

INSPECTION REPORT

CROSSLIE COMMUNITY PRIMARY SCHOOL

Blackley, Manchester

LEA area: Manchester

Unique reference number: 105412

Headteacher: Ms Michal Evans

Reporting inspector: Mrs Sonja Øyen
7167

Date of inspection: 14 - 17 October 2002

Inspection number: 246485

Full inspection carried out under section 10 of the School Inspections Act 1996

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school: Infant and junior

School category: Community

Age range of pupils: 3-11

Gender of pupils: Mixed

School address: Crosslee Road
Blackley
Manchester

Postcode: M9 6TG

Telephone number: 0161 795 8493

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Appropriate authority: Governing body

Name of chair of governors: Mrs Joanne Bradley

Date of previous inspection: March 1997

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members			Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
7167	Mrs S Øyen	Registered inspector	English Music Equal opportunities	The characteristics and effectiveness of the school The school's results and pupils' achievements Teaching and learning Leadership and management Key issues for action
19366	Mr W Walker	Lay inspector		Pupils' welfare, health and safety Partnership with parents and carers
12232	Mrs D Atkinson	Team inspector	Foundation Stage Information and communication technology Design and technology	
17877	Ms C Ingham	Team inspector	Science Geography History Special educational needs	Quality and range of opportunities for learning
28320	Mr R Willey	Team inspector	Mathematics Art and design Physical education Religious education	Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Crosslee is a community primary school in Blackley, north-east Manchester. With 219 pupils, the school has spare places. As numbers in each year group vary, there are two classes of Year 5 pupils, and two classes of mixed infant years. The 45-place nursery has 36 full time children and a small number of part timers. Not all stay at the school at the end of their nursery time. Most pupils live in rented homes close to the school, which is in an area of social disadvantage. Sixty two per cent of pupils are eligible for free school meals, more than three times the national average. A high percentage of pupils join or leave the school during the year as families move in and out of the area. Thirteen pupils are from ethnic minorities and four have English as an additional language. One in five pupils, similar to the national average, is identified as having special educational needs. One pupil has a Statement of Special Educational Need and 23 others receive support from external agencies, predominantly for emotional and behavioural difficulties and moderate learning needs. On entry to the nursery, the children's attainment varies but is generally well below that expected for their age. The school has two learning mentors funded by monies from Excellence in Cities. It also benefits from having two teachers from the local education authority's support team.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

Crosslee is a rapidly improving school that is giving satisfactory value for money overall but good value in raising pupils' self-esteem. Its major strength lies in the very high level of pastoral care. It is very effective in helping pupils from different social backgrounds to get on well together. Very strong leadership by the headteacher, together with the enthusiasm of all who work at Crosslee, creates a vibrant community. Very good teaching in the nursery and reception year ensures the children make really good progress. Good teaching enables the infant and junior pupils to learn to read, write and use number but standards are low. The junior pupils have significant gaps in their learning from previous years. Positive signs of change are pupils' willingness to learn, their growing pride in what they achieve, the air of purpose in the school and the clear focus on improvement.

What the school does well

- A good range of interesting activities and very good teaching ensure the nursery and reception year children get off to a flying start and develop good levels of independence.
- The headteacher and the deputy headteacher inspire a high level of commitment from all who work in the school: outstanding team work provides strong personal support for pupils.
- Pupils thrive on the adults' praise and encouragement and most behave well in and out of class.
- It is a bright, attractive place where pupils want to learn and to celebrate their achievement.

What could be improved

- Standards in all subjects but most especially in reading, writing, mathematics, science and information and communication technology.
- The pace of pupils' learning.
- The effectiveness of the subject coordinators in their work to drive up standards.

- The use of information to identify exactly where changes need to be made.
- Pupils' attendance and punctuality.

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

Improvement in the last year has been good although overall improvement has been unsatisfactory since the inspection in March 1997. That inspection identified serious weaknesses in the quality of teaching, educational standards and the management of the school. The move into a new building in 1998 gave a new start but school evidence shows that the action to deal with the nine key issues was not sustained and improvements were short lasting. Standards fell in 1999 and have remained well below average. Financial irregularities and changes in the governing body and staffing resulted in a lengthy period of uncertainty until the current headteacher's appointment in September 2001. Parents and staff comment on how the instability badly disrupted pupils' learning and seriously undermined support for the school. Pupils' behaviour deteriorated severely as they responded negatively to temporary teachers. The headteacher has been highly effective in working to establish a calm, orderly school. Incidents of unacceptable behaviour have declined sharply and the morale of governors, staff, pupils and parents is now high. All agree with inspectors that the school "is on the up". In 2002 the school achieved a community award and was awarded Investors in People. This is a springboard for further improvement, especially in raising academic standards.

STANDARDS

The table shows the standards achieved by pupils at the end of Year 6 based on average point scores in National Curriculum tests.

Performance in:	compared with				Key
	all schools			Similar schools	
	2000	2001	2002	2002	
English	E	E	E*	E	well above average A above average B Average C below average D well below average E lowest 5 per cent E*
mathematics	C	E*	E*	E	
science	E*	E	E*	D	

Standards are unsatisfactory in all subjects apart from physical education throughout the school, and in science and information and communication technology for the infant pupils who are achieving well and generally doing as well as expected for their age in these subjects. Standards in English are below average for seven year olds and well below for 11 year olds. They are also lower than at the time of the last inspection. Even so, most pupils make good progress from a low start when they enter the nursery. Very good teaching is ensuring that the nursery and reception children are well on line to meet the standard expected at the end of the reception year in knowledge and understanding of the world, creative development, physical development and personal, social and emotional development. In all year groups pupils are slower to make progress in reading, writing and number. Very few pupils do better than expected for their age at five, seven and 11. The girls generally do better than the boys, although the boys are beginning to outshine them in mathematics and science. In 2002, the school's results were far lower than most similar

schools. The English and science results placed Crosslee in the lowest five per cent of all schools nationally. The school fell far short of its very challenging targets. The Year 6 class, however, had a very high percentage of pupils with special educational needs and many had a negative attitude to learning. Although they started the year at a low level, they made good progress. In the national tests several came close to the expected standard for their age and higher attaining pupils achieved well especially in English and science where they did better than expected for their age.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Very good; pupils enjoy school and are keen to take part in activities.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Good; most behave sensibly in lessons and around school. A few, most often boys, find it hard to control their emotions.
Personal development and relationships	Satisfactory; boys and girls of all ages get on well together. Pupils show much respect for the adults in school and some awareness of responsibility for their actions.
Attendance	Well below average. Too many pupils arrive after school starts.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils in:	Nursery and Reception	Years 1 – 2	Years 3 – 6
Quality of teaching	Very 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 overall is good and has improved markedly since the last inspection. A key strength is the teachers' expertise in managing the pupils' behaviour and mood swings. All the adults know the pupils well and make good use of humour and praise to encourage and reward them. The excellent partnership between the teachers and the support staff ensures that pupils' needs are largely met. The swift action of learning mentors and key staff often pre-empt behaviour problems and helps to sustain a good, positive atmosphere for learning. There is occasional very good teaching in several classes. It is most consistent in the nursery and reception class where the teachers have high expectations of the children to organise themselves. They challenge the children but make learning fun. The variability in teaching in other classes, particularly in English and information and communication technology, is one reason why standards are not rising fast enough. Another is that the challenge, especially for the higher attaining pupils, is not always high enough. Pupils are not systematically learning what they need to know to improve their reading, writing and use of the computer. More consistent teaching and a greater focus on practical work are strengthening pupils' knowledge of number and their confidence in solving mathematical problems. In science, pupils are learning quickly because the teachers encourage them to talk about what they see and find out from practical activities. A poor range of resources limits pupils' learning in other practical subjects, including art and design, and design and technology. Good coaching and teaching of skills by specialists in sport and music helps pupils to achieve well.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Satisfactory overall; the nursery and reception children experience a good range of interesting activities.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Satisfactory; adults support pupils well. Tasks and resources are not matched closely enough to individual needs to ensure that pupils can achieve well on their own.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	Satisfactory; pupils have no need of specialist support and the support from adults and other pupils enables them to extend their range of spoken English and to play a full part in lessons and school life.
Provision for pupils' personal development, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Very good; the adults are good examples for the pupils in how to get on with others and how to appreciate what others achieve. The high emphasis on considering others, irrespective of social and ethnic background, ensures tolerance and acceptance. The school does little to develop pupils' awareness of other cultures, values and traditions.
How well the school cares for its pupils	High quality care and support for pupils creates a friendly atmosphere that helps all pupils to feel safe and valued. Information about pupils' progress is not used consistently to plan what they need to learn next.

The school's links with parents are strengthening. Parents appreciate the changes in the school. Many parents, but by no means all, support their children in homework and school events and allow them to attend the good range of clubs and activities.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	The outstanding leadership of the headteacher has established a very good team spirit and a shared sense of purpose. Key subject leaders are not as effective in driving up standards.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Satisfactory; governors' skills and expertise are being used well to shape the direction for the school and to meet all responsibilities.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Good; the analysis of pupils' progress over time gives a clear picture of the value added by the school. Governors and staff have a good overview of how well the school is doing in key areas.

The strategic use of resources	Satisfactory; grants are used as appropriate and spending is linked to the school's priorities for improvement. Support staff are very well deployed to support pupils at key times. Time, space and resources are less effectively used. The computers are underused.
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The school accommodation is very good with extensive grounds and spacious rooms. Library provision is poor and resources in many subjects are inadequate. The number of teachers is good although two are only temporary. Their skills and expertise are crucial to the continuing improvement in junior pupils' attitudes and learning. The school seeks best value in goods and services and sets challenging targets. It compares itself with others and actively promotes itself locally.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Their children are expected to work hard. • Their children like school. • They feel comfortable about approaching the school with concerns and problems. • The work of the nursery. 	<p>A small number of parents raised the following concerns:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pupils' misbehaviour. • The limited range of activities outside lessons. • The amount of homework.

Thirty four parents returned the questionnaire and 16 attended the meeting with inspectors. The inspection team agrees with the parents' positive views and finds their concerns partly valid. Homework is sporadic rather than well organised, and staff, pupils and parents do not always use the homework diaries. The range of additional activities is better than in many other schools. While there is occasional unacceptable behaviour, especially when pupils are tired, upset or lack motivation, generally most pupils behave sensibly.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and pupils' achievements

1. Standards are low across the curriculum. Pupils make satisfactory progress over time from a very low start in the nursery and some make good, and occasionally very good, progress to reach the level expected for their age. Higher attaining pupils achieve well in tests but work from last year and this shows that they, and others, could often achieve more. Now that the school is calm and orderly and the pupils are interested in learning, Crosslee is in a good position to drive up academic standards. There are signs that this is starting, especially in the work of the nursery, reception class and younger infants. This forms a good seed-bed for future years while the school also tries to help pupils in the junior classes make up gaps in their learning from previous years.
2. Very good teaching, together with a well planned, coherent programme of practical experiences, is boosting the learning of the children in the nursery and reception year. Many are making rapid progress, especially in personal and social skills and in their knowledge and understanding of the world. When the children start in the nursery as young three year olds, most show skills, knowledge and understanding more typical of children a year younger. Many have very limited general knowledge and immature language skills. Although they often chat easily with others, their speech is indistinct and difficult to understand. A significant number are in need of speech therapy although only three out of ten actually receive it. The high focus given by the Foundation Stage to developing the children's language ensures that many improve their communication skills significantly. However, the children, especially the boys, are slower to move into reading and writing. Only the higher attaining pupils do as well as expected for their age. In the reception class, they are starting to read and are already writing simple messages independently.
3. All in all, given the reception children's current rate of progress, many are on line to reach the standard expected nationally at the end of the year in knowledge and understanding of the world, physical development and creative development. A significant number already show a good level of maturity in the way they organise themselves and take care of their own and others' needs. However, fewer will meet the expected standard in all aspects of communication, language and literacy or in mathematical development at the end of the reception year.
4. The lag in progress in literacy and number is highly evident in all year groups but markedly so in the junior years. The cumulative effects of unsatisfactory learning and teaching in previous years have resulted in many older juniors, most especially boys but not exclusively, finding it hard to understand fully what they read. They also have difficulty writing fluently and accurately and have little intuitive feel for number. In turn this affects their learning in all subjects.
5. Over the last three years the school's results in the national tests for seven and 11 year olds have not compared well with similar schools or with all schools nationally. Although there have been some high spots, such as in 2001 when the reading results for 11 year olds matched the national standard, the school has generally fallen below average. In 2002, the overall results for 11 year olds placed Crosslee in the lowest five per cent of all schools and well below the average of similar schools in English and mathematics. The school fell far short of its targets in both subjects. The high

attainment of a few pupils in science helped to raise the standard but it was still lower than seen in most similar schools.

6. While the majority of the seven year olds reach the level expected for their age in reading, writing, mathematics and science, few do better and this keeps the overall standard low. In the 2002 tests, no seven year old did well for their age in reading, writing, mathematics or science. The school fared really badly in reading. Its results placed it in the lowest five per cent of all schools as only 62 per cent of pupils reached the level expected for their age compared with 84 per cent nationally. This meant that nearly half of the pupils started the junior years still in the very early stages of reading.
7. Inspection evidence shows that current English standards are below average for seven year olds and well below average for 11 year olds. Many pupils throughout the school have limited skills in expressing themselves lucidly. They find it particularly hard to describe, explain and to give reasons. This affects the quality of their discussions especially in science and history where they are asked to justify their opinions. Many are also at least a year behind in reading and writing. By the end of Year 2, most are reading with some fluency and writing independently, punctuating simple sentences correctly. However, in the junior years, they continue to need teaching in how to identify and spell new words, how to make sense of what they read and how to structure and present their writing.
8. Pupils in Years 3, 4 and 5 are making at least satisfactory progress but not enough to bridge the gap and bring more of them up to the level expected for their age. The English work of most of the current Year 6 is more typical of younger pupils. While the higher attaining pupils cope well with reading and writing across the curriculum, the others struggle. They find it hard to interpret what they read and to identify features of an author's style. Their written work lacks maturity in the development and organisation of the content. Added to this, too many have untidy handwriting and are inaccurate in spelling and punctuation.
9. Standards have fallen in mathematics since the last inspection in 1997 when they were judged to be average. The emphasis over the last year to raise standards in mathematics is slowly bearing fruit. The infants and lower juniors show a developing ease in using number mentally and in explaining how they work out answers. Many name mathematics as their favourite subject even though they find it hard. Nevertheless, standards remain low in all year groups as too many pupils are slow to apply what they know, especially in dealing with problems expressed in words rather than numbers. They often need much support in dealing with number related aspects in other subjects. Year 6 pupils needed to be reminded how to check and read measurements accurately in science.
10. In science, standards are broadly satisfactory in the infant and lower junior years but below average at the end of the junior years. The school's focus on practical work and posing questions is having a positive effect. There are signs of improvement in pupils' understanding of concepts and in their skills in carrying out investigations.
11. The school's targets for 2003 are again challenging in English and mathematics. Pupils' current work indicates that the target in mathematics is more realistic than that in English. However, the programme of support and booster classes was effective in raising Year 6 pupils' attainment last year and the school plans to repeat it from the autumn term.

12. Several key factors help to explain the pupils' underachievement, the low standards over the last few years and the very slow process in raising them since the last inspection in 1997.
13. The school has not kept pace with the national upward trend in standards. Although the school's standards rose in 1998 for the 11 year olds in English, mathematics and science, those for the seven year olds fell and the dip continued in 1999. Standards also dipped significantly in 1999 for the 11 year olds, particularly in English and science. They have remained below average ever since. However, test results at the end of Years 2 and 6 have not always truly reflected the picture of attainment and progress in the school. In 1998 inspectors, monitoring the school's improvement, commented that standards in lessons in different year groups did not measure up to the profile indicated in the school's test results in 1997, when standards then matched the national average in English and mathematics at the end of Years 2 and 6, and the school did better than most in science.
14. The gaps in the current Year 6 pupils' knowledge and skills across the curriculum point to considerable weaknesses in their previous learning and to a lack of action in the last few years to remedy them. School evidence shows that significant and common areas of weakness were not always identified as priorities for improvement. For example, in spring 2000, the school felt there was no issue regarding writing, yet standards were well below average in the 1999 national tests, not least for the seven year olds who are now the current Year 6 class.
15. The most potent factor, however, has been changes in staffing. These had a highly negative impact until more recent stable staffing has strengthened pupils' learning and achievement. The period of uncertainty following the leaving of the previous headteacher in spring 2000 led to several changes in staff and difficulties in recruiting replacement teachers. Over a period of two school years, most pupils in the previous Year 6 class were taught by 33 temporary teachers. Parents, staff and pupils comment on how the instability led to a significant downturn in pupils' attitudes to learning and subsequent minimal progress. When the current headteacher was appointed in 2001, her first priority was to bring order to the school and to rekindle pupils' confidence. Recent appointments of skilled, enthusiastic teachers and support staff have strengthened the quality of teaching and pupils are now beginning to raise their achievement. Nevertheless, the occasional reluctance to learn of some Year 6 and other junior pupils, more often boys, especially when writing is involved, rubs against the moves to raise standards.
16. An important factor is that one in five pupils in the school is identified as having special educational needs. The percentage in some classes is particularly high. In the older junior classes, the staff have taken great care to differentiate between those pupils with learning needs and those with social and emotional needs which have been accentuated by their experiences in school over the last few years. Nearly 60 per cent of the current Year 6 pupils have special needs, particularly in literacy. All are making at least satisfactory progress because of the school's effective support systems and high emphasis on raising pupils' self-esteem. The pupils receive extensive support from the teachers, classroom assistants and the learning mentors in class, as well as in groups away from the classroom.
17. Many pupils have made extremely good progress in meeting their behaviour targets and, in turn, this is reinforcing their satisfactory progress towards their individual reading, writing and number targets.

18. Pupils with English as an additional language do at least as well as the others. The teachers' focus on explaining new terms in literacy and mathematics lessons, as well as placing a more practical emphasis in science, works particularly to the benefit of these pupils. Many make good progress and achieve well academically.
19. In physical education, standards are similar to those in other schools. Specialist coaching and a wide range of physical activities allow many pupils to do well personally. Similarly, the pupils who receive specialist music tuition make good progress in performing and reading musical notation. Overall, however, the standard in music is unsatisfactory and has fallen since the last inspection when it was judged to be good. Many of the junior pupils are still at the stage of exploring what sounds instruments can make and how they can be played.
20. In art and design, design and technology, geography, history and religious education, standards are unsatisfactory. Pupils' knowledge is patchy and superficial but the main weakness lies in pupils' poor level of skill. For example, in art and design, the older juniors show minimal level of skill in ensuring quality of work and creativeness in their approach. In information and communication technology, standards are broadly satisfactory in the infant years. The good achievement and attainment of many of the younger pupils show what can be done. The low standards and limited information and communication technology skills of the older junior pupils point to the lack of hands-on experience and tuition in the past.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

21. The inspection team agrees with the parents who said at the meeting with inspectors that their children like school because they like the teachers and find the activities interesting. Pupils generally behave sensibly and get on very well with others.
22. Although this reflects the strengths noted in the last inspection, anecdotal and documentary evidence shows that at the start of the last school year the junior pupils, particularly those in Year 6, were disaffected, unwilling to learn and often unruly. Current Year 6 pupils comment on how they now find school enjoyable because they get involved in art and design, music, physical education, drama and mathematics. This positive attitude was also reflected in the good number of pupils who voluntarily attended lunchtime and after-school clubs. For example, Year 5 pupils, keen to improve their prowess, attended the 'Times Table club'.
23. Children in the nursery and reception class show very positive attitudes to school. They come happily into class and are quick to find something to do. They know the routines and help one another. For example, one nursery child hung up several painting aprons that had fallen on the floor before moving to a new activity. Reception children were very content to wait their turn to paint and found themselves something profitable to do, only seeking adult help when their own efforts failed.
24. Similar good working habits typify many lessons in other classes. Pupils generally work well together although many, more usually boys, are easily distracted and the pace of work is often slow. They concentrate longest when it is something that really catches their interest. In cool windy weather, boys and girls from Years 5 and 6 responded enthusiastically to rugby and football coaching with personnel from local clubs. Year 6 pupils also responded with great interest and enthusiasm in the art workshop entitled 'Boggarts and Brollies'. They worked very co-operatively and sustained concentration well during the long session.

25. Pupils' behaviour in lessons and around the school is generally good. A few pupils, predominantly boys, show challenging and volatile behaviour. They occasionally refuse to follow the rules and easily lose their self-control when riled. At such times, they take up a lot of the teacher's time and interrupt others' learning. However, they respond well to the procedures adopted by the headteacher and other staff and, during the inspection, disruptions to learning were minor and quickly dissipated. In one case, when one pupil became very upset, other pupils tried hard to defuse the situation. Pupils show a developing awareness of the impact of their actions. Year 6 pupils commented that their behaviour in lessons has much improved and that they were grateful for the calmer atmosphere this has brought as they can get on with their work. They resent being put in detention but accept that there needs to be something for those who break the rules.
26. In the school year prior to the inspection there were 33 fixed period exclusions and two permanent exclusions. Fifteen pupils were involved. This figure is well above the average for similar schools. However, school records indicate that exclusion was only used for extremely disruptive or abusive behaviour and in each case other sanctions had been tried previously. Exclusion has not been used recently.
27. Pupils are polite to visitors, keen to talk about what they have been doing and willing to help. They are pleased to do jobs in class, such as taking the register to the office, and Year 6 pupils take their roles as monitors very seriously. The older pupils set good examples for the younger ones in school and in the playground. All are proud of the school buildings and show a good level of respect for items on display and the resources they use. Year 1 pupils showed great care when they examined old toys. Older pupils openly referred to the graffiti at the previous school but how they want things at Crosslee to "stay nice".
28. Pupils are pleased with each other's success. One such example was in a school assembly when pupils received certificates for their achievements. The other pupils listened attentively throughout and warmly applauded the recipients. Pupils also work well together and their response to collaborative work is a developing feature of school life. In all year groups pupils talked through ideas with a partner, shared computers and tutored one another, discussed ideas as a group and often came to collective decisions in a sensible and mature manner.
29. Pupils' attendance is poor. In the year 2001/2, the rate of attendance was 89.3 per cent, well below the average for similar schools nationally and also lower than noted in the previous inspection. Only about one third of pupils had a satisfactory attendance record and there was a high incidence of unauthorised absence. The continuing poor attendance of a substantial minority of pupils, and some frequent lateness, affects adversely the learning of too many pupils.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?

30. The quality of teaching has improved since the last inspection in 1997 and is now good overall. However, the dip in standards, gaps in junior pupils' learning, as well as documented problems in retaining staff, along with pupils' poor behaviour and negative attitudes to learning, all indicate that the overall quality of teaching has been inconsistent and at times unsatisfactory in the years since 1997. Recent appointments have strengthened the quality of teaching and added curriculum expertise, most especially in the Foundation Stage. The placement of two experienced teachers from the local education authority's support team with junior pupils has also been crucial in the successful programme to manage pupils'

behaviour effectively and in setting the tone for learning. They are vital members of the current teaching team.

31. In the school as a whole, the teaching was satisfactory in nearly all lessons seen and was good or better in just over half. The good teaching was spread throughout the school with very good teaching predominating in the nursery, the reception class and Year 4. There was occasional very good teaching in a few other classes.
32. In the infant and junior classes the main strengths lie in the teachers' commitment, their hard work in organising their classrooms and planning lessons, and in their skills in managing the pupils' behaviour. The teachers, classroom assistants and learning mentors work very effectively as a team to sustain a calm, positive atmosphere in classrooms. This is well exemplified in the close partnership of the Year 6 team; the classroom assistant often supports the teacher by noting the pupils' responses, commenting, praising and jotting down reward points. Her high profile in the class along with the teacher means she has the respect and regard of the pupils. Both the adults know the pupils' personalities and how to deal with mood swings. They use humour, endearments and coercion to sustain the pupils' attention and are quick to involve a learning mentor when pupils lose their self-control. They also amend their plans when they sense the pupils are less than willing to co-operate. For example, in a music lesson, the teacher reduced the content as it was clear the pupils were not able to respond as asked.
33. Although the school has done much to overcome barriers to learning, such as pupils' behaviour and attitude, less attention has been given to identifying how the pupils learn best. Their learning is much limited by their poor retention of what they hear. Many only half-listen as they find it hard to repeat what they have just heard or to use words that have been explained to them. The teachers pre-empt this by repeating and rephrasing questions and comments. However, too much focus in teachers' planning and in lessons is on what is to be taught rather than how the pupils will learn it best. Pupils' learning is too transitory, especially for the lower attaining pupils and those with special educational needs. They do well in lessons, especially when the teaching is carefully structured, and when an adult works with them, but later show only partial recollection of what they have done or how it was done. They often need considerable prompting to recall salient facts and key vocabulary. In some lessons, the teachers move on too quickly before establishing that pupils have fully understood. In information and communication technology, most progress was made when the sessions were broken into stages and pupils were gradually introduced to what they had to do.
34. This situation is aggravated by gaps in teachers' subject knowledge and expertise, particularly in English, science and information and communication technology. While there is some very good and good teaching in these subjects, it is not consistent enough to accelerate pupils' learning and lift standards. In some of the satisfactory lessons, the teaching strengths in managing the pupils only just outweighed weaknesses in the teachers' subject expertise. In the unsatisfactory lessons seen in information and communication technology, the poor structure of the lesson and lack of clarity in what pupils had learnt hindered pupils' progress.
35. The teaching in mathematics is much more consistent. During the inspection, much good teaching was seen, especially in encouraging pupils to use different strategies to handle number. Pupils' good learning is starting to have a positive impact on standards in mathematics. Specialist skills teaching in physical education and music also boost pupils' learning. The coaches have high expectations of the pupils and

make it very clear when the pupils' work is not good enough. Pupils playing the steel pans were stopped several times so that errors could be rectified. This led to a marked improvement in the pupils' performance.

36. The adults' high expectations also typify the very good teaching for the children in the nursery and reception year. This gives them a flying start. The teachers and support staff make an effective team and bring a high level of consistency to the teaching and learning across the two classes. The staff set excellent examples for the children in how they work together and support one another. They set a fast pace and are effusive in their praise and encouragement. Their skill in cajoling children and enticing them into activities contributes highly to the warm, caring and stress-free environment in which the children are happy and show a positive attitude to learning. Although the nursery teacher had only been in the school for a few weeks, the nursery was extremely well organised with attractive zones to promote learning in different areas. All the children knew what they were expected to do. The resultant buzz of learning was also highly evident in the reception class. The pattern of class sessions, adult-led group sessions and child-chosen activities works extremely well as the adults ensure that the children know the learning purpose behind each. Even in listing "my extra bits and pieces" the reception teacher makes it clear to the children what she expects them to do. This motivates the children and they work purposefully and at a good pace.
37. Such good pace of learning and productivity is not always so evident in the infant and junior classes. Too many pupils take their time and do not complete the tasks in the time allocated. This is sometimes because the teachers do not exact enough from the pupils and set a higher standard in what the pupils are to do, and sometimes because the tasks themselves are too onerous. In several lessons, there was too much for the pupils to do in the time and the focus on paper-and-pencil work slowed the pupils' learning as so many find writing hard or do not enjoy it. In literacy hours, particularly, the teachers do not give enough emphasis to practical experiences and the use of resources to support the pupils' learning. When a Year 5 teacher used cards with different phrases and time words the pupils were quick to see how the sequence affected the meaning. However, some impetus was lost when the pupils then wrote sentences rather than use the cards to create new sentences. Little use is made in the junior classes of information and communication technology.
38. When pupils are really motivated, they concentrate and try hard. In a very good English lesson on play scripts, the teacher's lively and enthusiastic approach inspired Year 4 pupils. The teacher made it fun to come up with ideas for a play about trolls and in writing them down pupils began to apply their knowledge of stage directions and spelling rules. Year 1 pupils were really pleased to go on a walk around school with the classroom assistant to find different shapes. Their enthusiasm spread as each found and named a range of shapes.
39. In many lessons, the pace slows when the pupils move from the class introduction to their activities. The teachers sometimes take too long to tell the pupils what they are to do and pupils' attention wanders as they wait to start or for what they need. Slick routines, with monitors collecting work baskets already prepared for their groups, helped Year 2 pupils to organise themselves smoothly at the start and end of group time. In some classes, the teachers keep the pupils well informed about the length of time available. A Year 5 teacher made it clear that pupils had only three minutes to write a sentence about their visit the previous day. This ensured that pupils were quick to make a start and concentrated on the task in hand.

40. The teachers are committed to meeting pupils' individual needs. Lesson plans include details of activities for pupils with special educational needs and make good efforts to ensure the activities will help pupils to meet the targets in their individual plans. However, the activities are frequently linked to groups of pupils and are highly dependent on the adults to tailor them to individuals.
41. A good step in raising standards is the common practice of setting targets for pupils in literacy and numeracy. These are expressed in simple terms such as "I will try ..." but the teachers rarely refer to them as part of work in class or in their marking. As a result there is little sense of pupils actively improving what they do. The teachers mark the pupils' work regularly but are not using marking as a way to raise standards. In too many cases, pupils receive overblown praise. For example, the comment, "Neat work, well done" was given to an older junior when the presentation was of a very low standard and showed very little improvement on previous work. The focus over the last year has rightly been to raise pupils' self-esteem but teachers' comments have not developed to show pupils where their work does not meet the required standard and how they can improve it.

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

42. The quality and range of learning opportunities is satisfactory overall and good in the Foundation Stage. The school's deliberate emphasis on personal, social and health education alongside English, mathematics and science has been relevant to the pupils' needs in the last year, but the school is now right to widen the curriculum and look to ways to develop and apply pupils' literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology skills through other subjects.
43. While the curriculum for English, mathematics and science meets statutory requirements, there is superficial coverage of Programmes of Study in many subjects and some gaps. In information and communication technology, for example, little is done on control and monitoring and the use of information and communication technology in other subjects. The school's adoption of national subject schemes of work provides in-built and systematic progression of skills and knowledge but not enough has been done, especially in English, to ensure that the content best suits pupils' needs and builds on their current attainment. Subject coordinators monitor teachers' planning in their subjects but do not rigorously evaluate the impact of the content and its organisation on the pupils' learning.
44. One good move has been to increase the amount of physical education, to include some sessions in the mornings and to bring in specialist coaching teams. These sessions are popular with pupils. They not only motivate them, especially the older juniors, but also allow some pupils to achieve well when their performance in other subjects is low. This also applies to the sessions when pupils learn to play steel pans, samba and stringed instruments.
45. The school now provides more practical work in science. As a result, the pupils show signs of retaining more information than they do in lessons when they are not actively involved. Making the most of pupils' higher engagement through practical experience activity is not as evident in other subjects.
46. However, practical experience is strongly emphasised in the Foundation Stage curriculum. The quality and range of experiences are good. The children benefit from a rich curriculum where effective links are made across all six areas of learning

through themes, such as the tale of 'Little Red Riding Hood'. A real curricular strength is the commitment given to the use of play as the lynchpin for learning indoors and out and a way to develop the children's communication skills. The staff plan play activities very carefully to promote learning of particular skills and concepts and use what they know about the children's stage of development to increase the challenge. They have different expectations of the outcomes for the youngest nursery and the oldest reception children. The morning and afternoon nursery children experience similar activities while the full-time children are given additional challenges as well as time to rehearse what they have done previously.

47. The time allocated to teaching is broadly in line with national recommendations. However, the allocation and timing of some subjects has an adverse affect on learning. For example, the break down of the 90 minutes per week science time into three sessions of 45, 30 and 15 minutes does not work effectively in all classes. Too often the short time sessions cover minimal ground as time is often lost settling pupils and reminding them of what went before. This is aggravated when the session follows literacy and mathematics and pupils have had little opportunity to be active. Another example is when short sessions of only five minutes are allocated to some personal, social and health education sessions.
48. Daily literacy and mathematics lessons follow the guidelines of the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies. The school's provision for numeracy is effective in developing pupils' basic number knowledge. Although there are many opportunities for pupils to be involved in practical mathematical activities, the opportunities are limited for them to use what they know to solve problems in everyday life. The strategies to teach literacy skills are satisfactory but there is much to do to make up for poorer provision in previous years and to lift the pupils' enthusiasm for reading and writing.
49. The provision for pupils with special needs is satisfactory overall. It is stronger in the Foundation Stage where the staff have a good awareness of each child's progress and make good use of practical activities and staff intervention to work on particular problems, such as limited speech. For the infant and junior pupils the provision is less consistent as the teachers do not always make enough use of available resources to support pupils with special educational needs. The high reliance on adults to support these pupils enables them to make progress and often finish their task but some pupils are highly dependent on the adults to tell them what to do and how to do it. Good use is being made of national programmes to boost pupils' reading, writing and mathematics both as part of class work and in groups away from the classroom. The management of sessions when pupils are withdrawn from class is mainly effective because the staff have discussed strategies to ensure pupils do not miss out on key elements. For example, a group may be withdrawn for close support during the group work in the literacy hour but then return to the classroom to share in the final class session. As a result, pupils with special educational needs have access to all areas of the curriculum and are fully integrated in class-life.
50. The personal, social and health education programme is well planned and comprehensive covering social, moral and personal issues. The high quality of this programme has been a key factor in improving the pupils' response to school and their behaviour. The school makes good use of specialists, including the school nurse, to teach about citizenship, racism, drugs and sex education.
51. The school offers a good range of opportunities for the pupils to participate in extra-curricular activities and many pupils choose to be involved in several of them. The

programme caters for a wide range of interests including sport, music, drama and mathematics. Some of these sessions involve people from the community. The school makes effective use of chances for the pupils to take part in events such as litter picking and attending a pantomime at the high school.

52. The provision to promote pupils' spiritual, moral and social development has improved since the last inspection and is now very good. As then, it is a strength of the school although the provision for cultural development, especially that to develop pupils' knowledge and appreciation of other cultures, is not as good as in the other three areas. Nevertheless, the overall provision is an integral part of the school's high focus on pupils' personal development and is closely linked to the provision for their health and welfare.
53. The high quality provision for spiritual development is epitomised in the smartness of the school, the attractive displays of pupils' work and the celebration of what has been achieved. All the staff set good examples for pupils in how they value others' talents, skills and achievements. They are very effective in raising pupils' self-esteem and in taking time to share with pupils the things that delight them, such as the range of colours the reception children could use in their computer pictures. In daily, well-planned school assemblies the pupils are expected to enter and leave in a quiet, respectful and orderly manner. The stillness and reflective atmosphere is reinforced by short periods when pupils are given time to think about their own values and beliefs. They are also encouraged to develop a sense of belonging to a community that has shared values and responsibilities. The invitation to parents to join these assemblies helps to spread the values that the school is trying to establish.
54. The provision for moral development has improved and is now very good. The headteacher takes a strong lead in ensuring that all the pupils know and are encouraged, at every opportunity, to follow the school's values. In the first school assembly of the inspection week she set the tone in emphasising and celebrating the improvement in the behaviour, attitude and response of pupils the week before. As a result, kindness, thoughtfulness, consideration of others and politeness were praised and reinforced. Pupils are shown the difference between right and wrong and the older pupils are expected to set the younger ones a good example. In regular class and group sessions, the adults discuss moral issues with the pupils. For example, Year 3 pupils talked about some of the things that showed others trusted them. The learning mentors show good skills and expertise in leading some of the sessions, especially with pupils who find it hard to control their emotions, and play a significant contribution in developing the pupils' understanding and acceptance of rules within the school community. The sessions for Year 6 pupils on decision-making are also a good feature of the overall provision.
55. The provision for pupils' social development is also very good. The adults expect and encourage all pupils to play a full and active role in the life of the school and to be responsible members of the class and school community. They work particularly hard with those pupils who have difficulty getting on with others by helping them to find ways to cope. By asking these pupils to work together on relatively simple tasks, such as sorting out jigsaw pieces, the adults gradually foster the pupils' skills in co-operating with others. From the nursery onwards the pupils are given opportunities to work and play with others from different year groups. The "Craze of the week" in the playground is used well to encourage older pupils to show the younger ones how to skip or bat balls. In class, the teachers plan tasks so that pupils can work in small groups and as pairs on the computer although they give less emphasis to promoting the pupils' ideas on how to organise what they have to do. The school places

deliberate emphasis on promoting the pupils' awareness of responsibility and self-reliance through the allocation of jobs and the school's involvement in events. The weekend residential visit to Winmarleigh also provides pupils from Years 4, 5 and 6 with activities to develop their independence, initiative and ability to get on with others. The planned introduction of a school council will help to develop pupils' understanding of others to represent their views.

56. The provision for pupils' cultural development is satisfactory overall. In music, history and geography, pupils are introduced to aspects of other cultures through themes, visits and extra activities, but this is not planned in any coherent way. Year 1 pupils, for example, saw toys from the last hundred years and heard from a visitor how they had been made and used. The school takes part in local events and ensures the pupils gain a sound awareness of local culture and traditions. For example, Year 6 pupils heard the story of the local imp, the Boggart, and took part in a community celebration in early November. The school played its part in Blackley in Bloom.
57. Much less time, however, is spent developing the pupils' understanding of other faiths, cultures and traditions and life in a culturally diverse society. Chances are missed to strengthen this through work in the subjects, particularly in religious education, music and art and design. The pupils who play the steel pans learn about some aspects of the music's traditions. The school recognises the need to improve the provision and there are plans to extend the programme of visitors and links with groups within the Manchester area.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

58. Crosslee Primary School is characterised by a strong sense of community. Teaching and non-teaching members of staff are highly committed to creating a caring environment where all pupils feel safe and secure. The adults know the pupils very well and give much time and effort to ensuring their welfare. The good practice in place at the time of the previous inspection has been much enhanced by successful recent initiatives to improve pupils' attitudes, behaviour and their ability to get on with others. Procedures to assess and track pupils' performance have been developed and now give good information on pupils' progress. The school has also made considerable efforts to improve the rate of attendance but has not been successful in raising it significantly.
59. The very good relationships between pupils and staff are manifestly based on trust, respect and care. The adults treat the pupils with understanding and value their contributions in lessons. They give time to talk to pupils and show particular sensitivity to pupils who have particular social and emotional problems. As a result, the teachers work closely with parents, carers and other support agencies to ensure that individuals' needs are recognised and met fully. Innovations such as the 'Friendship stop', 'No put-down zone', puzzles for wet days and "Are you on target to meet your target?" highlight the school's active approach to helping the pupils help themselves. This high level of care and support gives pupils the confidence to share their concerns with adults and to develop close bonds that help them to cope with the problems of daily life in school.
60. The headteacher and the governors share a responsible approach to health and safety matters. They have worked closely with the local education advisory service to carry out a thorough assessment of risk and issued additional guidelines to members of staff. They are now redrafting their health and safety policy to ensure that it reflects current advice on best practice. On a day-to-day basis the caretaker follows a well-

structured programme of health and safety checks and maintains detailed records. Arrangements for child protection comply with local authority guidance. Teachers and other members of staff are aware of their responsibilities in this regard. However, changes in staffing over the last two years mean there is a need to update all staff on relevant school procedures. As part of the high emphasis on personal, social and health education, staff are discussing ways to improve the content and ensure that, from the nursery onwards, pupils acquire knowledge and understanding about healthy, safe living, and consistent guidance in how to develop a responsible attitude to life as part of a community.

61. The school's very effective procedures to monitor and promote pupils' good behaviour are the key to the school's calmness and orderliness. The headteacher has the full support and co-operation of the whole staff in putting into practice agreed procedures to reward and penalise pupils for their behaviour. The consistency in approach begins in the nursery and reception class. As in other classes, the teaching and non-teaching staff, including the lunchtime organisers, make it very clear that they will not tolerate any transgressions of school rules or any form of bullying indoors or out. All the staff are quick to notice and reward good behaviour through praise and awards, but are equally prompt to deal with unacceptable behaviour. As they know the pupils well they know when it is most appropriate to withdraw pupils and how to help them to calm down. Their firm, negotiating approach helps to sustain other pupils' acceptance of, and in many cases their ability to ignore the situation. The two learning mentors play a key role in teaching pupils how to avoid conflict and in developing ways to manage their anger. They make an excellent contribution to the good order that is now a feature of the school.
62. A good strategy is the involvement of pupils from Years 1 to 6 in discussing and agreeing classroom rules that run alongside the school system of pupils' names on classroom 'traffic lights' to indicate the quality of pupils' behaviour throughout the day. Pupils respect this system and in many classes several made it evident that they were trying hard to avoid the detention that came after 'the red light'. School rules, including those for outdoor play, are clearly displayed inside school and out, and pupils value the rewards given by lunchtime staff who recognise pupils who follow the outdoor rules.
63. The headteacher places high emphasis on continuity of experience for the children and this is well exemplified in the carefully managed move for children from the nursery to the reception class. The children know they are "starting school" but find the organisation of the day very similar. A good aspect is the use of the nursery outdoor play area on some days rather than joining Year 1 and 2 pupils in the playground.
64. There are good procedures to monitor and improve attendance. The headteacher is well aware of the significance of regular attendance and good punctuality in raising attainment. She has successfully worked with other agencies to implement several effective measures that are having some positive benefits. The 'Breakfast Club' has already had a significant impact on the punctuality of several pupils who were previously regularly late. Similarly, the practice of contacting families on the first day of their children's absence is actively discouraging casual absence. Classes compete weekly for the best attendance figures and the learning mentors regularly analyse attendance data. Although this identifies absence rates it does not provide specific information on trends for different groups of pupils and, therefore, help to pinpoint where most effort should be placed to improve attendance.

65. The teachers and support staff work hard to include all pupils in lessons and school life. The school has an agreed policy to promote racial equality and monitors the progress and personal development of different groups of pupils. Deliberate decisions have been taken to make some activities, such as samba playing, available initially to identified junior pupils, with the consent of their parents, to develop their interest in school and to raise their self-esteem. This is proving effective and has, in turn, contributed to the orderliness of school life.
66. The school, as part of its programme of care and welfare, has improved its systems to identify and provide for the needs of pupils with Special Educational Need. The headteacher took the lead in working with staff to identify those pupils with particular needs, especially those with emotional and behavioural problems, who make up the largest group on the school's register of special needs. The high profile given to this area over the last year means the staff all have a good awareness of pupils' needs and how to work together to meet them. The school has a good working partnership with nine support agencies and has made the most of advice to improve the overall provision, and it also meets fully the requirements in the Statement of Special Educational Need of one pupil. Pupils' individual learning plans include realistic short-term targets, the steps to success and some guidance on teaching strategies. All the staff who work with these pupils are aware of their targets and contribute to reviews.
67. The learning mentors and classroom support staff play a vital role in working with pupils with special needs and also in giving them feedback on how they are doing in meeting their targets. Pupils' individual learning plans have realistic, achievable targets that are regularly reviewed by all the adults who support the pupils, including those from outside agencies. Pupils' achievements are acknowledged and praised and this successfully raises their self-esteem. However, praise is sometimes given too frequently and too easily and this is beginning to have an adverse effect in that not all pupils are striving to improve. The learning mentors have also recognised that some pupils enjoy being withdrawn from class and have rightly altered the programme of support to work with pupils in the classroom. This good monitoring of the impact of support is an effective feature of the overall provision.
68. There are no particular systems to support pupils who have English as an additional language as their fluency in spoken English is satisfactory. General support from teachers and other pupils is effective in developing their awareness and use of new words and phrases.
69. The school has effective procedures to assess pupils' progress through tests and to track their progress over a year, key stage and time at school. This gives the school reliable data on the value it is adding through good teaching and curriculum experiences. The deputy headteacher's detailed analysis of the data for 2002 has highlighted gaps in teachers' skills in assessing pupils' attainment and in setting realistic targets. Similarly, her analysis of the 2002 test results for pupils in Years 2 and 6 identified clearly the progress made over the year for different groups of pupils. In mathematics, she has set a good precedent by identifying possible factors that account for strengths and weaknesses in pupils' performance and where improvements need to be made. This has given a good focus for teaching and led to changes in the curriculum. Although coordinators look at samples of pupils' work, they are not building up portfolios of work to provide teachers with exemplars of attainment that would help them in judging how well the pupils are doing.
70. The nursery teacher is making effective use of national guidance to assess each child's stage of development in the six areas of learning when they start in the

nursery. This is giving a clear indication of the provision needed to help them progress and also to set targets for their achievement. The nursery staff keep ongoing notes of the children's progress and have a good overview of each child, no mean feat given the different lengths of time the children have been in the nursery and the teacher's appointment this term. This good practice also typifies the work of the reception teacher who also encourages the children to keep their own records of what they have done.

71. Teachers are setting targets for infant and junior pupils in literacy, mathematics and science. However, the targets are not always linked closely enough to teaching and learning so that pupils understand what they have to do to achieve them. Teachers' day-to-day records are inconsistent and do not give sufficient information to form cumulative assessment files. Pupils' reading diaries, for example, give only information on the frequency of reading and the teachers have little to identify where there are strengths and weaknesses in pupils' attitudes, skills and strategies. The guided reading records used by some teachers are a good start to note this information. In information and communication technology, there is little to record pupils' competence and level of skill. This is a significant gap as some pupils are already proficient in the skills being taught to their year group.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

72. The school's satisfactory partnership with parents is strengthening. Thirty four parents returned the questionnaire and 16 attended the meeting at which they expressed favourable views of the school. They recognise that many changes for the better have taken place over the last year but feel the school's reputation continues to suffer from the earlier period of instability. Parents agree that their children like school, are well taught by teachers who have high expectations, and are helped to become mature and responsible. They feel welcome in the school and find the teachers approachable. They have a high regard for the leadership and management of the school. A few parents have reservations about the school's homework policy and would like to know more about their children's progress. Several also are unhappy with standards of behaviour. Inspection evidence shows this concern to be unfounded as pupils' behaviour is generally good. There is, however, a lack of consistency in the provision of homework. The quality of the annual reports on pupils' progress is satisfactory and there are also many opportunities for parents to contact staff to discuss any concerns they may have.
73. The quality of information has improved since the last inspection and is now good with some very good features. For example, the information about what each class is doing keeps parents abreast of current topics and the regular sharing of targets gives parents a good indication of their children's progress. Parents new to the school are given detailed advice on how they can best support their children. The bright, new prospectus incorporates suggestions for all parents on how they can assist the school in promoting their children's personal and academic development. The annual reports on pupils' progress comply fully with statutory requirements. They give a good indication of each pupil's strengths and weaknesses and the school has plans to incorporate reports as part of a record of achievement for each pupil.
74. The headteacher greatly values the support of parents. Since her appointment, she has been sensitive to parents' concerns but has also been quietly persistent in her efforts to increase the involvement of parents in their children's education. This is paying off in several ways. Parents commented positively on the welcoming environment throughout the school and several parents were seen in school at the

end of the day talking with staff. Thirty one parents came to an assembly led by the nursery children and 25 supported the football team in a match against a local school. Many parents of children in the nursery stayed for a short time at the start of the day to work with their children, and parents of Year 1 pupils sent toys and photographs to support their children's study of old toys. A good number of parents attended the recent 'Maths is Fun' afternoon, and there was a good response to a recent 'Book Week'.

75. Much success has come from the work of the two learning mentors who have consulted and involved parents whose children find it hard to cope with school and to control their emotions. The mentors' contact with parents has also helped to improve pupils' attendance and punctuality. Similarly, other support staff take time to talk to parents of children who have been identified as having special educational needs. They are effective in encouraging the parents to attend reviews, to share in their children's achievements and contribute their ideas to new targets for improvement.
76. The headteacher recognises that there is much to do and the development of the partnership with parents is a priority in the current school improvement plan. Parents' attendance is low at consultation evenings with the teachers and there is a vacancy for a parent governor. Few parents are involved in helping in school and there is limited support from parents to ensure that their children complete homework. Not all parents sign the home-school agreement or keep to their part in ensuring pupils attend regularly and punctually.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

77. The school is well led and managed. The outstanding leadership of the headteacher, since her appointment in September 2001, has renewed the optimism in the school and local community following a lengthy period of instability and uncertainty. She has forged a strong team of teaching and support staff and has gained their commitment and willingness to continue the programme of improvement. The marked change in the school has set a very positive tone and parents at the meeting with inspectors were quick to recognise it and to praise the headteacher who they see as having "turned the school round".
78. The 1997 inspection identified serious weaknesses in the leadership and management of the school. It was not providing satisfactory value for money as it was spending more than its income. Moreover, underlying the nine key issues were weaknesses in the school's ability to identify where changes were necessary and to use available resources to support the process. Although a programme of action was begun, continuing weaknesses in the work of key staff and the governors meant that improvements were short-lived. School evidence shows that the school "assumed" the 1997 inspection report was "invalid".
79. The move to a new school in 1998 was not used well enough as a stepping off point to make changes. Standards fell in 1999 for seven and 11 year olds and placed the school in the lowest five per cent of all schools in English and science. When the headteacher left in the spring of 2000, the school went through a long period of changes in the leadership, staffing and governance that undermined the confidence of staff, pupils and parents. Matters arising from financial irregularities that came to light during this period have only recently been resolved and the school continues to pay back a sizeable sum to the local education authority arising from the high overspend in previous years. This has placed considerable constraints on the work of the current headteacher and governing body in planning for the future.

80. Current financial management is satisfactory. The financial situation at Crosslee is untypical. Financial planning decisions prior to 2001 have been poorly documented and the headteacher and governors, all new to their role in 2001, needed to carry out a detailed audit of the school's finances and an objective evaluation of the school's provision to draw up a school improvement plan. Governors made a commitment to use all available finances "to turn the school round" and have made a good move in releasing the deputy headteacher from classroom responsibilities. She is highly visible round the school, sets a good example in her work with the pupils and is making good use of time to develop target setting and tracking procedures.
81. The headteacher is very successful in motivating the staff and creating a shared sense of purpose and direction. Her calm, determined approach together with her competence in developing others' skills and expertise has been the key to the sense of shared purpose and shared responsibility. All who work in the school show the same high level of commitment to Crosslee and the pupils and to making things even better. This was well recognised in the award of Investors in People in 2002.
82. The headteacher's pragmatism and very good organisational skills were highly evident in the detailed preparation for and during the inspection. She has been effective in developing shared management of the school. Her very good partnership with the deputy headteacher and other senior staff keeps the school running smoothly and allows all to voice their opinions. This has been crucial in agreeing informally the aims and values of the school and in establishing consistent systems throughout the school to raise standards in pupils' behaviour and the routines and practices to create a positive learning atmosphere.
83. However, there are some gaps in strategic planning and in the leadership and management skills now needed to raise standards in the subjects. Although the information and communication technology plan for 2001/4 is running behind schedule, the school improvement plan for 2002/3 has almost been completed. The staff have worked successfully to carry out most of the actions leaving the school in a strong position to work on the remaining aspect of the development of monitoring and evaluating the work of the school. A good start has been made in agreeing a programme to monitor pupils' work, teachers' planning and teachers' assessments of pupils' progress. The links between standards and other factors, such as attendance, punctuality, length of time in school and with teaching and learning, have not yet been explored fully.
84. The focus on different subjects at various times in the year links well with the programme of staff development and training. Nevertheless, subject action plans lack specificity in where improvement is needed and how this will be achieved. For example, the literacy coordinator has identified weaknesses in pupils' understanding of what they read and the presentation of their work. However, the action plan does not identify clearly enough the steps needed to deal with these weaknesses, the resources and the success criteria. The coordinator and governors need such information to plan how best to use funds and to allocate staffing. In literacy, for example, monies will be needed to increase the currently poor range and number of books throughout the school.
85. Subject leaders have not all taken the initiative to drive up standards. They have a general view of what needs to be done in their subject, have revised subject schemes of work and organised resources, but they are not monitoring the quality of provision well enough to be able to identify precisely where changes need to be made and how

best to achieve them. The deputy headteacher is paving the way in her leadership of mathematics. Her detailed analysis of pupils' responses in the 2002 national tests has identified many of the reasons why the school did not meet its target and where more explicit teaching is needed to lift standards in 2003. Her work alongside other teachers is helping to raise the quality of teaching and learning.

86. The management of the provision for pupils with special educational needs is efficient and effective. The coordinator has developed the staff's expertise in identifying pupils' needs and establishing procedures to review pupils' progress and manage their individual learning plans. She has identified the need for further support for staff so they may plan a wider range of practical tasks for pupils and also the need to help teachers identify more clearly individual activities where appropriate. The governors allocate considerable monies to allocated funds from the local education authority to provide a good level of support staffing, particularly in English and mathematics lessons.
87. The school is making efficient and successful use of additional monies from 'Excellence in Cities' to fund two learning mentors, to supplement classroom assistance and to broaden the school's curriculum. The substantial Standards Fund is also carefully targeted at measures such as additional pupil support and 'Booster Classes' to raise standards, particularly in literacy and numeracy.
88. The headteacher and governors have a sound awareness of the principles of best value and are able to illustrate that they have used them in purchasing computer equipment and in reviewing the arrangements for cleaning the school. They compare the school's results with other similar Manchester schools and set challenging targets. Governors are also well aware of the need to increase the numbers of pupils in the school, and the new prospectus with photographs and pupils' drawings is a good step in turning the school's lingering poor reputation locally.
89. Day-to-day administration and financial control are sound. There have been several changes in administrative personnel but the headteacher has compensated for the lack of continuity and experience by using the services of a financial consultant. There has, however, been no recent audit of the school finances, nor has documentation been found relating to any audit previous to 2001. This unsatisfactory situation has been brought to the attention of the governing body. A good start has been made by the headteacher and her staff on planning for improvement in standards but governors have yet to agree a budget plan for the next few years to outline, on the basis of the best information available, anticipated income and its use to achieve the school's goals. This will also prove a useful opportunity to review the deployment and effectiveness of other school resources.
90. Unlike the previous building, the school now has very good quality accommodation. The two storey school is light and spacious with ample teaching areas for class, group and individual work. The nursery is extremely well appointed with good access to a secure outdoor area. The staff make good use of the different surfaces and undercover area for a wide range of activities every day. Spare rooms in school have been used well to provide a music room and a base for the learning mentors. However, there is no library and the music room is often unused. Similarly, there are many times when the information and communication technology suite and classroom computers are unused. Given the low level of skill of many pupils this is poor use of key resources.

91. The school has a good number of teachers and support staff, given the number of pupils, and the governors' recent appointments have strengthened subject and curriculum expertise particularly in the Foundation Stage and information and communication technology. The number and range of learning resources, however, are poor.
92. The school is providing satisfactory value for money overall, with good value in raising pupils' self-esteem and in providing a good education for the youngest pupils. However, there is still much to do to ensure similar value in raising academic standards for the infants and juniors.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

93. In order to raise standards across the curriculum, but most especially in English, mathematics, science and information and communication technology, the governors, headteacher and staff should:
- (1) improve the pace of pupils' learning by strengthening the teaching so that pupils know exactly what they need to do to improve and also how to do it;
(paragraphs 7, 8, 33, 34, 37, 39, 41, 117, 129, 139, 139, 150, 155, 176)
 - (2) strengthen the quality and effectiveness of strategic planning by :
 - using a critical analysis of pupils' strengths and weaknesses across the curriculum to match experiences and the use of time, staff, resources ever more closely to pupils' needs;
 - identifying more specific priorities for school improvement so that governors and staff are clear about the steps needed to achieve targets and their part in reaching them;(paragraphs 8, 9, 10, 33, 43, 69, 71, 83, 84, 130)
 - (3) ensure that subject coordinators take an increasingly active role in driving up standards by developing their leadership and management expertise and by providing them with the resources and time to carry out their subject improvement plans;
(paragraphs 14, 43, 84, 85, 147, 153, 157, 162, 167, 175, 190)
 - (4) raise pupils' levels of attendance and punctuality by analysing more rigorously the trends and patterns and developing further ways to work with parents, carers and pupils to heighten their awareness of the negative impact of absence on attainment.
(paragraphs 29, 64, 76, 83)
94. In drawing up their action plan, the governors may also wish to include the following minor issues for action:
- the poor range and number of learning resources, especially books;
(paragraphs 91, 84, 147, 157, 159)
 - the lack of a school library;
(paragraphs 90, 120)
 - the narrow provision to develop pupils' awareness of other cultures;
(paragraph 57)
 - the lack of a school finance audit;
(paragraph 89)

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	65
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	22

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Number	0	10	28	23	4	0	0
Percentage	0	15	43	35	6	0	0

The table gives the number and percentage of lessons observed in each of the seven categories used to make judgements about teaching. Care should be taken when interpreting these percentages as each lesson represents more than one percentage point.

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)	43	219
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	0	166

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs

	Nursery	YR - Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	0	1
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	0	58

English as an additional language

	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	4

Pupil mobility in the last school year

	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	12
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	31

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	8.2

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	2.5

National comparative data	5.6
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National comparative data	0.5
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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 2)

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2002	12	14	26

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	5	5	8
	Girls	11	11	12
	Total	16	16	20
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	62(72)	62(80)	77(80)
	National	84(84)	86(86)	90(91)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	6	8	9
	Girls	11	12	12
	Total	17	20	21
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	65(80)	77(80)	81(84)
	National	85(85)	89(89)	89(89)

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

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 2 (Year 6)

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2002	16	19	35

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	4	6	12
	Girls	9	9	14
	Total	13	15	26
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	37(63)	43(41)	74(72)
	National	75(75)	73(71)	86(87)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	9	10	9
	Girls	10	13	8
	Total	19	23	17
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	54(63)	66(45)	49(69)
	National	73(72)	74(74)	82(82)

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

Ethnic background of pupils**Exclusions in the last school year**

Categories used in the Annual School Census	No of pupils on roll	Number of fixed period exclusions	Number of permanent exclusions
White – British	206	33	2
White – Irish	2	0	0
White – any other White background	0	0	0
Mixed – White and Black Caribbean	2	0	0
Mixed – White and Black African	0	0	0
Mixed – White and Asian	2	0	0
Mixed – any other mixed background	0	0	0
Asian or Asian British - Indian	0	0	0
Asian or Asian British - Pakistani	0	0	0
Asian or Asian British – Bangladeshi	0	0	0
Asian or Asian British – any other Asian background	0	0	0
Black or Black British – Caribbean	1	0	0
Black or Black British – African	0	0	0
Black or Black British – any other Black background	0	0	0
Chinese	3	0	0
Any other ethnic group	3	0	0
No ethnic group recorded	0	0	0

The table refers to pupils of compulsory school age only. It gives the number of exclusions, 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)	11
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	19.9
Average class size	24

Education support staff: YR – Y6

Total number of education support staff	9
Total aggregate hours worked per week	285

Qualified teachers and support staff: nursery

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	1
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	43
Total number of education support staff	2
Total aggregate hours worked per week	50
Number of pupils per FTE adult	14

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Recruitment of teachers

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	4
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	4

Total number of vacant teaching posts (FTE)	2
Number of vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of a term or more (FTE)	2
Number of unfilled vacancies or vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of less than one term (FTE)	0

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Financial information

Financial year	2001/2
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	£
Total income	819,114
Total expenditure	736,088
Expenditure per pupil	2,741
Balance brought forward from previous year	-75,719
Balance carried forward to next year	7,307

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	262
Number of questionnaires returned	34

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	68	26	6	0	0
My child is making good progress in school.	50	38	12	0	0
Behaviour in the school is good.	50	18	24	6	3
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	41	38	12	0	9
The teaching is good.	56	29	3	3	9
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	38	47	9	6	0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	62	35	3	0	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	76	18	3	0	3
The school works closely with parents.	38	41	9	6	6
The school is well led and managed.	41	41	6	3	9
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	56	29	0	9	6
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	26	38	12	3	21

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

95. Children start their nursery experience when they turn three. They begin with half-day attendance and then stay the whole day before joining the reception class in September or in January, depending on when they are five.
96. On starting in the nursery, the children's attainment varies but for their age most of the children have limited knowledge, experience and skills, especially in language. All the children in the nursery and reception class make very good progress because of the consistently very good teaching and the wide range of well planned, stimulating activities. The majority of the children are on line to reach the standard expected by the end of the reception year in knowledge and understanding of the world, physical development and creative development. The children's speaking and listening skills improve markedly but they still have much to catch up in communication, language and literacy and in mathematical development. Many make good strides in their understanding of number but only the higher attaining children have started to read and write when they move into Year 1. In personal, social and emotional development, the children do very well. The level of maturity of many of the reception children is already above that expected for their age.
97. Since the last inspection there has been good improvement in what is provided for children in the nursery and reception year as:
- the quality of teaching has risen markedly and is now very good overall;
 - the governing body has appointed a very well qualified and effective coordinator;
 - the curriculum has been re-planned to give good consistency and continuity of experience to the end of the reception year;
 - there is now a high focus on the children learning through investigation and play;
 - information from observation and assessment of the children's progress is used systematically to plan activities that match the children's level of understanding;
 - staff are deployed very effectively to support the children's learning;
 - the action plan identifies relevant priorities for development, including ways to improve further the use of the outdoors and the range of outdoor play facilities;
 - the children are in an attractive environment – the purpose-built nursery is spacious and well appointed.

Personal, social and emotional development

98. The nursery and reception year staff are very skilful in how they plan and set up a very wide range of activities indoors and out to promote children's independence, interest and self-confidence. They share the same high expectations of the children's behaviour and emphasise praise and positive encouragement. As a result, the children thrive and show an increasing level of self-assurance and willingness to organise themselves. Central to this are the routines of the day, including having school dinner together, and the "signals" the staff use to gain the children's attention. Nursery children quickly learn when they must tidy away and come to the carpet. They listen carefully to the adults and watch intently when they are being shown what to do. The adults welcome the children's ideas and opinions and their smiles and reassuring comments such as, "I like the way you did that" and "Well done" reinforce the children's efforts and confidence in what they do.

99. In the nursery and reception class, the children are helped to choose from a range of activities that have been carefully set up by the staff with particular learning in mind. For example, the reception teacher reminds the children of what she expects them to do through comments such as, "Remember, I am looking to see if you can ...". Because they know what is expected of them, the children often persevere and concentrate for long periods of time. They learn to take turns and to share resources. Nursery children happily waited their turn to roll the sponge dice and listened carefully to the nursery nurse who explained "how to be a winner".
100. The teachers and support staff ensure that the children learn to take care of their own needs and to be responsible for certain jobs. The children who start the nursery learn quickly from the older nursery children how to handle the equipment and where things are kept. Their excitement and delight are obvious in coming in from outdoor play to "do their jobs" in the nursery room. They know exactly who is expected to do what and carry out their tasks with great seriousness and considerable efficiency. They show similar eagerness to take part in new experiences and show much delight in what they achieve. Older nursery children were very keen to show visitors their displayed paintings. The adults observe and listen carefully to the children and are quick to spot when individuals need particular support or a greater challenge. They are also very skilled in knowing when to allow the children to sort things out themselves. As a result, the children form good relationships with each other and the adults. They know where to go for help but are also highly self-sufficient and keen to be involved.

Communication, language and literacy

101. In the nursery and reception class, the children's learning is enhanced by the very high quality of the language used by all adults as they talk with the children or extend their understanding through sensitive questioning. Many of the children confidently voice their ideas although their speech is often difficult to understand. The adults plan and organise the activities so that the children hear the adults use, and are in turn encouraged to use, a wide range of words and expressions. Staff are sensitive to those children who are reluctant to speak and prompt those whose understanding is far greater than their ability to express themselves. The children competently use language to direct their own actions. For example, when playing in 'Grandma's cottage' they remembered and used phrases from the tale of 'Little Red Riding Hood' such as "All the better to see you with".
102. The nursery children develop an interest in books and reading as opportunities to read are part of nursery life. Words and pictures surround the children and the adults use them naturally in the course of activities, drawing children's attention to significant features such as initial letter shapes and sounds. The older nursery children already recognise and name the letters in their names. Although some reception year children are still in the early stages of matching sounds and letters, most delight in exploring simple words. They use their knowledge of initial sounds and the illustrations in books to help them work out new words. Many are just starting to read. Although school staff hear them read, their parents and carers do so infrequently. This lack of practice holds back the children's progress.
103. The higher attaining reception children are also starting to spell words on their own. For instance, two girls spent a long time compiling the message on a 'Wanted' poster by using words on the wall and having a go at spelling words. One child's 'littul' was a good attempt at 'little'. As there are frequent sessions for the nursery children to

practise the letters of the alphabet, most of the reception children produce well-formed letters.

104. The children's steady, systematic progress in understanding and using letters and sounds is closely linked to the good skills of the adults when they share books and games with the class and groups of children. The nursery children are enjoying books about bears, particularly stories with sentences where they can predict the rhyme. The more confident children offer their ideas about the story and relate what they hear to events in their own life. In the reception class, the children much enjoyed a game where they had to give the initial letters of objects. All did well as the teacher prompted the hesitant children by mouthing the letters and also by limiting the choices, as in "Now is it s or m?". Despite this interest, the children do not spontaneously spend time in the book corners as a free choice activity unless an adult is already there. However, when they can listen to a recorded story, they are more enthusiastic. The good provision, teaching and learning means that a significant number of children will be close to meeting the standard expected at the end of the reception year.

Mathematical development

105. The teaching is good and the provision is well planned. The children learn much about number, shape, measures and their use through games and practical activities, including baking. In the nursery and reception rooms, the children are drawn to attractively set out areas with challenges and games to explore number and patterns. As a result, the children see mathematics as fun and develop in confidence in using number. They enjoy number rhymes, chanting numbers and counting items as part of what they do. The adults make good use of every opportunity to reinforce this. For example, from starting in the nursery the children know that only a certain number of children are allowed in some areas. The number of aprons or chairs helps to reinforce the children's awareness of low numbers. The nursery teacher helped the children to count how many were in the line to go to the hall and the reception teacher talked about the need for the children to space themselves out around a parachute.
106. The adults encourage the children to use mathematical language to order and describe everyday items by length, size, colour or shape. The children gradually acquire a familiarity and understanding of mathematical terms and also of written numbers through simple situations such as a number card game. Over the nursery and reception years, the adults introduce increasingly higher numbers to reflect the stage of the children's development. While the younger nursery children are counting and ordering numbers to five, the older reception children are working with number to ten and counting to 20 and above. The children often volunteer to count aloud and show how they have worked out their answers. Over the reception year, the children learn about addition through investigating and experimenting with objects. For example, in their play, the children commented on needing "one more" to make up a tea table and a reward of '20 hundred one pounds' as a suitable reward for catching the wolf in the tale of 'Little Red Riding Hood'.
107. The staff make good use of daily outdoor play to encourage the children to count and use number and mathematical knowledge. The nursery children counted as they climbed steps and realised they could make a tunnel if they placed tyres exactly side by side.

Knowledge and understanding of the world

108. Many of the children have had very limited experience outside their home when they start in the nursery. Well chosen themes, such as 'All About Me' provide staff with opportunities to involve the children in a wide range of activities to help them learn about themselves, their families and where they live. A strong feature of the very good teaching is the flair shown by the staff in choosing activities that fire the children's interest and prompt their use of new words and phrases. The children were fascinated when looking at photographs of themselves as babies, and they returned constantly to the display of clothes, toys and photographs which led to much chatter, discussion and questions. The adults made good use of this to ask the children about what they saw and thought. Similarly, the reception teacher helped the children to examine their eyes by using a mirror. She encouraged them to look carefully, saying "What do you think? Have another look!" to ensure they selected the most appropriate colour when drawing what they could see.
109. The staff are adept at achieving a good balance between time for the children to explore on their own and time for adult led activities when the children are introduced to new ways of looking at things. For example, by washing baby clothes and hanging them up to dry, the children saw what happened over time and were able to repeat the sequence on their own later. When baking, the adults work hard to develop a sense of enquiry. They help the children to discuss the ingredients needed, to think how they look and feel, to note how they change as they are mixed together, and to predict what is going to happen. The children also get to eat the results and give their opinions.
110. As part of their work about 'Little Red Riding Hood' the reception year children used the computer to draw their own version of the story. They used the mouse to open up a graphics program and used different tools to select pictures, fill in colour and draw paths. These were uneven and twisting because of the children's shaky mouse control, but the children were very proud of what they had learnt to do and many showed very well developed information and communication technology skills for their age.

Physical development

111. The secure outdoor space provides a good-sized area for the nursery and reception children to explore the use of wheeled toys, to climb, balance, swing and develop a range of skills using balls, bats and quoits. The staff also make good use of the indoor space to set out floor and table activities and ensure that the children develop their skills in moving confidently and controlling their actions. They work out carefully what they are encouraging the children to learn and identify where the adult teaching focus will be. Thus some of the youngest children successfully played skittles as an adult showed them how to throw the ball safely, how to set up the skittles and how to aim their throw. The adult's comments ensured the children persevered and were increasingly successful in knocking down skittles. This typifies the hard work of the adults to improve the children's skills and their understanding of the need to be safe. During snack time the adults also refer to healthy eating and good hygiene.
112. The adults make careful observations of the children's developing skills and sometimes intervene to pose a higher challenge but also allow the children to use the equipment in their own way. For example, older nursery girls lined up the skittles to

make a wall and younger nursery boys made up their own sequence of balancing on the top of a barrel before jumping off and then back on again. The reception children show a more mature level of skill in using the wheeled toys and equipment. They keep to the demarcated area and confidently steer and manoeuvre.

113. The children learn to manage a range of tools effectively as the adults show them what to do. One nursery child was helped to change his hold on a paintbrush to give him greater control. As he dipped his brush in the paint he modified his grip as had been suggested. The reception children also handle scissors and pencils competently because of the good teaching in how to handle tools properly.

Creative development

114. A striking feature of the nursery and reception room is the display of the children's own creative efforts. These show that the adults have been effective in introducing the children to different ways of using and applying paint and other media. The individuality of the children's creative responses also reveals the differing skills in representing their ideas. The staff keep careful records of the children's progress and competence and match the activities and their expectations accordingly. In the children's first weeks in the nursery, the staff use the children's natural fascination with paint to develop and reinforce the children's recognition of colours. They then move on to teaching specific techniques and skills to help the children work on their own. For example, the teaching assistant showed the reception children how to mix white and black with red to make different shades. Having practised this the children went on to replicate the front cover of the book 'Little Red Riding Hood' which had several different red items. Their skill and attention to detail was more typical of the work of older children.
115. The children love music and rhymes and songs are a very important part of their daily routine in the nursery and reception class. The children have a good ear and pick up tunes quickly. They recited action rhymes from heart and sang an impressive range of songs, tunefully and sweetly, in front of the other classes and parents. The nursery children already have clear favourites and ask if they can sing them. They like best those songs that have a strong rhythm and they move in time to the beat. All like using the percussion instruments and the younger nursery children know how to beat and shake them. At such times, the adults encourage the children to listen and appreciate the differences in types of sound. This is reinforced when the nursery children sometimes work to a background of quiet, soothing recorded music.
116. The adults set up inviting role-play areas to encourage the children to use and rehearse their knowledge and skills in their own way. The staff ensure that these experiences stay fresh and challenging by regularly introducing a new focus or different resources and props. In the reception room, the children wore a wolf mask or a red coat as they re-enacted the tale of 'Little Red Riding Hood'. When an adult joined their play, her comments helped the children to use more key phrases from the story. In the nursery, the children often reproduce scenes from home. Two girls selected dresses, hats and shoes and as they put them on, they picked up a baby each and then said, "Let's go down the pub".

ENGLISH

117. Standards are below average at the end of Year 2 and well below average at the end of Year 6. There has been little improvement in standards since the last inspection. The reading and writing skills of the current Year 6 class are more typical of much

younger pupils. Only the work of the higher attaining pupils comes close to an acceptable standard for 11 year olds and no pupil is doing really well. School evidence shows that pupils' progress has been affected adversely by changes in staffing and limited resources, especially to promote reading and to develop teachers' expertise. The planned support in the spring of 2003 from the Local Education Authority literacy consultant is a good chance to share effective practice and to identify exactly where the thrust to raise standards is best placed.

118. The pupils' limited speaking skills partly account for their low reading and writing performance. Many have good listening skills, particularly when their interest is caught by stories or lively presentations. Year 3 boys, who had found it hard to sustain their concentration, listened attentively to the teacher's dramatic telling of a tale about pirates.
119. Many pupils, however, find it hard to describe situations or to express their thoughts clearly. In all year groups, the pupils chat easily but they use a narrow range of vocabulary. Few Year 6 pupils express themselves maturely or give well-reasoned explanations. They rarely justify their views by reference to specific examples. This is aggravated by pupils' limited general knowledge. Four Year 2 pupils, discussing weather words, insisted that the word "fog" was "frog" because they did not know the meaning of "fog". Junior pupils generally struggle to remember technical terms and, therefore, find it hard to talk about language. Year 5 pupils needed much prompting to recall the features of an effective recount but higher attaining pupils were then able to suggest a selection of relevant time phrases, including "soon after that". When the teachers' questioning and prompting are strong, pointed and explicit, the pupils lift their performance. Year 1 pupils were keen to help the teacher replace missing words in the story "Peace at last". Their suggestions showed a good sense of the right type of word, but the teacher missed chances to get the pupils to explain how they had decided what the word might be.
120. Such missed chances explain why pupils often look to adults to help with new words when they read. The infant pupils enjoy reading and are keen to read to an adult. The older juniors are more reluctant and show little enthusiasm for reading or any preference for particular authors or book types. They have had little experience of a wide range of literature and many read infrequently. The coordinator has rightly identified the need to rekindle pupils' interest in reading. Events such as 'Book Week', a new reading scheme with stories and characters the younger pupils like, and toys for the younger pupils to read to, are all helping to heighten the profile of reading in the school. However, not all classrooms invite pupils to read or look at books, and despite the move to a new building, there is still no dedicated area for a library to develop pupils' study skills and use of non-fiction material.
121. The infant pupils get off to a slow, steady start in reading. They use their knowledge of letter sounds and patterns to try new words and the higher attaining readers recognise a lot of words. Too often, however, they do not understand what the words mean and gloss over them as they read. Although some parents hear their children read frequently, too many do not and pupils' reading diaries often show long stretches of time when they have not read to an adult. The limited time for pupils to rehearse their reading accounts in no small part for their slow progress. Many pupils could do far better. Year 2 pupils responded positively to suggestions on how to read with more expression. They gained in confidence as they changed their voice for characters and excitedly pointed out exclamation marks.

122. At group reading times, the adults do not always exact enough from the pupils or emphasise specific teaching points. Not enough is being done in the junior years to teach and reinforce reading strategies, especially in reading “between the lines”. As a result, the pupils find it hard to infer, to talk about stylistic features and to cope with non-fiction text. This affects the quality of their work across the curriculum. In a history lesson, although higher attaining Year 6 pupils knew to use index pages to help them locate information on Ancient Greece, average and lower attaining pupils needed considerable help to identify key words and take notes.
123. The quality of pupils’ writing is well below average. The school’s display of writing from each year group sets a good example of what pupils can achieve in quality of content and presentation. Compared with the junior pupils’ writing, that of the infant pupils is closer to the standard expected for their age although too many boys lag behind. Year 1 pupils are starting to write independently but their hesitancy often means they get little done. Year 2 pupils show a growing understanding of how to structure stories and instructions, and also how to punctuate sentences. However, their work is inconsistent especially in handwriting.
124. The junior pupils show little enthusiasm for writing and little pride in their work. Year 6 pupils’ handwriting is generally poor and reflects a legacy of unsatisfactory teaching and learning. Regular sessions to practise letter joins and to set out work neatly are beginning to have a positive impact although some pupils continue to cross out and fail to use a ruler properly to underline. Accuracy in spelling is also improving. The focus on learning how to spell the most frequent words is evident in pupils’ growing self-confidence in all year groups. Lower attaining Year 6 pupils were very proud of their humorous mnemonic “Nits in giant’s head tickle” to remember the word “night”.
125. There are other indications of rising standards. Pupils are beginning to think about their literacy targets and to take more care in their work. They respond well to praise and encouragement and work co-operatively with support staff. Short, brisk sessions using materials from national support programmes are enabling pupils with special educational needs in reading and writing to make satisfactory progress towards the targets in their individual plans.
126. The coordinator’s very good teaching and personal enthusiasm is prompting Year 4 pupils to use language more confidently. They made good strides in understanding about “powerful verbs” as they read a play script because of the coordinator’s explicit explanations and lively demonstrations. Pupils understood what they had to do and were highly engaged. They worked hard throughout the 60-minute lesson and, at the end, they gave clear accounts of what they had learnt. Year 1 pupils also find learning fun. A teacher’s effective strategy of getting the pupils to tell her what to write ensured that they confidently spelt out common words and were quick to comment, “You need a full stop” when she stopped writing a sentence.
127. Information from the school’s procedures to track progress show that pupils make good progress over their time in the infant years. From a low start the majority of pupils reach the level expected for seven year olds in reading and writing. Nevertheless, more than a third of pupils start Year 3 only just reading and writing. Current teaching in Years 2 and 3 is not giving enough focus to helping the pupils realise what they need to do and how to use their knowledge to best effect. As a result, some pupils are underachieving. The uneven picture of progress in both the infant and junior years means that standards remain low. While the teaching is satisfactory overall for the infant and junior pupils, the instances of good teaching are

not widespread enough to ensure that pupils in each year group make up the knowledge and skills lost in previous years and lift their attainment.

128. Part of the problem lies in gaps in teachers' subject knowledge and in their expertise in leading an effective literacy hour. In many lessons, the whole class sessions were more structured and effective than the group tasks that followed. Teachers make good use of talk partners to encourage pupils to share ideas and ploys such as puppets and word/phrase cards to gain the pupils' interest and keep them involved. The activities often motivate the pupils, such as Year 2 pupils writing alternative lines in a poem. However, the prime weakness lies in the lack of emphasis on showing the pupils what strategies to use and how to apply what they know.
129. Occasionally, the class sessions are too long or too much dominated by the teacher so that the pupils, more quickly the boys and the lower attaining, lose their concentration. Similarly, time is often lost when materials are given out. For some older juniors the task of writing the date and title of the work could take up to ten minutes and meant they did not complete what they had to do. In some cases, time was also lost copying out sentences when pupils could have inserted words on worksheets or used word cards to form sentences. In many lessons, the teachers did not give a clear focus to the class session at the end. Pupils often read out or show what they have done but the teachers do not always ask the pupils to explain how they have done it.
130. As a leading literacy teacher the coordinator has much knowledge and expertise to share with the staff. She has used her short time as coordinator to identify key areas for improvement and to plan how proven practices from other schools can be introduced to develop pupils' interest in books. However, the literacy action plan is too general to ensure that the proposals will raise standards or the quality of teaching and learning.

MATHEMATICS

131. Standards are below average and have fallen since the last inspection. However, there are signs of positive change in pupils' attitudes to mathematics and their facility with number. These changes reflect an improvement in the range of resources and in the quality of teaching which is now good.
132. Too few Year 6 pupils reach the level expected of 11 year olds in using number and other aspects of mathematics. Only the higher attaining pupils are working at the level expected for their age. Factors that partly explain the situation are the gaps in their previous learning, their poor retention of information and their poor reading skills which often deter them from reading number problems carefully, and more importantly, from interpreting written instructions correctly. Most Year 2 pupils reach the level expected for their age, but the lower attaining pupils do not. This keeps the overall standard down. Many Year 2 pupils have only a basic knowledge of number when they enter Year 3. However, Year 2 pupils are making satisfactory progress and many do well over time from a low start in the nursery.
133. The infant pupils are making satisfactory progress overall and often good progress in lessons because of much good teaching. Although the same concepts are taught to all, the teachers pitch the task to reflect the pupils' ability and make good use of support staff to work with groups of pupils. This is helping to accelerate the pupils' learning. However, the average and lower attaining pupils do not always apply what they have been taught and often show little understanding of what they are doing. For

example, two pupils found it hard to accept that a metre rule measured the same distance as one turn on a metre wheel.

134. On the other hand, Year 2 higher attaining pupils know about number techniques such as doubling and are more confident in mentally handling and manipulating number to 20. Their attainment is typical of pupils of their age. They know about hundreds, tens and units, recognise odd and even numbers and know multiplication facts relating to two, five and ten, but they are not always challenged enough. For example, in work on time, chances were missed for them to compare digital and analogue times. Similarly, few investigations in number were seen. A scrutiny of work from last year showed that some work by average and lower attaining pupils was unfinished. As then, many pupils reverse numbers and only the higher attaining pupils set out their work tidily. This also characterises the work of the juniors where few of the older pupils show pride in what they do.
135. A scrutiny of last year's work shows that pupils' progress was uneven, and in some cases unsatisfactory, during Years 3 to 6. Although the teaching seen was frequently good, most pupils are not making up ground fast enough to reach the level expected for their age. Pupils are learning about number facts and how to deal with number but in too many instances they are a year behind pupils of the same age in other schools. Older pupils struggle with mathematical terms. For example, only one Year 5 pupil offered the term "axis" although most could talk about information and how it was laid out in a bar graph. The teacher's attempts to get the Year 5 pupils to compare the effectiveness of line and bar graphs was thwarted by the pupils' inability to express themselves clearly and explicitly. It became clear that too many did not understand terms such as "vertical".
136. As at the time of the last inspection, pupils have positive attitudes in lessons, even though many find mathematics difficult. Many junior pupils said it is their favourite subject and commented that they now feel safe to answer questions without fear of being ridiculed when they get it wrong. This growing interest in mathematics is typified by the good attendance at the weekly tables club for Year 5 pupils. Although they are rewarded with badges and certificates for achievement in learning multiplication tables, many said it is the desire to improve rather than the wish to gain rewards that attracts them.
137. The work of the current Year 6 pupils shows that they are making slow progress despite many opportunities to practise addition, subtraction, multiplication and division. On the other hand, the higher attaining pupils have too few opportunities to use and extend their number knowledge in practical situations. This is a weakness in otherwise strong teaching. In most of the lessons seen in the junior classes, brisk teaching and a focus on mathematical vocabulary helped pupils to learn well. Only in Year 3 did the teaching fall short. In this lesson, inadequate planning meant the challenge was not high enough for some and too much for others and not enough time was given to ensuring that the pupils realised the key points that would help them next time.
138. The majority of Year 6 pupils have not developed sound strategies for manipulating numbers mentally and do not have a secure understanding of addition, subtraction, multiplication and division. A minority know multiplication facts to ten and only the higher attaining pupils can multiply four-digit by two-digit numbers, add and subtract decimals up to two decimal places and carry out the process of long division and multiplication. Many Year 6 pupils have sound working knowledge of shape, space and measures but difficulty in recalling names and metric terms. While the support of

adults helps the lower attaining pupils, and those with special educational needs to succeed in their work, it often means that pupils do not remember key terms as the adults tell them what they need to know and do.

139. The teachers' subject knowledge is at least satisfactory and often good. They are often effective in engaging pupils' interest through games and items such as number fans from the 'toolbox' in each classroom. Year 4 pupils much enjoyed putting clues together to answer "What's my shape?" quiz cards. In the most effective lessons, the teachers used well the discussion at the end of the lesson to reinforce and extend the pupils' learning. This is not carried over into the marking of pupils' work. Much work is simply ticked and left devoid of comment. In too few cases do the teachers write encouraging comments and advice to help the pupils improve. The use of computers to support pupils' learning varies and is minimal in the junior classes.
140. The very strong leadership and management of the coordinator, who is also the deputy headteacher, is setting a clear direction. The coordinator has successfully improved the pupils' view of mathematics through events such as the mathematics day, and set an excellent precedent in using records of pupils' progress to identify common areas of difficulty and slow progress. Much thought has been given to the best way to support the oldest pupils while also raising the attainment of the younger ones. As a result, extra support will be given to Year 6 for a longer period than in most schools, with the coordinator directly involved. This provides a good opportunity to boost the achievement of the higher attaining pupils as well as raising the attainment of the others.

SCIENCE

141. Standards are average at the end of Year 2 but below average at the end of Year 6. As in the 2002 test results, most Year 2 pupils are attaining the level expected for their age. Inspection evidence shows, however, that many of the present Year 6 pupils are below the level expected for their age. Standards in Years 3, 4 and 5 are satisfactory.
142. Standards have improved in the junior classes since the last inspection and all pupils now make satisfactory progress in the development of enquiry skills and scientific knowledge because of good, structured teaching, a firm emphasis on practical and investigative work and the use of a good range of resources. Year 3 pupils, investigating how shadows are formed, benefited from using chiffon, cellophane and tissue paper. The teachers plan lessons with clear targets and give due consideration to building on what pupils already know. In a very good lesson, Year 4 pupils deepened their understanding of the properties of liquids because the teacher guided them to recall and summarise the outcomes of previous experiments on dissolving and liquefying solids. This made a useful starting point to discuss ways to separate solids and to find out whether the process could be reversed. The pupils worked enthusiastically and sensibly in threes with much questioning about what they observed, such as, "Why doesn't the sugar stay in the filter paper?".
143. The teaching for the infant pupils is satisfactory and they build on the skills gained through practical investigations in the Foundation Stage. They are well led by the teachers in how to predict before finding out. In discussing hair and eye colour, Year 1 pupils collected information about themselves to find out whether all people with blond hair have blue eyes. Although most predicted correctly, many had difficulty in giving their reasons. The work of last year's pupils in Year 2 shows they acquired a sound range of basic scientific facts and learnt how to write a simple report with labelled diagrams.

144. The practical nature of most lessons inspires an enthusiastic and lively response from the pupils. They often concentrate hard on what they do. Year 6 pupils willingly repeated their experiments on dissolving bicarbonate of soda in warm water to check that the strategies they were using were appropriate. They also realised the need to check the accuracy of their reckonings. Year 5 pupils similarly were keen to see what happened when vinegar and oil were mixed and also when air was pumped through a syringe. This helped many pupils to see that some liquids separated again after mixing and that gases can be compressed in a contained area. One pupil, drawing on what he had been told at home, went on to relate this to how compressed air is used in brakes. In this lesson, as in others for the juniors, the teacher challenged the pupils' thinking which prompted good learning.
145. The high quality support of classroom assistants ensures that pupils with special educational needs take full part and their ideas are valued. Pupils are encouraged to ask their own questions. Consequently, Year 5 pupils made good use of their visit to a science museum to ask the scientists about solids, gases and liquids. The higher attaining pupils had gained much from the visit and confidently described what they had seen and done. They were amazed by some outcomes; for example, the immediate freezing of a flower as it was immersed in liquid nitrogen. Lower attaining pupils, however, found it very difficult to recall details of the visit.
146. A good feature of some lessons is the additional challenge for higher attaining pupils. For example, a group of Year 6 pupils worked together to decide on the variables to ensure that a test was fair. A weakness, however, is the low standard expected of pupils' recorded work which is often very untidy.
147. The coordinator provides satisfactory leadership and has drawn on the guidance of the local education authority science advisor to develop her understanding of science teaching and to give science a higher profile in the curriculum. She is aware of the need to make more use of the local environment and to use information and communication technology as part of teaching and learning. Despite the recent purchase of resources, the school lacks some of the software and equipment needed, such as sensors, to enable the pupils to control and monitor their investigations using the computer. While the teachers keep a record of what the pupils have done, there is little that identifies how well they are doing for their age, especially in their ability to carry out a scientific enquiry. As yet, the targets set for pupils do not always reflect their individual needs.

ART AND DESIGN

148. Standards have fallen since the previous inspection and are now unsatisfactory. The work of pupils in Years 2 and 6 is not consistently of the quality expected for their age. The school displays pupils' work in an attractive way and Year 6 pupils commented that they enjoyed seeing their work on the walls. Although current displays do not feature work of high quality, they do engender a climate of achievement in which better work can be developed.
149. Most of the displayed work is two-dimensional using pencils, pastels, charcoal, crayons and paint but evidence from last year shows pupils occasionally use natural materials, fabric and modelling media including paper pulp. Too much of the work lacks detail, tone and originality. Pupils learn techniques but have little chance to explore and develop their ideas. The elements of craft and design are barely evident.

150. In the infant years, art and design is frequently linked with other subjects. Year 1 pupils, for example, illustrated the story of 'This is the Bear' read in literacy hours, and Year 2 pupils made cardboard Greek masks and designed pots as part of their history theme. Such work does not always link well with the systematic teaching of skills and pupils' progress is also unsystematic throughout the school. Although the teaching in some lessons is good, it is unsatisfactory in the infants and juniors. The teachers do not all have the skills and knowledge of art and design to develop pupils' work on a broad front. The coordinator recognises that not all of the teachers feel sufficiently competent to teach unfamiliar techniques to the pupils and the development of teachers' skills is a priority in the school action plan.
151. The pupils like art and design. They enjoy the practical nature of it but are often more interested in getting things done quickly than in trying to achieve a good product. Year 5 pupils, fashioning a paper frame, lacked the careful control needed to produce a precise piece of work. This was also true of Year 6 pupils' work during a workshop. The pupils responded very enthusiastically to the idea of using umbrellas to create an imp, known locally as a Boggart. They worked co-operatively on a range of challenging activities but were keen to complete the task quickly rather than aim for finesse. A climate change is needed for pupils to value quality rather than the speed of execution.
152. In a good lesson seen, Year 3 pupils made marked progress in learning to use stippling to print a pattern. The fact that there were only 15 pupils enabled the teacher to give much individual support in cutting out a stencil safely and holding the stippling brush correctly. The teacher's high expectations of the pupils and encouragement to try wet and dry paint meant the pupils took their time, experimented and created over-prints with block prints made previously. They were very pleased with their work and confidently explained what they had done to the rest of the class on their return. The teacher also made good use of information and communication technology by asking two pupils to use a computer graphics program to produce a similar stippled effect.
153. Weaknesses in subject leadership and management are holding back progress in raising standards. Much has recently been done to organise resources and to update curriculum guidance. The policy now reflects the latest national guidelines and the coordinator has begun to monitor teachers' planning. However, little has been done to help the teachers improve the quality of the pupils' work. The school's involvement in projects led by staff from North City Arts is a good initiative to widen the curriculum and introduce the pupils to the work of contemporary artists and craftspeople.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

154. There was insufficient evidence to make a secure judgement about standards at the end of Years 2 and 6, but from work seen, few pupils reach the standard expected for their age in all aspects of the subject.
155. Pupils' progress is limited. Shortcomings in standards and teaching judged in the previous inspection are still valid. As then, the focus lies more on the completion of products rather than the systematic development of pupils' skills in designing, making and evaluating what they do. Pupils' ability to evaluate the quality of their work remains low and many lack commitment to good quality work. Year 6 pupils, who last year made an open box with a cam that made the figure move up and down, found it hard to report on their work especially as they followed the teacher's instructions to make one like hers. Such work reflects the absence of a clear school approach to teaching pupils about the steps in the design process. For example, there is little

evidence of pupils looking at or disassembling items to see how they have been put together or of pupils recording the different stages in their work using diagrams, sketches, accounts or photographs. Chances are missed to encourage pupils to apply and use their literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology skills.

156. Current work by Year 2 pupils to create Joseph's coat of many colours is giving pupils the opportunity to use a computer graphics program. However, pupils have only a vague idea of what is a design. This partial knowledge was also evident in the work of other pupils. Year 1 pupils talked about flaps and moving parts in books but were so eager to put together characters that moved based on the story of 'Farmer Duck', that they rushed the work. As a result, many took little care in cutting out pieces. The teacher did not do enough to focus the pupils' attention on how to improve their skills or the techniques possible. Year 3 pupils, looking at different forms of packaging, cut out nets, folded them and then had to decide how best to make up their box. As many had folded the paper inadequately – few had scored the folds - pupils found it hard to keep their box together. In a lesson for Year 4 pupils, however, there was a clear focus on developing pupils' skills in measuring, cutting and combining materials. In this short, productive session, pupils practised making an expanding shape using split pins and explored the potential of using a hidden wheel, both of which they could use later to make a pop-up book.
157. Subject leadership and management are unsatisfactory. The coordinator has identified relevant aspects for development but is not actively driving up standards. Although national guidelines for the content of design and technology have been adopted, they are not accompanied by guidance on how to teach the subject. Neither do they make clear the levels of skill expected of pupils by the end of Year 6. The school is short of tools as well as different materials including wood, plastic and different papers. This restricts the development of pupils' skills in selecting tools, materials and techniques.

GEOGRAPHY

158. Pupils' attainment by the end of Years 2 and 6 is below the level expected for their age. Standards of written work at the age of 11 are low. There is little extended work and the frequent use of worksheets inhibits the pupils' opportunities to express their own ideas.
159. In the previous inspection report, standards were satisfactory. Although these have not been maintained, there is evidence in lessons seen and in the work on display to indicate progress is satisfactory overall and good in some lessons. The quality of teaching is also satisfactory overall and sometimes good. Improvements in standards, however, are inhibited by the limited opportunities for fieldwork and the superficial study of many aspects, particularly in Years 3 to 6. Further barriers to progress are the very limited resources. Many books and atlases are outdated and the school has little to support local fieldwork.
160. Pupils in the infant years develop some understanding of where they live. However, the very little work done last year indicates the pupils' learning is shallow. Pupils compare different locations, including a country village and a fictional Scottish island, but their limited experience of visiting other localities inhibits their learning. In a well-planned lesson, Year 2 pupils made good progress because they were highly interested in finding out about real places around the world. The teacher's questions, such as, "How do you know it is hot?" encouraged the pupils to look for clues in

pictures. One pupil responded, "It must be hot as there are not clouds in the sky. It's very blue". Through such enquiry, the pupils realised that seaside locations in different countries share similar features.

161. The quality of pupils' work in Years 3 and 4 on world climates is poor and does not reflect a real understanding of climatic conditions. Pupils' preference to talk rather than write is sometimes used to good effect. Year 4 pupils enthusiastically recalled their telephone call to a travel agency to find out the cost of flying to Chembakolli and most were able to list verbally differences between the Indian village and Blackley. Year 5 pupils, having seen a practical demonstration of how to filter water, went on to explain well the reasons for water pollution and ways it might be purified. However, many had difficulty in understanding how humans affect the environment through their actions. This is partly because the pupils have a limited understanding of geographical terms and concepts. The teachers are placing good emphasis on introducing key terms and Year 2 pupils made good progress in understanding 'secondary resources' and 'overseas locations' as they were explained clearly.
162. There are weaknesses in subject leadership and management. The coordinator has good subject knowledge and is aware of the areas for development. Key aspects lie in the need for guidance for the teachers in how to promote pupils' learning, a more coherent programme to develop pupils' mapping skills, and agreed procedures to track pupils' progress and levels of attainment.

HISTORY

163. Standards by the end of Year 2 and Year 6 are unsatisfactory. Pupils are not reaching the level expected for their age and standards are lower than at the time of the last inspection. History has not been a high priority for the school and not enough has been done to ensure that pupils acquire the skills of historical enquiry as well as facts about different periods in time.
164. A scrutiny of pupils' books shows a very limited range of recorded work. Much is simply the filling in of missing words on worksheets and there is little evidence of sustained study. Much work is unfinished and is not always marked. In some instances the teacher marked work of low quality as being 'super work'. In other cases, when pupils make patterns and draw artefacts, the content is more akin to art rather than history.
165. In lessons seen, however, pupils made mostly satisfactory progress and the teaching was often quite strong in helping them to find out about the past. The teacher's collection of old toys was a successful strategy to gain Year 1 pupils' interest and promote a discussion. Some showed good observational skills in picking out similarities and differences. As the teacher posed questions about how they knew the toy dog was old, the pupils began to understand how objects from the past can provide information. A visitor significantly developed their understanding through a very informative presentation of historical toys. For example, pupils learned of the simplicity of old toys compared with those today and how many were often made by family members. Year 6 pupils also made good attempts to research the differences between the cultures of Athens and Sparta. The teacher's good organisation of resources, including a CD-ROM, ensured all pupils were productive in finding key facts and made progress in learning how to access information.
166. As yet, pupils do not make consistent progress in developing their skills in historical interpretation and enquiry. This is partly because of their poor skills in reading and

writing. Chances are missed to develop pupils' literacy skills through the history curriculum and to raise pupils' ability to explain their findings to other members of the class.

167. Curriculum planning has improved since the previous inspection. National guidelines have been organised for each year group and this has helped to ensure the coverage of all required elements. The coordinator has recognised the need to adapt the content to match the attainment levels of the pupils and to ensure that there is a higher emphasis on learning through practical activities. The management of the subject is satisfactory although there are too few opportunities to exercise a leadership role. Resources are poor in quality and insufficient to meet the requirements of the curriculum.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

168. As at the time of the last inspection, Year 2 pupils are working at an appropriate level for their age. However, at the end of Year 6, standards have fallen and are now unsatisfactory. The school does not meet fully National Curriculum requirements as junior pupils have very little experience of using information and communication technology to control and monitor events.
169. The work seen of the Year 6 pupils indicates they will not reach the required standards as they have a deficit of skills, knowledge and understanding from previous learning that hinders their progress. They, and other junior pupils, do not have sufficient time using computers to make up for missed experiences, especially in the use of the keyboard. Most Year 6 pupils find it hard to word process as they are not familiar with the keyboard. Their one-fingered typing slows their work rate and they also lack basic knowledge in how to save their work. They quickly picked up and used simple routines including highlighting, underlining and boldening text but their skills are too low for them to be an effective tool for learning in other subjects.
170. Year 2 pupils are competent in the basic skills. They know how to click on different icons to select and change tools as they create pictures on screen. However, not all are sure how to retrieve or save their work. This also typifies work in other year groups. The junior pupils are learning about different functions, such as creating and interpreting simple spreadsheets, and how to change font size and type. However, standards and the rate of pupils' learning vary from class to class, reflecting the level of the teachers' expertise in teaching information and communication technology skills and in ensuring that pupils make the best use of their time on computers. Although just satisfactory overall, the quality of teaching ranges from unsatisfactory to very good.
171. Two common weaknesses are the over-expectation of what the pupils know. In lessons, the teachers often tried to cover too much in the time and pupils did not always perfect one stage before they moved onto another. This meant that lower attaining pupils became over dependent on others to show them what to do or lost interest.
172. Pupils made the most progress when the teachers:
- limited the amount of knowledge or new skills to the time available;
 - ensured that pupils' prior learning was recalled and reviewed, especially the basic routines of saving and retrieving;
 - demonstrated the skills and processes that the pupils were to learn;

- had effective strategies to manage the pupils' enthusiasm and behaviour. One good ploy was to ask the pupils to turn off their monitors during demonstrations;
 - 'hid' parts of programs so that pupils' attention was focussed on specific aspects;
 - made good use of the technical assistant's expertise;
 - monitored the pupils' time on the computers so that each pupil had adequate hands-on experience.
173. Improvement since the last inspection has been unsatisfactory and slow. It is only recently that the school set up a computer suite and increased its range of information and communication technology equipment. The teachers have not yet been fully trained in how to teach the pupils to use it, but changes in teaching staff have strengthened the range of information and communication technology expertise. Many of the staff now use information and communication technology to produce their own teaching and learning resources, and the infant pupils regularly use computers in the classroom as well as having lessons, like the juniors, in the suite. However, the improvements have not yet had a significant impact on the work of the junior pupils.
174. Several shortcomings identified in the last inspection still remain, particularly the minimal use of information and communication technology in English, mathematics and science and the lack of information from assessment to identify where there are gaps in pupils' learning.
175. The system of two coordinators is not as effective and efficient as it could be and current weaknesses in subject leadership and management are hindering the pace of improvement. Not enough has been done to monitor the quality of teaching and learning and to share good practice especially in pupils' use of classroom computers and other information and communication technology equipment, including the camera and tape recorders. The development plans for this school year include action to deal with many of these aspects. The coordinators recognise the need also to provide an additional scheme of work to bridge the gap between pupils' actual level of skill and that needed to enable them to profit from the national scheme adopted.

MUSIC

176. Standards in music are unsatisfactory and have fallen since the previous inspection when they were judged to be good. Pupils are not reaching the standard expected for their age by the end of Years 2 and 6. This is partly because, although the quality of teaching is satisfactory in lessons, the teachers have limited expertise and pupils, especially the older juniors, have significant gaps in their knowledge and skills. An exception, however, is the good quality of the playing of steel pans by some of the older junior pupils. They learn to follow simple notation, remember complex musical phrases and play with a good sense of expression and rhythm.
177. Most Year 6 pupils have little awareness of composers, musical styles and how music is produced. They find it hard to appraise what they hear and have very poor knowledge of musical terms. Few remembered the terms "chord" and "drone" which had been central to their lesson. However, they, like pupils throughout the school, enjoy performing music and are keen to play but they often ignore their teacher's conducting or verbal instructions. Pupils enjoy singing. Year 6 boys and girls were equally enthusiastic in singing a rhythmic chant and several attended the lunchtime choir session to sing songs by Madonna and Celine Dion with younger pupils. In assemblies, pupils sing with much gusto to taped accompaniment and know a good range of modern hymns and songs.

178. The extensive range of steel pans, drums, xylophones and glockenspiels reflects the school's former focus on public performances. In contrast, there is a limited range of percussion and other instruments to develop the pupils' awareness of how they are played and how their sounds can be combined. Junior pupils have had very little experience of recording music or of using information and communication technology software to compose and analyse sounds. They are not used to explaining their own ideas nor working to improve their work. Nevertheless, when encouraged they try hard and achieve well. Pupils learning to play the clarinet and flute played confidently for the school, and pupils learning to play the steel pans and to play samba music willingly rehearsed and were very proud when they perfected a new phrase. Similarly, Year 2 pupils' singing quality lifted when a visiting teacher helped them to get their tongue around the phrase "rubbed his belly with a five pound jelly".
179. The coordinator is well aware of the need to widen the curriculum and to raise the quality of teaching and learning. She is taking the lead in initiating change and a small but effective start has been made by linking the music used in school assemblies to particular themes; for example, the music of pan-pipes as an illustration of instruments "that we blow". The teachers are following national guidance to ensure pupils experience opportunities to perform, compose and appraise. However, the content is often too advanced for the pupils. The planned work with specialist music teachers next term provides a good opportunity to review what is taught and to identify ways to harness the pupils' interest in music.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

180. Standards in physical education broadly match those in most schools as they did at the time of the last inspection. In lessons, after-school sports activities and playground games, the pupils' attainment was as expected for their age.
181. The school places high emphasis on physical education as the pupils enjoy it and it helps to motivate the junior pupils, especially the boys. All classes have 90 minutes of physical education each week, split into two short sessions for indoor physical education and a longer period for outdoor activities. Not all teachers find this the most effective use of time as they are not always able to develop lessons, particularly those in the hall. Lessons seen lasted at least 20 minutes and were sufficient to develop pupils' skills in dance. However, other factors did have an impact. Several Year 3 boys were quick to become over exuberant and the teacher wisely curtailed the session, and Year 5 pupils' lesson was also short because some pupils delayed the start due to their inappropriate behaviour.
182. Over the school year, the pupils experience a range of physical activities including adventurous pursuits, dance, games and swimming. Pupils who do not learn to swim in Year 3 are given another opportunity during Year 4. Pupils are currently enjoying their visits to the pool used in the Commonwealth Games and most pupils achieve or exceed the expected standard by the end of the course.
183. The school makes good use of professional coaches in football and rugby to extend the range of activities. Their expertise raises the overall quality of teaching from satisfactory to good. The teachers have sound subject knowledge and structure their lessons well. The teachers begin with warm-up exercises and make good use of praise to encourage pupils to try harder. The teacher's demonstration of movements lifted the quality of the Year 3 pupils' dance and Year 5 pupils also improved when they saw others' interpretations of the music from 'The Carnival of animals'.

184. The school has dealt with concerns raised in the previous inspection. The move to the new site has provided a large playing field and three playgrounds with hard surfaces. Facilities for work outdoors and indoors are now very good. Resources have also improved and are now good as the school takes advantage of regular training for all staff and the opportunity to acquire the equipment needed for staff to put their skills into action. The last inspection also criticised breaches of the school's safety policy. In the activities seen, pupils were suitably dressed. The school now keeps spare kits to ensure that all pupils take part in physical education lessons. Most pupils remember to bring their own.
185. Junior pupils are keen to attend the after-school football and netball clubs run by school staff. Matches are also arranged with other schools. The rugby and football sessions run by professional coaches for pupils in Years 5 and 6 are very popular with girls and boys. Thirty-four pupils chose to attend the rugby club, almost equally divided between the sexes.
186. The coordinator has only been in post a short time but has already taken a good lead in developing the curriculum. She is well qualified, keen and willing to arrange training opportunities for all staff. She is due to rewrite the school's policy to ensure that it reflects the latest local authority guidance.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

187. As in the previous inspection, standards do not match those outlined in the locally agreed syllabus for pupils in Years 2 and 6. Pupils' knowledge is limited about religion and they have had little experience of learning from religion. Over the last few years Year 6 pupils have not been systematically taught religious education and this is reflected in their limited knowledge of Christianity as well as other faiths. Year 2 pupils' attainment is closer to that expected for their age but they have limited personal experience to draw on. For example, when discussing churches as special places, few Year 2 pupils talked about going to church or having been inside one. Pupils' progress is also hampered by the limited range and number of resources.
188. A scrutiny of last year's work shows that in most classes, apart from Year 4, pupils did very little work in books and learnt little about faiths other than Christianity. Little time appears to have been spent on teaching religious education and what was done was in little depth. Pupils in all years have been taught about stories from the Bible and junior pupils have acquired some facts about Sikhism and Judaism. However, their knowledge is fragmented and reflects a previously disjointed curriculum. For example, last year's Year 6 pupils had touched on disparate subjects such as their life journey, the parable of The Good Samaritan, the five pillars of Islam, Muslim worship, Buddha, the Christmas story, Palm Sunday and Ascension Day. Current work, however, is promoting pupils' awareness of religious teachings and how they have an impact on community and personal values. Pupils in Year 1 considered the concept of "being special" and Year 4 pupils discussed what it is to be a good friend.
189. The teaching was satisfactory in lessons seen but is unsatisfactory overall when pupils' previous learning is taken into account. The teachers give pupils opportunities to speak and listen to each other. All the teachers used good questioning techniques and knew how to draw pupils into the discussion. They used role-play well to reinforce the message behind a story. Pupils enjoy this approach and gain much from it. This was particularly evident when Year 5 pupils managed to tell a similar story to the Good Samaritan in a modern setting.

190. The coordinator is very aware of the gaps in the teaching and curriculum. She volunteered to oversee the subject temporarily as there had been no coordinator for well over a year. She is giving a sound lead and has taken effective action to ensure that all the teachers now follow the locally agreed syllabus. This is giving structure and coherence to the curriculum but her monitoring of teachers' has highlighted the weaknesses in teachers' knowledge of religious education and the need to raise standards. However, this is a difficult task as the school has no access to professional training for the staff or to good quality resources.