and governors should:

- (1) Raise standards in English, mathematics, science and ICT by:
  - Identifying in teachers' planning the literacy, numeracy and ICT skills to be taught in other areas of the curriculum;  
(Paragraphs: 26, 83, 85, 92, 94, 95, 107, 113, 119, 126 and 132)
  - Providing further planned opportunities for speaking and listening;  
(Paragraph: 83)
  - Ensuring that planning for the range of different ability groups within classes contains extension activities for higher attaining pupils;  
(Paragraphs: 20, 73, 75, 90 and 123)
  - Using examples of the good teaching of mental maths to improve the quality of these sessions throughout the school;  
(Paragraph: 90)
  - Raising staff competence and confidence in ICT;  
(Paragraphs: 21, 124 and 126)
  - Developing assessment procedures for ICT;  
(Paragraphs: 49 and 126)
  - The effective monitoring of teaching in science and ICT.  
(Paragraphs: 99 and 127)
- (2) Continuing to improve attendance by establishing a school based system that ensures meaningful contact with the hard core of parents whose children's attendance is causing concern.  
(Paragraphs: 15, 16, 40 and 41)
- (3) Improve the quality of the accommodation where it is very poor by continuing to rigorously pursue all areas of additional funding and initiating the planned areas of development.  
(Paragraphs: 27, 42, 62, 66, 80 and 81)

In addition to the above issues, the following less important matter should also be considered for inclusion in the action plan:

- Develop a designated play area for children in the Foundation Stage.

## PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

### Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	79
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	41

### Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
0	14	49	37	0	0	0

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

### Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	13	259
Number of full-time pupils eligible for free school meals	N/A	147

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	0	0
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	1	89

English as an additional language	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	0

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	5
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	4

### Attendance

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
	%		%
School data	6.8	School data	2.8
National comparative data	5.4	National comparative data	0.5

Both tables give the percentage of half days (sessions) missed through absence for the latest complete reporting year.

### Attainment at the end of Key Stage 1

	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	2000	20	18	38

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	14	12	11
	Girls	16	16	16
	Total	30	28	27
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	79 (76)	74 (71)	73 (82)
	National	83 (82)	84 (83)	90 (87)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	13	11	13
	Girls	16	16	16
	Total	29	27	29
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	76 (76)	71 (85)	76 (65)
	National	84 (82)	88 (86)	88 (87)

Percentages in brackets refer to the year before the latest reporting year.

### Attainment at the end of Key Stage 2

	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2 for the latest reporting year	2000	22	22	44

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	15	13	17
	Girls	14	9	16
	Total	29	22	33
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	66 (50)	50 (38)	75 (56)
	National	75 (70)	72 (69)	85 (78)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	15	12	17
	Girls	13	12	14
	Total	29	24	31
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	64 (57)	55 (49)	70 (76)
	National	70 (70)	72 (69)	79 (78)

Percentages in brackets refer to the year before the latest reporting year.

### ***Ethnic background of pupils***

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	0
Black – African heritage	0
Black – other	0
Indian	0
Pakistani	0
Bangladeshi	0
Chinese	0
White	229
Any other minority ethnic group	0

*This table refers to pupils of compulsory school age only.*

### ***Exclusions in the last school year***

	Fixed period	Permanent
Black – Caribbean heritage	0	0
Black – African heritage	0	0
Black – other	0	0
Indian	0	0
Pakistani	0	0
Bangladeshi	0	0
Chinese	0	0
White	5	0
Other minority ethnic groups	0	0

*This table gives the number of exclusions of pupils of compulsory school age, which may be different from the number of pupils excluded.*

### ***Teachers and classes***

#### **Qualified teachers and classes: YR– Y6**

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	14
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	18.5
Average class size	21.6

#### **Education support staff: YR – Y6**

Total number of education support staff	5
Total aggregate hours worked per week	145

#### **Qualified teachers and support staff: nursery**

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	1
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	13

Total number of education support staff	1
Total aggregate hours worked per week	32.5

Number of pupils per FTE adult	6.5
--------------------------------	-----

*FTE means full-time equivalent.*

### ***Financial information***

Financial year	1999/2000
----------------	-----------

	£
Total income	686 357
Total expenditure	727 000
Expenditure per pupil	2 408
Balance brought forward from previous year	69 057
Balance carried forward to next year	28 414

## Results of the survey of parents and carers

### Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	272
Number of questionnaires returned	68

### Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	62	34	4	0	0
My child is making good progress in school.	57	37	4	0	1
Behaviour in the school is good.	51	35	4	4	4
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	43	31	18	3	6
The teaching is good.	63	34	3	0	0
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	53	31	15	0	1
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	75	18	6	0	1
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	72	26	0	0	1
The school works closely with parents.	57	32	9	0	1
The school is well led and managed.	78	13	1	3	4
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	62	31	3	3	1
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	49	34	6	4	7

## **PART D: THE STANDARDS AND QUALITY OF TEACHING IN AREAS OF THE CURRICULUM, SUBJECTS AND COURSES**

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

#### ***Personal, social and emotional development***

70. Although some children have personal and social skills that are similar and occasionally above those expected nationally, teachers' assessments show that standards are generally low when the children first enter the nursery. The school places great emphasis on this aspect of their education, with the result that they make very good progress and most are in line to attain standards expected nationally by the end of the foundation stage. The children enjoy coming to school and are eager to learn. They are involved in their own learning from the time they first enter school, choosing for themselves from a range of activities. They learn the class routines quickly and respond positively to the caring ethos of the class. Many lack confidence when they first enter the nursery and their self-esteem is generally low, but they respond well to teachers' praise and encouragement. The reception children change for physical education sessions with little adult help and fold their clothes neatly in a pile. They tidy away quickly after an activity and sometimes volunteer to tidy up. They learn to take turns and share, for example when they observe the class rules about the optimum number of children allowed on the climbing frame.

71. The quality of teaching is good. The teachers know their children well and relationships between teachers and children are very positive and friendly. Children in the nursery and reception classes are provided with many opportunities to make choices and to be involved in their own learning. When they struggle to decide what to do, adults are very supportive, gently encouraging them to be more independent. Teachers provide opportunities for children to co-operate together, for example in the home corner and class shop, where they engage happily in role-play. Teachers set high expectations of behaviour and the few examples of inappropriate behaviour are sensitively dealt with. Children are helped to understand how their actions affect the feelings of others and to behave in socially accepted ways, for example through the use of puppets with happy and sad faces. Lessons in the nursery and reception classes are well organised, providing a safe and predictable learning environment for the children.

#### ***Communication, language and literacy***

72. Children enter the school with language and literacy skills that are well below expected standards, with particularly low attainment in boys' writing. Although they make good progress in their acquisition of language skills, their communication skills are poor and the majority does not attain the nationally expected early learning goals by the end of their time in the reception classes. They listen attentively to the class teachers, for example when the reception classes join together and listen with rapt attention to the story of *Elmer the Elephant*. However, their responses to questions are usually limited to one-word answers. They do not have the vocabulary to express themselves effectively when offering explanations or descriptions and the youngest children do not always understand simple questions such as, 'What did you do in the maths area?' A few have speech difficulties that further limit their ability to communicate their thoughts and ideas. Most can recognise their own name in print and a few are beginning to identify the names of others in their group. A small percentage write their own names, using mainly capital letters. They are beginning to understand that print carries meaning, for example when they 'write' shopping lists and Christmas lists. Children of average attainment trace over the teachers' writing in the reception classes and a few children copy the sentences that they have dictated underneath the teachers' writing. However, many are unable to stay within the lines when colouring simple pictures. Some associate a few letters of the alphabet with the sounds they make and one or two more able children are beginning to build simple three letter words and to

recognise words that rhyme. These children know how a book is organised and turn the pages correctly. They follow the text with their fingers and recognise the occasional word. They pretend to tell the story and comment on the characters. However, the majority of children have very few books at home and several have no experience of books at all. Consequently, their pre-reading skills are very weak.

73. The quality of teaching is good. From the time they enter the nursery, children's speaking and listening skills are nurtured. The importance of listening is constantly stressed and teachers use a range of strategies and resources such as puppets and music to encourage good listening skills. Strategies such as, 'show me you're ready to listen', work well and the children sit up and wait to hear the story or instructions. Teachers in the nursery and reception classes use questioning techniques well to encourage the children to talk about their activities and experiences and they introduce new vocabulary into most lessons. Reading skills are well taught and a good partnership with parents, in which the children take home books to share, is making a positive contribution to the development of early reading skills. This is an improvement since the previous inspection. Many opportunities are found for children to write for themselves. Letter sounds are taught systematically and direct teaching of handwriting skills is helping the children to form their letters accurately. This is also an improvement since the previous inspection. Small classes and high quality support from classroom assistants enables teachers to work with individual children to address their particular learning needs. Occasionally the higher attaining children are not stretched sufficiently, for example tasks sometimes do not stretch them sufficiently and a blanket rule on readiness for reading books constrains their progress.

### ***Mathematical development***

74. Baseline assessments show that the children's attainment in mathematics is well below average and many will not achieve the early learning goals by the time they leave the reception classes. Many children count to five and beyond but few can do this reliably, matching objects one to one. Some children are beginning to recognise a few written numerals. A few count real objects to ten and attempt to match the number in a set to the correct numeral but most find this activity very difficult and lose count. They struggle when listening to six cubes being dropped into a tin, some offering suggestions such as 'eighteen'. A few children are unable to count at all. A very small proportion of above average children count to 20 and are beginning to understand the concept of one more and one less. Children are beginning to learn the names of common two-dimensional shapes such as circles, squares and triangles. They arrange Teddy toys in order of size and make similar comparisons in the sand and water play. With a great deal of support, they develop their understanding of money through 'buying' items from the class shop.

75. The quality of teaching is generally good. Teachers understand the need for repetition and practice and provide a wide range of activities to consolidate the children's understanding of number. Resources are used well and a calm, industrious atmosphere affords a happy, safe learning environment. Classroom assistants are used effectively and make an important contribution to the progress that the children make in their numeracy skills in both the nursery and the reception classes. Occasionally, activities fail to stretch the higher attaining children sufficiently.

### ***Knowledge and understanding of the world***

76. Children enter the nursery and reception classes with very limited experience of the world beyond their immediate home and family. Their attainment in this area of learning is well below national expectations. However, they make good progress in the foundation stage of learning. Children in the nursery discuss the weather every morning and choose an appropriate symbol to describe the day. They learn the names of farmyard animals through puppet play. Children in the reception classes talk about past and present events and recognise some of the features of living and non-living things. They attempt to match foods with the ingredients used to make them. They are unaware that crisps are made from potatoes and many do not connect flour with bread or cakes. They enjoy sticking boxes together to make models and building roads and railway tracks with construction kits. They make puppets from paper bags and plates, explaining very simply what they have used to join their materials. They learn the correct names for fasteners such as zips. Their skills with ICT are very weak. Children in the reception control a roller-ball mouse in activities linked to literacy and numeracy skills but they lack the independence usually associated with this practice. Although they make good progress the children's knowledge and understanding is still significantly below average when they enter Year 1.

77. The quality of teaching is at least satisfactory overall, although more could be done to stimulate children's curiosity about the outside world. The classrooms are satisfactorily equipped and enhanced by classroom displays, but they lack the colour and vibrancy usually associated with early years provision. The poor state of the building makes it difficult for teachers to make their modestly sized classrooms inviting but more could be done, for example in creating interesting three-dimensional displays to stimulate the children's curiosity and inspire them to ask questions. Teachers ensure that opportunities are provided for the children to learn through play but the quality of interaction between teachers and children does not always lead to purposeful play and such sessions are sometimes not as productive as they could be. In teacher-initiated sessions, children make good progress, for example in a 'cookery lesson' in which the children invented their own recipes, made their own food from a range and tasted it. The activity was successful in introducing the children to the concept of changing materials. Visits, for example to a local environmental centre, provide further opportunities for the children to develop their knowledge and understanding of the world.

### ***Creative development***

78. The children's experience is very limited when they first enter the nursery, but they make good progress. In the nursery, they listen to fast and slow music and decide which is best suited to moving toys. Some recognise musical cues for their part in the school concert. They are gaining a repertoire of nursery rhymes and action songs and enjoy playing with musical instruments. They develop their creative imaginations appropriately through role-play in the home corner, for example when lie in bed waiting for Father Christmas to bring their toys. Children in the reception class experiment with colour and pattern to make pictures of animals such as stripy zebras. They paint, print and stick interesting materials such as coloured feathers to make simple collages.

79. The quality of teaching is generally satisfactory, although more could be done to make the classrooms visually stimulating and to give greater purpose to role-play in the reception classes. Good use is made of a visiting music specialist, who provides an enriching experience for the children, which they enjoy very much. Good quality dressing up clothes and good adult interaction enhances their role-play experiences in the nursery. Art and design supports language and literacy well, for example when children make handprints to reinforce the concept of five.



### ***Physical development***

80. The children are making good progress in developing their physical skills and most are in line to achieve standards set for them nationally by the time the end of the Foundation Stage. Children in the nursery practice hand/eye coordination through skittle games and bat and activities with small apparatus such as bats and balls. They explore, climb and balance on limited custom-made apparatus in the nursery and school hall. They develop their physical skills further through controlling wheeled toys in the school yard but this is in a poor state of repair and there is no designated outside play area for children in the foundation stage. Lack of storage facilities for the nursery limits the possibilities for outdoor play. They are developing their manipulative skills satisfactorily through the use of mark making tools, cutting and sticking but several children in the reception class are still unable to use scissors. Children in the reception classes make good progress. They run, jump, climb and balance with increasing awareness of space and others.

81. The quality of teaching is good. Teachers work hard to overcome the problems caused by the poor condition of the outside play area. Safe handling of large and small apparatus is appropriately emphasised.

### **ENGLISH**

82. Results of national assessments at the end of both key stages in 2000 were well below average in English. In comparison with similar schools however, reading at Key Stage 1 was above average and English was average at the end of Key Stage 2. At both key stages there has been a steady improvement in standards over the previous few years. There is no significant difference between the attainment of boys and girls. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress in relation to their prior attainment. The school recognises that standards in English are not high enough and there is a strong commitment by the whole staff to raising standards. The previous inspection report indicated that reading and writing were unsatisfactory and that speaking and listening were satisfactory. Current inspection evidence shows that standards in English are well below average at the end of both key stages and that speaking and listening skills are poor on entry.

83. When pupils enter the nursery their speaking and listening skills are under-developed and although listening improves quickly through the school, pupils make slow progress in speaking. The youngest pupils often have a very restricted vocabulary. In Key Stage 1 they can answer questions and give their opinions simply when asked but the majority of pupils lack confidence and fluency which inhibits effective communication. In Key Stage 2, pupils limited speaking skills restricts their ability to explore ideas, question and argue rationally. It inhibits their playing a full part in discussion, using varied vocabulary and grammar and adapting what they say to the needs of listeners. In the foundation stage and Key Stage 1, opportunities for language development are provided informally through role-play provision and more formally through literacy lessons and circle time. In Key Stage 2, the National Literacy Strategy is used well. Provision is made in school planning for speaking and listening but the skills are not specifically planned in other subjects. In English lessons, debating is taught and practised, but too few opportunities are given for formal oral presentations by pupils.

84. Reading skills are taught conscientiously in both key stages. Pupils, through the school, learn to read through a well-structured programme that includes the teaching of phonics and relates well to the National Literacy Strategy. Pupils learn a variety of strategies that help them to read and respond to a range of different writing. In Key Stage 2, pupils develop their knowledge of and preference for, different authors and their styles of writing. Pupils' comprehension skills are limited by their restricted vocabulary which also limits their expressing more complex opinions about what they have read. The school has rightly

identified a weakness in pupils using higher order reading skills such as deduction and inference and the extra time given to this is improving performance. Reading skills have improved since the previous inspection in all groups of pupils, including those with special educational needs. Pupils in Key Stage 2 are taught library skills and understand how to use the classification system. There is some use of the junior library for independent study and research but there are insufficient books for the purpose and many are shabby and outdated. By contrast the infant library is well stocked and enticing.

85. Writing was identified as a weakness in the previous inspection report and the school has put initiatives into place which are improving matters. Literacy is taught with vigour and additional literacy lessons are showing benefits. A new handwriting scheme is improving pupils' cursive style and pupils are writing satisfactorily for a range of purposes. One class in Year 6 responded with interested anticipation to their task of writing applications for jobs in a Victorian household. They will be making a visit to Croxteth Hall and will be interviewed by an authentically fierce cook and butler about their applications. The other Year 6 class, studying *A Midsummer Night's Dream* achieved good standards in re-writing Shakespearean language in a modern form and showed deep enjoyment of their learning. More pupils can write accurately with better regard for grammar, spelling and punctuation than at the time of the previous inspection. Standards of handwriting are good in pupils' handwriting books. All pupils regularly practise the skill and their writing in other subjects is legible although there are weaknesses in spelling and grammar unless they are continually exhorted to remember what they are taught.

86. Teaching of English is mainly good with some very good teaching in both key stages and none which is less than satisfactory. Staff have implemented the National Literacy Strategy with enthusiasm and have a good understanding of how to teach the skills and also motivate pupils to learn. This is especially evident at the ends of both key stages when the careful teaching of the basic skills in Key Stage 1 is expanded and pupils' horizons in literacy are widened by the end of Key Stage 2. In general, teachers understand their pupils' limitations in spoken English and many try very hard to arouse pupils' interest in new words during lessons. Teachers encourage pupils to read by showing their own love of books and in most classrooms there is a vibrant literacy atmosphere promoted by display and the care taken to make reading areas welcoming to children. In most lessons, writing tasks for pupils match their attainment so that more is expected of higher attainers although all pupils are appropriately challenged through their work. Teachers' expectations are high and pupils respond by writing stories, reports, instructions, book reviews, poetry, letters, persuasive arguments and other forms of writing. The teaching of spelling is well organised and pupils are taught common spelling patterns, words within words and spelling rules. A Year 5 class greatly enjoyed making up mnemonics to help them remember how to spell irregular words. Sometimes there is a tendency for pupils who spell satisfactorily in spelling lessons and tests to be careless when they are writing for themselves and they do not always apply what they have been taught.

87. Management of the subject is very good with strong leadership from the co-ordinator. She gives teachers good guidance for their planning, monitors teaching and learning and, alongside the headteacher, collects and analyses evidence about how pupils are progressing which enables the school to see what they need to do in order to improve. This careful analysis of data is a strength of the school and helps them to set targets which are raising standards. The current targets set by the school in English are above those recommended by the local educational authority. Assessment procedures are good. All records are kept in full and day-to-day assessment is used to plan pupils' next steps. In Year 6, groupings of pupils are flexible so that pupils can move easily between them for specific teaching. The good assessment enables teachers to write full annual reports for all pupils which give guidance on what the pupils need to do in order to improve. Resources for teaching literacy

are good and the library in Key Stage 1 is satisfactory. The library in Key Stage 2 is unsatisfactory in the number, range and quality of reference books available. The Readathon Project for the early years is very valuable in training parents to help their children and reinforcing the value of reading. This is part of the successful parent-school partnership which extends learning and is a valued and valuable extra resource for promoting literacy and raising standards.

## **MATHEMATICS**

88. Pupils in Year 2 attain standards that are below those expected for their age. Standards in Year 6 are well below the national average and reflects the results of the 2000 national tests; however, test results were above average when compared to similar schools at Key Stage 1 and average at Key Stage 2. Although standards are not as high as they should be, they have been improving since the previous inspection. The percentage of pupils that achieve the standards expected in national tests at 7 and 11 is steadily increasing. There was a 12 per cent improvement at Key Stage 2 and although the results fell slightly in Key Stage 1 because of a high proportion of pupils identified with special educational needs, prior to 2000 there has been consistent improvement. Overall, pupils learn effectively and make good progress. This includes pupils with special educational needs.

89. By the age of seven, pupils begin to understand place value and break down two digit numbers into tens and units. They count accurately to one hundred, start to develop their own addition problems and add together small amounts of money. Pupils identify objects that are taller than a metre and measure in centimetres. They use the mathematical names for common two and three-dimensional shapes and develop number sequences. Some of the lower attaining pupils find it difficult to count accurately and have a limited mathematical knowledge. The pupils determine the positions of racing cars when looking at ordinal numbers and identify odd and even numbers. In a very good lesson pupils were taught to think very carefully before estimating how many objects there are in a group. By the age of eleven, pupils have developed their understanding of place value so that it includes decimals. They are able to multiply and divide numbers by 10 or 100 and find simple percentages. Pupils are beginning to understand the relationship between decimals, percentages and fractions. The majority use protractors to accurately measure angles and are familiar with the terms acute and obtuse. However, a number of pupils still need support with this kind of work.

90. Overall, the quality of teaching through the school is good and this is an improvement on the previous inspection when some of the teaching was judged to be unsatisfactory. The good teaching enables pupils to achieve well in relation to the prior attainment. The National Numeracy Strategy is well managed by the teachers and this has had an impact on improving standards. Lesson objectives are shared with the pupils so that they have a good understanding of what they are learning. The start of the lesson is consistently used to develop the pupils' mental mathematics skills. During this session good attention is paid to involving all of the pupils and reinforcing mathematical vocabulary. However, some of these sessions could be more dynamic and enthusiastic so that all pupils learn quickly and develop their mental agility. In a very good Year 2 mental mathematics session no time was wasted as the teacher conducted a very challenging session. Pupils held up answers on 'whiteboards' and this presented a good opportunity for the teacher to assess the pupils' answers. A timer was used to monitor the length of the session and to ensure that it did not impinge on the rest of the lesson. Teachers' explanations of the lesson's main activities are always clear and enthusiastic. This inspires the pupils who generally apply themselves well and work hard, either independently or together in groups. Although in most classes the teachers work with and support one of the activity groups in the class, they have a good understanding of what other pupils are doing and how they are getting on. Activities are organised to reflect the

different ability ranges that are found in the classes and this is good practice. In the 2000 national tests the proportion of Key Stage 1 pupils that achieved the higher level 3 was above the national average. However, in some instances not all of the higher attaining pupils are given work that is appropriately challenging. The use of extension activities and time limits with these pupils is inconsistent. When these strategies are applied they work effectively. In a very good lesson, one pupil was given his own work to extend his thinking and understanding. The pupil was motivated and challenged and remained very much on task. Had he been given easier work he would have been finished too quickly. Most teachers evaluate their lessons effectively to highlight things that have gone well or to record pupils who had difficulty with a concept. This is good practice; however, there are one or two teachers who do this less effectively.

91. The subject is very well managed by the subject co-ordinator. She has a good understanding of the subject and is one of the school's leading teachers for mathematics. There is a very strong 'numeracy culture' in the school and the co-ordinator should take credit for this. The subject is well promoted through good classroom displays that reflect the current area of mathematics that is being focused on. During the inspection it was place value and each year group had targets in this area to try and achieve by the end of term. Corridor displays also highlight the subject. Outside the Year 1 classroom is a *Counting to 20* display with the challenge, 'Can you count to 20'. The subject is well monitored through lesson observations, discussion with pupils and scrutiny of teachers' planning and pupils' work. This enables the co-ordinator to have a good understanding of what is happening in the school and highlight areas for development with individual teachers or the staff as a whole. Assessment procedures are good and the school has a good view on the progress that pupils are making. Assessment information is also used well to influence future planning and decide what areas of the curriculum will need reinforcing when they are revisited in the numeracy strategy. Statutory tests are analysed well to identify strengths and weaknesses. This enables the school to produce key stage targets. For example, to reduce the discrepancies between boys and girls achieving level 4. The school has responded to this by forming, for this term, a maths club for girls.

92. Resources for the subject are well organised and there is a good range of class based equipment that is accessible to the pupils. The use of ICT to support the subject is unsatisfactory at present and the school recognises that this is an area for development. Pupils use mathematics to help in other subjects. For example, pupils constructed bar charts to compare the height of waterfalls as part of their geography work in Year 6.

## **SCIENCE**

93. Key Stage 2 results for 2000 indicate a significant improvement in the percentage of pupils achieving national test standards compared with 1999, although this is still well below the national average. The proportion of pupils reaching the higher level 5 has also increased. These results are average in comparison with similar schools. Inspection findings

are that standards at the end of Key Stage 1 are below average and well below average at the end of Key Stage 2.

94. In a Year 2 class pupils investigate how colour and light can affect their eyesight and how optical illusions can be created, extending earlier discussions, with the aid of a video, on the parts of the human eye and their functions. Linking science to history pupils were introduced to a Braille machine. Whilst they could see how indentations were impressed on paper, their attempts at writing Braille messages did not work particularly well. Scrutiny of children's work shows that they are aware of the five human senses and the organs that control them. They know that plants come from seed and require water and light to sustain growth. Whilst they know the main parts of a plant in simple terms they are unable to describe their functions. Pupils can sort materials into simple groups and a few can explain how things move. However, there are weaknesses in the way many pupils record their work and ICT is not used effectively to extend knowledge and to help tabulate and present results.

95. Inspection evidence shows that the percentage of Year 6 pupils on course to attain the expected level is well below average. However, an analysis of their work indicates that good progress is being achieved from a low level of understanding. Teaching places an increasing emphasis on experimentation and investigative work, which they enjoy and which is an improvement since the last inspection. Planning an experiment, predicting results and drawing conclusions are leading to improved inquiry skills together with better quality recording although the new ICT provision is not fully established to support this. An effective Year 6 lesson was observed where the teacher stressed the importance of fair testing when carrying out conductivity experiments on a variety of materials.

96. The quality of teaching is good overall and accounts for pupils' good progress. Teachers are more familiar with the science scheme that has raised subject knowledge and confidence. They plan together and regularly share ideas about classroom practice. Good lesson planning involves a variety of strategies and use of resources that are appropriate and hold pupils' interest. This was evident in a Year 5 lesson where pupils were asked to carry out experiments to determine which substances dissolved best, what effect warm water had and whether or not substances disappeared after dissolving. This involved the class in the use of measuring jugs, thermometers, weighing scales and stop-watches. Pupils learnt the importance of good preparation and proper safety features. In most lessons teachers take care to use the correct scientific vocabulary and pupils are given the opportunities to develop their own ideas and express them. This was evident in a Year 3 lesson on how light travels, using a series of pinhole cards to demonstrate that it travels in straight lines. Although a number of children thought that light might shine through the card or bend round it, pupils who understood the principle were allowed to explain their thinking to others in order to clarify their understanding.

97. Talking to Year 6 pupils indicates a good coverage of science topics although some of these have been developed in greater depth than others. Whilst pupils are familiar with scientific concepts and facts, they are not always able to relate these phenomena to the world around them. Pupils with special educational needs receive good quality support from the classroom assistants and also make good progress.

98. The school assesses pupils' scientific ability informally and through non-statutory tests that are analysed and from which targets are set to raise standards. In addition, pupils' individual progress is recorded on science major statement forms. However, teachers are unable to judge the depth of understanding and skills acquisition from these records and whether or not pupils are working within their capabilities or to the limit of their abilities.

99. Science is satisfactorily led and managed by the co-ordinator. Improvements have been implemented in subject documentation, the scheme of work, long and short-term planning and these are regularly reviewed. Whilst the co-ordinator sees teachers' planning and has helped them identify areas they need to improve, particularly in the use of scientific enquiry at Key Stage 1 and extending the higher attaining pupils, she is unable to identify strengths and weaknesses in teaching by observation in the classroom. Good use is made of resources that are audited by staff, prioritised and checked for educational value. Pupils throughout the school have a good attitude towards science. A number of improvements have been implemented since the previous inspection.

## **ART AND DESIGN**

100. Pupils of all abilities, including those with special educational needs, make sound progress in art and design and achieve standards that match those expected for their age. Standards have been maintained since the previous inspection. Although there is less time available for the subject it reflects the secure place art and design has in the curriculum. Pupils' past work shows a satisfactory range of experiences and art and design work plays an important part in display that is used effectively to create an attractive learning environment within a dilapidated building.

101. In Key Stage 1, pupils use a range of materials and media to express their ideas. Initially some show weak skills in painting and immaturity in the quality of their drawings, particularly of people. These skills improve considerably during the key stage and pupils' work becomes readily discernible in form and is more sophisticated. The youngest children have created bright collages of snowmen and robins using splash painting techniques and Year 1 achieved high quality wintry scenes using white paint effectively on a black background. Throughout the key stage pupils look carefully at the work of famous artists and Year 2 pupils create vibrant patterns in the style of Mondrian. They show good control in drawing straight or wavy lines with giant felt tip pens and in painting different blocks or colour. They transfer these skills to the computer and create satisfying patterns through the use of technology.

102. At Key Stage 2, pupils make sound progress in their knowledge, skills and understanding of art and design and extend their range of techniques appropriately. They pay increasing attention to detail in drawing, painting and in three-dimensional work, although this is more limited than work in two dimensions. Year 3 pupils attained satisfactory standards in printing with blocks. Year 5 showed skill in creating human faces through collage. In Year 6, pupils used water colours very effectively for miniature landscapes. Pupils have benefited from having a visitor from Japan for a year on a cultural exchange programme. Their two and three-dimensional work illustrates her influence in extending origami techniques.

103. Teaching is satisfactory overall and sometimes good. When teachers have special expertise it is very good. Planning clearly identifies what pupils are intended to learn, based on what they have previously been taught. Teachers have appropriate expectations for achievement and high expectations of behaviour. Their skills in managing classes ensures that work proceeds at a good pace and pupils' enjoyment of the tasks set for them ensures concentration and effort. Good use is made of learning support staff and both staff and pupils clearly enjoy art and design lessons and this contributes significantly to the suitable rate of progress.

104. The subject is managed satisfactorily. The previous inspection reported that the art and design scheme of work was a target for review in the school development plan. This has been accomplished and teachers are now given sound guidance in their planning. The recently appointed art and design co-ordinator recognises that there is still no effective system for monitoring pupils' attainment and has started to implement portfolios of pupils' work in each year group which will guide teachers' assessment and ensure consistency of their judgements. There is inconsistent use of sketchbooks through the school so that the design process is not recorded and individual progression is not clearly tracked. Art and design contributes well to other curricular subjects and significantly, through good quality displays, to the ethos of the school.

## **DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY**

105. Only a limited number of design and technology lessons was observed during the inspection so judgements are also based on discussions with pupils' and staff and scrutiny of pupils' work, teachers' planning and displays of work. Standards are in line with national expectations at the end of both key stages and all pupils, including those with special educational needs make satisfactory progress. This is an improvement on the previous inspection when standards were judged to be unsatisfactory in Key Stage 2 and there were concerns about pupils' progress.

106. In the lessons observed the quality of teaching was satisfactory overall but some good teaching was seen. In a good Year 1 lesson the pupils discussed the most effective materials to make a home stable after listening to the story of *The Three Pigs*. This well organised session reinforced the pupils' knowledge about the basic features for a stable building. The activities provided were linked to the pupils' attainment, so all pupils were challenged and able to learn well. However, activities for different ability groups of pupils are not always provided in all lessons and this restricts learning particularly for the more able pupils. The pupils obviously enjoy the subject. Year 2 pupils talked confidently about finger puppets that they were making and how different fabrics were joined together. Year 6 pupils described how they designing a model fair ground with moving rides. They were later observed working together building electrical circuits for motors that would drive the fairground rides. The pupils explained their ideas well and many understood the constraints they were working under with the materials that they were using. However, insufficient time had been spent on considering designs and how they could be improved. The school is moving towards using the national scheme of work for the subject that will provide continuity through the school and support for the teachers. This was a weakness at the previous inspection. A new school policy will be developed to reflect the use of this scheme of work. After the previous inspection in-service training was provided for teachers to develop their subject knowledge and this can be seen the detailed half-termly planning provided by most teachers. However, some of this planning is unsatisfactory because there is insufficient detail and some teachers are still reliant on the school's old commercial scheme. Where the new scheme of work is used effectively, for example in Year 5 food technology, teaching and learning are very secure. However, where planning is weak it is very unclear what and how pupils will learn and how they will be assessed. This was particularly the case in Year 4 planning.

107. The subject co-ordinator has a good understanding of the subject and how it needs to develop. Because of the school's most recent and understandable focus on literacy and numeracy, the subject has suffered in terms of the time allocated to it and as a priority for development; however, improvement since the previous inspection has been satisfactory. Although the co-ordinator monitors the half-termly planning she has no time for monitoring teaching and learning. Teachers identify assessment opportunities in their planning but these

could be more consistent. Good links with other subjects were observed during the inspection, for example, links with literacy in Year 1 and science in Year 6. However, literacy, numeracy and scientific skills are not identified in the design and technology planning. ICT is also underused. Resources for the subject are satisfactory and are well organised.

## **GEOGRAPHY**

108. All pupils make good progress and, by the age of eleven, they achieve standards of work similar to those normally gained by pupils of the same age. This also includes pupils with special educational needs. The last time the school was inspected, standards in geography were average at both key stages, with pupils making satisfactory progress. Quality of work inspected, shows that teaching is good. This is the reason why improvement has taken place since the previous inspection. At that time, some resources were in short supply but now there is an overall shortage.

109. Most geography lessons take place on a Friday, so it was possible to inspect only two lessons. In a good Key Stage 1 lesson, pupils made good progress. They develop an understanding of the concept of how things look when viewed from above. This good development was made possible because the teacher had provided an aerial photograph of a school, which, with clear explanation, identified to the pupils what they were to learn. This was followed by a good, carpet-based activity, involving pupil identification of a well-resourced variety of three-dimensional objects from their aerial-view outline. This good, practical lesson was concluded with the consolidation of learning, using a pre-prepared large-scale plan of the classroom. Pupils were asked to identify all the classroom furniture from its aerial viewpoint shapes. Learning was made possible by the good subject knowledge of the teacher, supported by a relaxed class control.

110. In a sound Key Stage 2 lesson, groups of pupils with differing levels of ability, were given suitable work graded in difficulty. This supported their ability to appreciate the differences between their own lives, and those of children living in regions of India affected by monsoon winds. A good opportunity was missed, by not relating those monsoon conditions to the recent unusually heavy and prolonged rainfall causing flooding, nearer to home. The teacher maintained a good pace to the lesson, by keeping all pupils concentrated on their different tasks.

111. From looking at pupils' workbooks, it is clear that the recently introduced curriculum is being appropriately covered. Key Stage 1 pupils complete work related to the topic of 'Food'. Their work is neat and generally accurate because their teachers maintain a good standard of marking, which encourages all pupils to take pride in their work. From study tasks, such as the journey of milk from the cow to the doorstep, pupils make good progress in their knowledge and understanding of the processes and of the different trades involved in milk production. With good planning, work is related well to history. This supports their understanding of the change that has taken place from the horse-drawn farm implements in the past, to the tractors and machinery of today.

112. At Key Stage 2, geography supports mathematics well. The higher attaining pupils in Year 6 are well challenged. They research the heights of the world's biggest waterfalls before graphing their findings accurately. Year 5 pupils develop mapping skills by using and understanding addresses on a grid, as part of the good progression towards working with co-ordinates. This highlights teachers' good subject knowledge. Good long-term planning ensures that Year 3 pupils continue to make good progress in understanding plans and maps started in the previous year. They draw route maps from their homes in the Croxteth area to school, with good encouragement to develop an understanding of scale and location.



113. A strong feature of the work examined is the overall, high quality of marking. Teachers work hard to encourage neat and attractive work. They write positive comments and award stickers, which are greatly valued by the pupils. These efforts are successful. Resources are not sufficient to allow full development of the subject. There is a need for good quality, large-scale maps of different aspects and regions of the world. There is no evidence of CD-ROMs, appropriate to the different abilities of the pupils, to take full advantage of the well-developed computer suites and so improve research skills to support individual topic work. There are insufficient opportunities for pupils to be involved in practical fieldwork to obtain first-hand awareness of aspects of their lives. The subject co-ordinator has written an appropriate policy, which she plans to update in line with recent curriculum developments.

## **HISTORY**

114. Standards are in line with those expected nationally at the end of both key stages and are the same as they were the last time the school was inspected. All pupils, including those with special educational needs, make good progress, which is an improvement on the previous inspection. This is because of the improvement in teaching which is good overall and which was judged then to be satisfactory. The number and quality of resources to support teaching was a weakness at that time and this is still the position.

115. In Key Stage 1, history and geography are taught as a topic and at the time of the inspection, geography was the subject being taught. From looking at pupils' work and talking to pupils, it is clear that the new curriculum is being adopted and the pupils are making good progress. They can recognise changes that have developed since their grandparents were children. A result of good teacher planning is that they can identify the methods used in the past to grow, harvest and cook a variety of fresh foods. Good teaching means that pupils can compare this with the fast, frozen foods development of today and can appreciate what is good, and not so good, for healthy development of their bodies. Older people from the locality come into school from time to time to talk to the pupils about their experiences as children. This provides good, first-hand insight into the way people used to live.

116. Some lessons were observed in Key Stage 2. Year 3 pupils study life in Roman Times and a good lesson included the teacher showing good subject knowledge related to the leisure pursuits of the Romans. This gave pupils a good feel for history and the way that provision for swimming and relaxation have changed in the last two thousand years. A good conclusion to the lesson allowed pupils to show off their gains in knowledge and the teacher to assess how well the pupils had learned. Year 6 pupils discuss the types of jobs available as part of good, in-depth study of Victorian times. Well presented, good subject knowledge and positive attitudes to support learning, allow the pupils to work independently over a long period of time. The teacher supports those pupils with special educational needs well and

they make good progress towards understanding life in the past, including transport and sanitation.

117. Pupils' books show that history supports literacy well. In extended letter writing to Queen Victoria requesting her to bring child labour to an end, pupils show a good appreciation of the hard life that children experienced at that time. Long 'Dear Diary' writing about 'poor meets rich' and application for child labour type jobs, show that pupils have been given a very good insight life at the beginning of the 19<sup>th</sup> century.

118. The subject is led by an enthusiastic co-ordinator who intends updating the policy document when teachers have sufficiently experienced the requirements of the new curriculum. Planned visits to Croxteth Hall, Speke Hall and the Planning Room of the Battle of the Atlantic during World War II, provide pupils with rich experiences to develop knowledge and understanding of history close to home.

119. The school has a shortage of good quality resources that would allow teachers to present their work in a more motivating manner. There is little evidence of appropriate history programs to enable teachers to make good use of the computers available.

## **INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY**

120. Lesson observations, audit of work samples and discussion with pupils show that at the end of both key stages, the pupils' attainment is below the national standard and lower than that reported in the previous inspection. However, with recent major upgrading of computer resources, pupils are currently making satisfactory and sometimes good progress and the school is well placed for further improvement.

121. At the end of Key Stage 1 pupils' attainment is well below national expectations. Pupils construct simple sentences and use a 'paint' to create pictures and patterns, which they print out for display. They are learning to use the Internet facility. Pupils in Year 1 are gaining confidence in using the computer mouse to click on icons to match pictures to simple sentences. They develop their listening skills through the use of a listening centre, identifying familiar sounds around the home. The majority of pupils rely heavily on teachers' support and very few have developed independence in using the computer as an aid to learning. There is no evidence of them controlling activities through the computer, for example by programming a floor turtle to carry out a number of pre-planned moves.

122. In Key Stage 2, Year 6 pupils are making good progress. They are becoming more independent in the use of ICT but their attainment remains below expectations because they have not yet gained experience in some areas such as the control and monitoring applications of ICT. They access the Internet and use the mouse confidently clicking on drop down menus and answering questions relating to their science topic. They find their way around the screen quickly and access other programs that help them to develop their thinking skills. They download pictures and insert these into texts, for example when researching work on Buddhism. They use the computer to draft and amend their work and use borders and other enhancements to change the appearance of their work. They create databases relating to other areas of the curriculum and produce graphs of their results. Pupils in Year 5 create a questionnaire containing multi-choice questions that are linked to their work in design and technology. However, they are very inexperienced in using drop down menus and data bases and require a great deal of support in carrying out the task. Younger pupils are beginning to understand how to alter texts by changing the font style, size and colour of their finished work. They too are making good progress, starting from a very low starting point. However, many pupils are still unable to load, save and retrieve files independently.

123. Pupils with special educational needs make satisfactory progress overall, but they do not make the same good progress as the higher attaining pupils because they lack the necessary skills to enable them to work independently. Tasks are often too complex for them to remember. Consequently they lose confidence and sometimes engage in inappropriate behaviour whilst waiting for support. They lack confidence in trying for themselves and rely heavily on the teachers and more able pupils, who often add to the problem by taking control of the computer mouse and doing the task for them. The higher attaining pupils do not always make the progress of which they are capable because teachers use their expertise to help those who need support. They enjoy this responsibility and teachers appreciate the help but the situation prevents these pupils from extending their own knowledge, understanding and experience.

124. The quality of teaching and learning is good overall. A number of the lessons observed were executed by visiting support teachers whose expertise is making a significant contribution to the quality of learning and to teachers' knowledge and understanding. Learning is best where teachers have very good subject knowledge and high expectations of what pupils can achieve. In these lessons direct teaching, clear explanations and instructions enable pupils to make good progress. For example, pupils in Year 6 made good progress in a lesson linked with science after a knowledgeable introduction that gave pupils the skills and understanding to be able to work independently. Problems with the program were quickly solved, enabling pupils to learn at a good pace. In this lesson, pupils extended their experience of using the Internet and made very good use of the resource to consolidate and extend their knowledge and understanding of electricity circuits. All pupils were successful in completing the task, evaluating their own work and correcting their misconceptions. They worked well, both independently and co-operatively, and early finishers moved on to explore other programs. Where teaching is not so strong, insufficient use is made of classroom computers. This is largely because of inconsistencies in subject knowledge within the staff, a weakness that is to be addressed in the very near future. All teachers manage the pupils well and relationships are very good.

125. Since September, the school has allocated substantial resources to the development of ICT. All pupils now have access to two well-resourced networked computer suites that are connected to the Internet. In partnership with the local education authority and the computer industry, classroom computers are being updated and intensive staff training is planned for the spring term. There is a shared commitment to improvement and teachers are excited about the possibilities afforded by the new resources and training. Currently all classes are timetabled to use the computer suites and an after-school computer club is presently supporting Year 6 pupils' attainment in subjects such as mathematics.

126. The policy for ICT is to be rewritten to take account of the increase in resources and the new curriculum for primary schools. The school is presently adapting nationally recommended programmes of work to suit the specific needs of the school. Some links are made with literacy, mathematics and science but these have not yet been formally planned into the curriculum. Teachers plan well together to ensure equal opportunities between parallel classes. This planning outlines the skills to be learned, but assessment criteria have not yet been developed and on-going assessment and recording of pupils' ICT capability is unsatisfactory. The school is aware of a need for staff training and the school development plan clearly indicates that this is shortly to be addressed. There is good use of time and

resources in lessons but class-based computers are under-utilised, restricted mainly to word-processing activities.

127. The newly appointed subject co-ordinator is very keen to develop the subject throughout the school but has not yet received the necessary training. There is insufficient monitoring and evaluation of the subject. The school is currently well supported by visiting specialists whose expertise is helping teachers and pupils to gain confidence.

## **MUSIC**

128. By the end of Key Stage 1 standards are below average. However by the end of Key Stage 2, standards are in line with expectations, although there is a variation in standards across year groups. Progress in music throughout the school is satisfactory and at Key Stage 2 good progress is often achieved. This includes pupils who have special educational needs. The tuition provided by a visiting specialist teacher is a strength of the school and has enhanced musical awareness, understanding and the acquisition of musical skills across all age groups. It has enabled pupils to copy rhythms with increasing aural awareness, to chant and sing more confidently with correct pitch and tone and for older pupils to maintain part-singing accurately. Pupils can recognise different musical patterns and sing an accompaniment to them. They enjoy singing collectively with greater accuracy and with control of pitch and dynamics, especially if these are accompanied by hand, finger and arm actions. Pupils are becoming increasingly aware of music from other times and places, which are closely related to their own pop music culture. Much enjoyment was evident when pupils performed two African songs "Zum Gali Gali" and "Shay Shay Koolay" and a sense of awe and wonder was evident when they were introduced to an old, wooden, portable harmonium and invited to play it. In these sessions pupils are encouraged to play untuned instruments but the quality of timing and tempo is not well developed. There are no specialist musicians on the staff and no opportunity for pupils to learn a musical instrument.

129. There is a school choir, that performs at school concerts, for the local community and in Friday celebration assemblies. However, pupils have had few opportunities to listen to visiting musicians or to attend theatres and concerts.

130. Younger pupils have poor musical skills on entry to the school and this combined with below average language and literacy skills hinders progress. They do not sing particularly well and show little control of pitch, dynamics and rhythm. Whilst they use untuned instruments to accompany their singing, no opportunities for composing simple pieces were observed during the inspection. Most lessons observed at each key stage adhered to the BBC music programme for schools. Where teaching is well planned and organised, these programmes are enhanced by focusing on the skills being taught and by using strategies and resources to refine and improve the quality of pupils' performance. This was evident in a Year 3 class where pitch and phrasing were rehearsed using xylophone and voices to perfect the singing of "Christmas without Carols". Pupils were given opportunities to play and sing individually and to appraise each other's performance, simultaneously providing on-going assessment of their personal skills. The teachers of younger pupils occasionally rely too heavily on commercial tapes for much teaching.

131. However, the quality of teaching overall is satisfactory with evidence of some very good teaching in Year 5. In one lesson opportunities were provided for pupils to read musical sentences and to estimate which were being performed. They were then asked to compose their own, perform them in groups using tambourines and drums, whilst the other children wrote down the notes being played with attention to rhythm, tempo and dynamics. Teaching exhibited good pace and planning. They derived much pleasure from the activity and their knowledge and understanding was well promoted.

132. There is evidence of some continuity across key stages and year groups but, at Key Stage 1, few opportunities for composing and performing were observed. Musical resources are good and appropriately used but the link between music and other cultures and times requires greater emphasis. The use of ICT to support music is not in place.

133. Although there is a more structured approach to teaching music, many staff still lack the confidence and skill to deliver the curriculum successfully in the classroom. There is insufficient detailed guidance to help teachers plan their lessons effectively. The co-ordinator, who is not a musician, has received no training nor have the staff and the subject continues to suffer from having no designated music specialist. This was the situation at the last inspection. Furthermore, whilst annual class assessments are evaluated there is still no system for assessing or recording individual pupils' progress in music from one year to the next and this has a negative impact on continuity and progression. The co-ordinator is only able to monitor teaching through planning and discussion and not by direct observation of lessons. Consequently, her role does not focus sufficiently on teaching and learning.

## **PHYSICAL EDUCATION**

134. At the time of the previous inspection, attainment in physical education was in line with national expectations and pupils made satisfactory progress at both key stages. A very limited number of lessons was observed during the current inspection, which provides insufficient evidence to make an overall judgement on current pupils' standards and progress. Of the lessons observed, standards would be judged to be the same as the previous inspection. No difference in standards between boys and girls was observed.

135. A criticism of the previous inspection was the lack of systems for monitoring and evaluating pupil progress. Whilst ongoing assessments are made in lessons through observation, and formative tests are employed in swimming and gymnastics, there remains no effective means of assessing pupils' skills across all strands of physical education. However, pupils are encouraged to make self-assessment and set their own targets for achievement.

136. In one lesson observed at Key Stage 1 pupils were aware of the need for sensible and safe behaviour during the lesson and respond positively to the teacher's instructions. They worked independently or with a partner and were given opportunities to reflect and respond to their own and other pupils' performances. They exhibited an awareness of space and used this effectively to link a variety of warm-up activities including skipping and jogging sequences. Pupils rolled and controlled a ball with improving accuracy and extended these skills to bouncing, throwing and catching with increasing distance between them. Teaching focused the pupils' minds on the object of the lesson and the activity being executed and pupils were clear about their own learning. Instructions were sharp and high expectations were evident and challenging exercises were set. Opportunities for pupils to demonstrate their own skills and to appraise each other were encouraged and good use was made of the classroom assistant in supporting behaviour and promoting skills. Good resources, such as soft balls, which are easier and less painful to catch, were employed in the lesson, which concluded with games involving a high level of fun which created opportunities for practising

and extending the skills learned. The teacher took every opportunity to encourage and praise pupils' performances, thus raising confidence and self-esteem. The effect of all this was that pupils reached good levels of attainment.

137. In one Year 6 lesson on passing and dribbling skills the teacher's effective planning and organisation were highly influential in activities involving close ball control, dribbling techniques and passing, receiving and trapping skills. Such skills were taught systematically using a variety of exercises, each one progressively demanding and requiring higher levels of concentration and control. Pupils achieved well in games because teaching was clearly focused on developing skills. By using demonstration techniques and by allowing pupils to observe, appraise and refine their own performances and that of their peers, the teaching ensured that pupils were taken to the limit of their abilities. However, not all the tasks set were physically demanding and whilst behaviour overall was satisfactory, the degree of effort exhibited by some pupils was minimal. Teaching was less effective in lessons where the skill being targeted had no clear focus or was not reinforced throughout all of the activities taking place.

138. A good range of extra-curricular activities takes place at various times of the year depending upon interest and support. These include boys and girls soccer, netball, cricket, indoor and outdoor athletics, tag rugby and cross country running. All Key Stage 2 pupils have access to these activities. Provision for pupils with special education needs is good, many excelling at sport and gymnastics. Several pupils have had trials with the city's professional football teams and the school encourages competition against other schools. These activities compensate for the reduced times allocated to physical education due to the school's emphasis on literacy and numeracy. Whilst swimming does take place at Key Stage 2, a minority of pupils are unable to swim competently the recommended distance of 25 metres. Discussion with the co-ordinator indicates that many pupils make good progress and many non-swimmers are able to achieve about 10 metres in a short time.

139. The co-ordinator manages the subject satisfactorily. He monitors the school's medium and short-term planning through the recently introduced Dudley Physical Education Scheme, and is available to staff who require advice and support, some of whom lack confidence and skill in delivering the curriculum. Whilst new teachers evaluation forms have been introduced to review teaching and revise planning, there remains no formal assessment procedures for the subject, although an annual judgement about individual pupil's ability is reported to parents. No staff training has taken place since 1998 and the co-ordinator has no means of monitoring the quality of teaching and learning taking place by direct observation of lessons. Dance is under-emphasised and is a weakness in the overall provision.

140. Resources for the subject are satisfactory, quite accessible and annually checked for safety. There are two reasonably sized halls although space for older Key Stage 2 pupils is limited and games activities need to be restricted for safety reasons. The school has a good-sized playing field for games.

## RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

141. Religious education is taught in all classes, following the guidelines of the Liverpool Agreed Syllabus. Pupils' knowledge and understanding, at both key stages, is in line with what is expected at the ages of 7 and 11. In the lessons inspected, teaching was always good and occasionally very good and, for this reason, all pupils including those with special educational need make good progress. This is an improvement when compared with the previous report.

142. In Key Stage 1, pupils show pride in their work, show respect for the subject matter, answer questions eagerly, behave well and are very keen to take a full part in lessons. This is because teachers have good subject knowledge, provide their own motivating resources, exercise a calm, relaxed discipline and present their information in a manner that makes their pupils want to listen. Year 1 pupils learn about the sacrament of baptism through their good acting of the ceremony, supported well by the teacher providing her doll with all the artefacts, clothing and meaningful gifts normally used and given, during and after a christening ceremony. Year 2 pupils learn from pictures, poem and story about the celebration of Diwali by people of the Hindu religion as part of their study of 'Festivals of Light'. They learn the early dance steps of the Diwali dance and the varying body movements associated with Rama and Sita. Their behaviour is very good in response to their teacher's very motivating manner.

143. In Key Stage 2, Year 5 pupils have already prepared a good variety of questions to put to the local vicar when he takes the lesson. He responds to their questions in a way that they understand and, through his training and role in the local community, he is able develop their questions in a very meaningful manner. He introduces a wide variety of vestments, communion artefacts and bibles to motivate and develop knowledge and understanding of their purpose. He mischievously invites pupils to read from bibles printed in both Greek and in Latin. Year 6 pupils exhibit a developing understanding of the values of Buddha, with their teacher showing good subject knowledge presented at a brisk pace to sustain interest. Their books show evidence of an in-depth study of Buddhism and the training they have received in taking pride in their work. Pupils with special educational needs receive good support to develop their understanding of the meaning of Anatta. Literacy skills are developed to a satisfactory standard.

144. The subject co-ordinator was absent throughout the inspection. The policy identifies all of the requirements of the locally agreed syllabus and provides appropriate support to the teachers. Religious education supports well, the spiritual development of all pupils. The local vicar is a very regular visitor to the school and he too supports all pupils very well. There is a shortage of artefacts to support teachers' work in developing knowledge and understanding of non-Christian religions.