

# INSPECTION REPORT

## **CROWCROFT PARK PRIMARY SCHOOL**

Longsight, Manchester

LEA area: Manchester

Unique reference number: 105413

Headteacher: Mrs Danuta Brightwell

Reporting inspector: Mrs Sonja Øyen  
7167

Date of inspection: 25 – 27 November 2002

Inspection number: 246486

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 to 11

Gender of pupils: Mixed

School address: Northmoor Road  
Longsight  
Manchester

Postcode: M12 5SY

Telephone number: 0161 2245914

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Appropriate authority: Governing body

Name of chair of governors: Mr David Callicott

Date of previous inspection: February 1998

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members			Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
7167	Mrs Sonja Øyen	Registered inspector	English Music	How high are standards? How well are pupils taught? How well is the school led and managed What should the school do to improve further?
9952	Mrs Lillian Brock	Lay inspector		Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development How well does the school care for its pupils? How well does the school work in partnership with parents?
3108	Mr Eric Jackson	Team inspector	Science History Information and communication technology Physical education English as an additional language Equal opportunities	
30954	Mr Brian Ashcroft	Team inspector	Mathematics Design and technology Geography Special educational needs	How good are curricular and other opportunities?
17877	Ms Christine Ingham	Team inspector	Foundation Stage Art and design Religious education	

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

### **INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL**

Crowcroft Park is an infant and junior school in Longsight, an area of housing and community development, two miles south east of Manchester city centre. Thirty eight per cent of pupils are eligible for free school meals, which is almost twice the national average. As well as the 196 pupils in school, 60 children attend either the morning or afternoon sessions in the nursery. The school has more girls than boys in nearly every year group. Three out of four pupils are from ethnic minorities, reflecting the wide diversity of the local community that includes families from Pakistani, Bangladeshi, Caribbean and African heritage. A small number of pupils are refugees, mainly from Pakistan. Over the school year, a higher number of pupils than average leave and join the school, which has a long waiting list for places. Last year 31 pupils left and 38 joined. One hundred and twenty two pupils (54 per cent) have English as an additional language although only 28 are at an early stage of English fluency. Most speak Urdu, Punjabi or Bengali as their first language. Thirty pupils (13 per cent, lower than average) are identified as having special educational needs. One pupil has a Statement Of Special Educational Need and seven others receive support from external agencies predominantly for specific learning difficulties, emotional and behavioural difficulties and speech problems. Since the last inspection, there has been a change in headteacher and the school has become involved in several local initiatives, including Excellence in Cities.

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

Crowcroft Park is a justifiably popular school as it achieves good standards and provides its pupils with a broad educational experience. This is at its best in the nursery and reception year where the children rise to the staff's high expectations of them to learn and to do well. By the end of the infant years, standards are very good because of much good, focussed teaching. In the junior years, the quality of teaching and the pace of pupils' learning are too variable. Pupils do not always achieve or behave as well as they should. The school is effective in helping pupils from different ethnic minorities and those with different needs to get on very well together. The headteacher, still relatively new to the school, is giving a clear lead in what needs to be done. While there are strengths in the work of subject leaders, they are not all pulling together to improve what the school offers. The school gives satisfactory value for money with good value for the youngest children.

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

- Very good teaching and a rich programme of activities ensure the youngest children get off to a really good start and are keen to learn.
- Standards are good at the end of Year 2 in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Pupils with special educational needs and pupils who have English as an additional language make good progress because of good quality support and teaching.
- It develops pupils' interest in learning through a wide range of experiences in and out of school.

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

- Standards in writing, especially in handwriting, and spelling, and accuracy in the use of punctuation.
- Pupils' behaviour, self-discipline and independence in their learning.
- The pace of learning and pupils' achievement in the junior years.
- The effectiveness of subject leaders in working as a team to drive the school forward.

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

## HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

The school has made satisfactory improvement since the inspection in 1998. It has sustained some of the strengths identified then, especially in helping pupils to learn to read, write and use number, and in being a community where pupils from different cultures show mutual tolerance and respect. Standards have risen since 1998 and Crowcroft Park does better than most similar schools. In science, pupils still have relatively little opportunity to carry out their own investigations. Similarly, they have limited chances to develop their research skills by using the attractive library developed since the last inspection. While some new strengths have developed, notably in the nursery, aspects of the four key issues from 1998 remain as priorities for improvement. A major weakness still lies in the need to strengthen the work of subject leaders in raising standards and ensuring improvement in all year groups. Crowcroft Park has fallen behind many other schools in how well it identifies what needs to be done and in effective teamwork to achieve it. The use of assessment information to plan where change is needed is still an area for refinement. The headteacher, appointed in April 2002, has been successful in fostering a positive attitude to change and in sharing some school leadership duties with two managers until a new deputy headteacher takes up her post in January 2003. Such changes offer good scope to increase the pace and impact of school improvement.

## 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			
	all schools			similar schools
	2000	2001	2002	2002
English	E	E	D	A
mathematics	E	E	E	B
science	D	E	C	A

**Key**

well above average    A

above average        B

average                C

below average        D

well below average   E

Over time the pupils make good progress, often from a low start. For some, who speak little English on starting in the nursery, the progress is remarkable, not only in learning to understand and speak English but also in reading and writing it. The children make rapid progress in the nursery and reception year because of the enthusiastic teaching. All are on line to meet the standard expected at the end of the reception year in personal, social and emotional development, mathematical development, knowledge and understanding of the world, and physical and creative development. Only in communication, language and literacy is their attainment lower than expected for their age. By the end of the infant years, the majority of pupils are doing as well as expected for their age in most subjects. While some infant and junior pupils are highly articulate, more have difficulty in expressing and explaining their ideas clearly. This affects the quality and development of their work across the curriculum. Good teaching for the infants in reading, spelling and writing has helped standards to rise since 1998. In 2002, nearly all Year 2 pupils reached the level expected nationally in reading, writing and science. In mathematics, as in 2001, all pupils did so and this placed the school in the top five per cent of schools. This was a notable achievement. In the junior years, standards are not so good. As in the 2002 national tests, the pupils'



attainment in English is below average. Few Year 6 pupils are consistently working at the level expected of 11 year olds. Gaps in learning in previous years partly account for this. The school fell short of its target in English in 2002 and, given current standards, that for 2003 is too challenging. In mathematics and science, standards are below average. Pupils acquire mathematical and scientific knowledge but are less secure in carrying out investigations and explaining the process. Standards in art and design are lower than expected for pupils' ages in the infant and junior years. Although satisfactory in word processing, standards are lower than expected in other aspects of information and communication technology (ICT). In design and technology, geography, history, music, physical education and religious education, standards are as expected for pupils' ages. The standard of singing by the school choir is good.

## PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Good; pupils enjoy school and are very keen to take part in new activities and practical tasks.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Unsatisfactory; too many pupils, especially in the junior years, are quick to assert themselves. They show low self-discipline, overstep the mark and misbehave in and out of class.
Personal development and relationships	Satisfactory; there is good racial harmony and girls and boys get on well together. However, too many do not consider the effect of their actions on others. While some undertake jobs conscientiously, others are less sensible.
Attendance	Satisfactory; most pupils are punctual.

## TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils in:	Nursery and Reception	Years 1 – 2	Years 3 – 6
Quality of teaching	Very good	Good	Satisfactory

*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.*

As in the last inspection, the overall quality of teaching is good but the profile of teaching has changed. The strongest teaching is now in the nursery, where the staff work as a very effective team to prepare and lead experiences that foster the children's skills and knowledge. Similarly, in the reception class, the children find learning fun as there is something new each day to grab their interest. Good teaching in the infant years has been sustained and the pupils make good progress especially in reading, writing and number. The teachers have good ideas to keep the pupils engaged. In contrast with 1998, there is little consistent strong teaching for the junior pupils. The teachers do not do enough to find the best ways to help the pupils learn. They too often tell the pupils what they need to know and assume the pupils learn it. Unfinished and poor quality work is accepted too easily, especially in writing. Although the teaching is satisfactory overall, gaps in the teachers' knowledge about how to develop pupils' skills in reading and writing are slowing younger junior pupils' progress. This is compounded by the inconsistent use of marking to help pupils improve. While the oldest junior pupils work conscientiously and try hard, pupils in other junior classes often work slowly and look for adult support. When the task is practical, the pupils apply themselves

willingly and often learn quickly. At such times, pupils with special educational needs and those with English as an additional language benefit from working alongside and discussing their ideas with the others. Common strengths in the teaching throughout the school lie in the good relationships and the preparation of lessons. Good partnerships with support teachers and assistants ensure all know what they are to do. Good teaching by specialists in music enables the pupils to make at least satisfactory progress in lessons and for many to do well in singing and playing instruments, including steel pans.

## OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Good: themes and topics are used very effectively to make learning relevant for the nursery and infant pupils. There is a good programme of extra activities for the older pupils, especially in music.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Good: pupils are given much adult support and guidance in class which helps them to achieve their targets.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	Good: specialist teaching ensures that pupils' language needs are identified and appropriate support is given in acquiring skills in speaking, reading and writing English.
Provision for pupils' personal development, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Satisfactory overall: the stronger provision in spiritual and cultural aspects ensures the pupils gain a good awareness of their own and others' talents, skills and heritage. Although the school has rules and encourages pupils to work and play together, too many pupils lack a sound awareness of right and wrong, and show little respect for others.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Good day-to-day welfare procedures and racial harmony are offset by many gaps in the systems to promote and sustain pupils' good behaviour. Information on pupils' personal and academic progress is not used rigorously enough to decide what they should learn next.

The quality of the outdoor provision for the nursery and reception children is very good. The school has a good, well-established partnership with parents, who support school events, take courses and offer their views on school proposals. Very good informal links start in the nursery. The school recognises pupils' home cultures but misses chances to make even more of parents' expertise.

## HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Satisfactory: the headteacher shows good leadership in setting a clear direction while astutely taking time to foster team commitment. The good leadership of the Foundation Stage manager is highly influential on the work of her team. Other subject leaders are not as active or as effective in raising

	standards across the school.
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How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Good: the committees of the governing body deal effectively with the work of the school and meet all responsibilities.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Satisfactory: the school has a good grasp of how well it does in national tests but has less information on the impact of key factors such as the quality of teaching, learning and attendance.
The strategic use of resources	Satisfactory: grants are used as intended and governors have been prudent in accumulating reserve funds to meet costs associated with the impending building and refurbishment programme. Staff are well deployed but time and resources are not used to best effect.

The school has adequate staffing and accommodation for the number of pupils. The proposed new wing is much needed to replace ageing, temporary, less attractive classrooms. The school seeks best value in goods and services. It compares itself with others, consults parents and the community, and sets challenging but realistic targets.

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

<b>What pleases parents most</b>	<b>What parents would like to see improved</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The friendliness and "happy family" makes it easy to approach the school.</li> <li>• Their children make good progress as the teaching is good.</li> <li>• Their children are expected to work hard.</li> <li>• The youngest children are well cared for.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The amount of homework.</li> </ul> <p>A small number of parents also commented on their wish for -</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Even more information on how well their children are doing.</li> </ul>

Four parents attended the meeting with inspectors. The inspection team largely agrees with the parents who have identified many of the strengths of the school. The headteacher is looking how to further improve ways to keep parents informed and how to balance the amount of homework.

## **PART B: COMMENTARY**

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

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

1. Standards are good at the end of Year 2 but below average at the end of Year 6 in English, mathematics and science. Standards have risen since the last inspection, particularly in the performance of the Year 6 pupils. This is because of much systematic teaching in reading, writing, number and science and the determined efforts of the Year 6 teacher to pull as many pupils as possible up to the level expected for their age. When the school's test results are compared with similar schools, Crowcroft Park is better than most. Pupils make very good progress over time from a low start and higher attaining pupils are attaining their potential.
2. Nevertheless, there is room for improvement, particularly in writing. Current standards are not as strong as the school's national test results in 2002 indicate. Inconsistencies in standards in the junior years reflect gaps in previous learning, current underachievement by some pupils and some teachers' low expectations of what pupils can do. The headteacher is aware of these aspects and is working with the staff and governors to make changes.
3. Crowcroft Park is different from many schools in that it has a very diverse school population. Three out of four pupils are from ethnic minorities, with the largest percentage of pupils from Pakistani heritage, including some refugees. The school's location, close to the university and in an area of community regeneration, also means that many families stay only a short time. A significant percentage of the current Year 6 pupils joined the school after Year 2. Seven pupils joined Year 6 during the last school year and just under half had been at the school since Year 2. Overall, 54 per cent of pupils have English as an additional language although only 28 are at an early stage of fluency and qualify for support from the local education authority's Ethnic Minorities Achievement Service (EMAS).
4. However, when children first start in the nursery, many have limited skills in communicating in English. This is compounded by their limited general knowledge and experience. Children for whom English is their first language also often show limited skills in expressing themselves. Overall attainment is mostly well below that expected of three year olds. The children make rapid progress in all areas of learning because the staff plan activities that excite and motivate them. Learning is fun and very good teaching ensures the children develop good social skills as well as an understanding of number and skills across the curriculum. As a result, when they join the reception year, their attainment is much closer to, although still below that expected of four and five year olds.
5. Many who speak little English initially show remarkable early progress in their command of English. In the reception year, not only do they speak confidently to make their wants and ideas known, but they are also beginning to read and write English. This is largely due to the high quality support of the nursery and reception year team in encouraging the children. Good teaching in the reception year is sustaining the children's good progress and positive attitudes to learning. Given the rate of current progress, most children are on line to reach the standard expected by the end of the reception year in personal, social and emotional development, number, knowledge and understanding of the world, physical and creative development. Only in reading, writing and using language to communicate is the children's attainment

lagging behind that expected for their age. Nevertheless, their very good progress is a significant new strength of the school and augurs well for future years. School evidence shows that in previous years pupils have started in Year 1 some way behind children in many other schools.

6. The lag in pupils' performance in speaking, reading and writing is reflected in other year groups, most especially in the junior years, where pupils find it hard to use language competently and maturely to explain, reason, deduce and infer. This affects their work in other subjects, including mathematics and science, where pupils are expected to deal with written problems and situations.
7. Pupils continue to make good progress in the infant years. By the end of Year 2, nearly all have reached the level expected of seven year olds in reading and writing. Bilingual and multilingual pupils have made such good progress in speaking, listening, reading and writing that many of them attain similar levels to their peers. In the 2002 national tests, Crowcroft Park was in the top five per cent of similar schools in reading. It also achieved this accolade for the second year running in mathematics as all Year 2 pupils reached the expected level. In writing and science, the school did far better than similar schools and sustained the good standards of 2001. Another notable feature is the good standard reached by the higher attaining pupils. The school did much better than most similar schools. When compared with 1998, standards are higher although fewer pupils do well in writing. This also typifies the work of the current Year 2 pupils.
8. The good standards achieved by the seven year olds in 2002 are not so evident in their current work in Year 3. Pupils are not receiving the systematic teaching they need to improve the quality of their reading and writing. This is particularly evident for those pupils who are only just in the early stages and need frequent reminders of how to construct sentences, how to identify words and how to make sense of what they are reading. In Year 4, there are signs that pupils' progress has slowed. For example, many pupils' work is untidy and inconsistent in quality and quantity. This is partly explained by the fact that the class teacher is absent and pupils are being taught by temporary staff. The pupils do not respond well to this situation and some pupils' misbehaviour is disrupting the learning of others. Similarly, in Year 5, pupils are often underachieving because the behaviour of a few badly affects others. The slower progress in English compared with mathematics reflects some gaps in the teacher's knowledge of how to develop reading and writing skills.
9. The Year 6 pupils are generally making sound, steady progress and achieving well. The focussed teaching is highlighting what they need to know and pupils are helping themselves by doing homework and revision papers. This is helping to plug some of the gaps in their previous learning and to consolidate their knowledge of number processes, scientific facts and features of effective writing. Too little has been done since the last inspection to deal with the key issue related to developing experimental and investigative work in science. The current Year 6 pupils, who were in Year 1 at the time of the last inspection, have poorly developed skills in devising a fair test. Their lack of awareness of the factors to consider points to minimal experience in previous years. With the changes in the format of the science test in 2003, pupils are ill placed to cope.
10. The current performance of Year 6 pupils is below average. Few produce work of a consistent quality to meet the level expected for their age in reading, writing, number and science. A particular weakness is pupils' lack of expertise in dealing with problems. Given this, the school's targets for 2003 are unrealistic in English and

science, but achievable in mathematics. However, school evidence of pupils' progress from last year shows that many pupils, especially boys, made good progress in Year 6 and caught up. The school has already put in place similar booster programmes and the teacher is setting high expectations for the class.

11. In the 2002 national tests for 11 year olds, the school's overall results were below the national average in English, well below in mathematics and matched it in science. However, when compared with similar schools they were well above average in English and science, and also above in mathematics. This was a good achievement for the school. More pupils than in 2001 achieved the level expected for their age, bringing the school to its highest ever percentages in English, mathematics and science. In addition, the significant increase in the percentage of boys doing well for their age in English and science lifted the overall standard. In science, the school matched the national average for the first time. The school still has some way to go to reach the national average in English and mathematics, but the 2002 results show what pupils can achieve.
12. Recent monitoring evidence shows that pupils who qualify for support from the EMAS team have made better progress over the last three years than other pupils in the junior years. This is largely because of the good quality of the support they receive in class and in withdrawal groups that helps to develop their confidence in using English as well as their range of vocabulary and understanding of words and phrases.
13. The school's own tracking information highlighted the stronger performance of the boys compared with the girls in reading, writing and mathematics. However, it is not clear from the literacy and numeracy plans for this year how the school intends to ensure that all girls reach their full potential.
14. Pupils with special educational needs make satisfactory progress in working towards the targets in their individual plans. Good quality help from support staff enables them to complete their tasks. Over time, these pupils achieve well and often come close to the level expected for their age.
15. As in 1998, standards for pupils in Years 2 and 6 in design and technology, geography, history, music, physical education and religious education are generally satisfactory. Only in art and design have standards fallen, and pupils' attainment is now lower than expected for their age in the infant and junior years. In ICT, standards are unsatisfactory overall. While they are satisfactory in word processing, they are unsatisfactory in other aspects. Standards are rising as pupils gain more experience in the ICT suite but there is still much to do to make up for gaps in previous learning, especially in control technology.

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

16. As in the last inspection, pupils enjoy school and are enthusiastic about their learning. Most pupils have good attitudes but their behaviour overall is unsatisfactory. Standards have fallen since the last inspection. The unacceptable behaviour of some pupils was raised at the meeting with parents prior to the inspection. Inspection evidence shows that the inability of a significant number of pupils, most especially junior boys but not exclusively, to conform to rules and to exert self-control weakens pupils' progress in lessons and over time. Pupils' personal development is satisfactory and there are satisfactory relationships throughout the school. A continuing strength is the harmony and mutual respect of pupils from differing ethnic minorities.

17. Children in the nursery and reception class show very good attitudes to learning and to being in school. The majority come into class happily and settle quickly into the routines of the day and the layout of the buildings. They develop in confidence because of the encouragement of the adults to try new things and to express their views. The children find learning fun and, more often than not, they are totally engrossed in their tasks and show great enthusiasm and delight in what they do; for example, photographs show the fascination on the children's faces when they looked inside a piano and saw what happened when a note was played. The children behave and get on well together. During an outdoor play session, they worked closely as a team to "repair the roads" and re-direct the traffic safely. They know what they are expected to do, such as writing their names on a board when they leave the reception classroom, and try hard to please their teachers and support staff. The older nursery children help the younger ones, and the good relationships between all result in a calm, warm and supportive ambience and the children thrive.
18. Similar enthusiasm is evident in the infant classes and to a lesser extent in the junior years. Infant and junior pupils' response in lessons is satisfactory overall but varies between good and unsatisfactory. The majority of pupils enjoy school and many concentrate well for lengthy periods in lessons and group work as they strive to finish their tasks in the allotted time. They enjoy receiving praise and certificates for effort and behaviour. Most listen appreciatively to others' opinions during discussions and co-operate constructively, often sharing ideas and equipment well. For example, Year 1 pupils, who had much fun in playing musical instruments, showed good consideration in waiting their turn and choosing what they wanted to play. Many pupils are polite, welcoming to visitors and happy to discuss their work.
19. However, a significant number of infant and junior pupils do not know how to speak appropriately to adults and occasionally overstep the mark. This was most evident in the way they responded to support staff and flouted their authority. In lessons and group sessions, pupils often spoke out, got up to move about the classroom when adults were talking, took their time in responding to instructions, and generally went their own way. Pupils' books and work in lessons also show that too few take care to present their work well. Although pupils enjoy practical activities, they do not all know how to control their eagerness and how to show respect to adults and others. There are many instances of immature behaviour such as silliness to gain the attention of adults or to deliberately annoy other pupils. In some lessons, the high noise level disrupts the concentration of those pupils who want to learn. The time needed by teachers to control and reprimand these pupils upsets the continuity of lessons.
20. Pupils' behaviour as they walk in the corridors and move around the school is satisfactory when they are directly supervised by adults, but pupils cannot be trusted to act appropriately when on their own. Pupils of all ages were seen running and larking about despite the number of notices reminding them to walk around the school, and also the 'Golden Rules' displayed at strategic points around the building. Pupils do not always understand or appreciate the impact of their actions on others. However, Year 6 pupils confirmed that there are few instances of bullying or oppressive behaviour and if they occur, the school deals with them well. No pupil has been excluded recently for unacceptable behaviour and there were no recorded racist incidents in the summer term of 2002.
21. Almost all pupils who have English as an additional language show positive attitudes to learning and most try hard to improve. Occasionally, some need to be reminded by teachers or support staff to focus more closely on their work. When working with



support staff, especially with those from EMAS, most pupils make good progress as they listen hard to the explanations given of words, phrases and ideas. When a teacher discussed words for teeth in pupils' first languages, the pupils were quick to offer their own information. Many older bilingual and multilingual pupils gain much pleasure and self-esteem from the focus on current affairs and especially the cultural and political impact of leading human rights campaigners such as Martin Luther King and Nelson Mandela. A Year 6 pupil concentrated hard to compile a letter to President Bush to try to avert war in Iraq.

22. The quality of relationships in the school is satisfactory. Most pupils play amicably together in the playground during break times and ensure that pupils with English as an additional language are taught games with which they may not be familiar. They also include pupils with special learning needs in all play activities and support them in lessons. However, there are occasional 'flare-ups' when some pupils find it difficult to share resources in classrooms and in the playground and take things into their own hands.
23. The personal development of pupils is satisfactory. Teachers and support staff in the nursery and reception class encourage the children to be as independent as possible and allocate classroom tasks. In the infant and junior years, pupils have jobs to do in the classroom and around the school. Two junior boys proudly showed their organisational systems to help pupils clear away their lunch plates. However, pupils have too few opportunities to develop as independent learners. Too much is done by the adults for them and pupils learn to wait for items to be given out or work to be collected. The projects by Year 6 pupils on the local environment were a good example of pupils carrying out their own research. The professional presentation was also a good indication of the standard that can be achieved and set a good example for others to follow. The newly formed school council offers pupils a chance to have an increasingly active say in school affairs.
24. Attendance has improved since the last inspection and is now satisfactory. Unauthorised absence is lower than the national average. Pupils enjoy competing for the best attendance and consult the percentage attendance displayed on classroom doors. During the autumn term to date, 80 per cent of pupils have achieved the national average and of these a third of pupils has 100 per cent attendance. Holidays taken in term time and the poor attendance of a few pupils affect the overall figures. Most pupils arrive at school on time because they enjoy the time they spend there.

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

25. The overall quality of teaching is good. However, the profile of teaching and learning has changed since the last inspection in that the teaching has strengthened in the Foundation Stage and is now very good, but has fallen in the junior years from good to satisfactory. Much good teaching in Year 6 helps pupils to plug gaps in their learning and to prepare them well for the national tests at the end of the year. In other junior year groups, the quality of teaching is far more variable and occasionally unsatisfactory. This accounts in the main for the variability in junior pupils' learning and their different rates of progress.
26. In the school as a whole, the teaching was satisfactory in all but four lessons. It was good in 32 per cent and very good in a further 19 per cent. Nearly all of the very good teaching was in the nursery and reception class. In the infant classes, the teaching was good overall, with Year 1 pupils benefiting from predominantly good and occasionally very good teaching. The nursery, reception and infant pupils learn well

and make good progress, especially in reading, writing and number, because the teachers make effective use of practical, active experiences to interest them. The teachers and support staff work with the pupils to guide their learning. This is not so evident in the junior years, where a higher focus on class teaching and direct instruction does not always meet all the pupils' needs fully and ensure best learning.

27. This also typifies the teaching in English and mathematics. The most effective lessons in English were those for the infants when the teachers made good use of the process of planting beans and making a fruit salad to demonstrate how to write a set of instructions for others to be able to do the same. The teachers ensured that the pupils then applied what they knew by giving them a similar task. One good link with Year 2 pupils' spelling knowledge was the game to guess whether words were spelt with 'oy' or 'oi', before the pupils needed to write 'soil'. Similarly, in mathematics, the infant teachers kept up a lively pace and demonstrated clearly what pupils had to do. This good teaching in literacy and mathematics is a key factor in the good standards attained at the end of Year 2.
28. In the junior classes, the teaching is satisfactory in English and mathematics overall, but there is often less emphasis on demonstrating the strategies and procedures needed. The teachers tend to tell the pupils rather than draw out from them what they know or think. Some Year 6 pupils found it hard to start their autobiographical writing as they were not sure of the stylistic features. In the end part of the lesson when pupils read out what they had written, chances were missed to identify and reinforce the effective features. In mathematics, too, there is often too little revision of key learning points or the use of pupils' errors and misunderstandings to rehearse essential strategies and knowledge.
29. The main problem in the two unsatisfactory English lessons was the pupils' poor learning attitudes, which were partly a consequence of weaknesses in the teachers' skills in managing pupils' behaviour but also of gaps in the teachers' knowledge of English, and how to teach it. In some parts of the lessons, pupils' good responses showed the potential of their learning. For instance, Year 4 pupils really thought hard about the possible focus of a short poem and Year 5 pupils used good expression when reading aloud. However, too many pupils were inattentive, noisy, quick to call out and, in the class working with a temporary teacher, were rude and defiant. The teachers were too slow to pre-empt problems, with the result that some Year 5 pupils fussed unnecessarily when they had to wait for resources and lost interest in sorting out the order of a poem. Junior pupils also showed similar poor learning skills in a physical education and a religious education lesson. Year 3 pupils gave minimal effort to improving their skills in handling balls in a physical education lesson as the teacher did not show them what to do or insist on them doing it. Year 5 pupils produced low quality work when illustrating the values behind the lines in a poem in religious education because the teaching did not help them to understand the task fully.
30. In the nursery and reception class, the staff are very successful and skilful in getting, keeping and focussing the children's interest, attention and willingness to learn. They teach in imaginative and engaging ways so that children are eager to get on with activities. For example, the teacher settled the children quickly by getting them to sing the alphabet and then drew the children's attention to the labels on pictures in a book about 'My body'. When they successfully matched a label, they were asked to take a bow while the others applauded. The rewarding of the children's efforts is also a key feature of the work of the nursery staff. The nursery teacher's enthusiasm and fun as she invited the children to take a monkey away from a bed of five monkeys kept the children totally absorbed and itching to see what happened. The staff also use clever

plays to manage the children's behaviour. For instance, when the reception children started to chatter, the teacher said she would choose "someone with their lips together" to show what they had drawn on their whiteboard. The staff are also adept at using their observations to decide what the children need to do next and also what they might need. They provide good visual clues and demonstrations to ensure that the children who have English as an additional language understand and join in all the activities.

31. Several good features characterise not only the teaching for the youngest pupils but in all classes:

- The relationships between the teachers and the pupils are good. Even in classes where the pupils do not always behave well, they are keen to talk to the teacher informally.
- The teachers prepare their lessons carefully. They know what they intend to do and lessons generally get off to a prompt start as everything is to hand.
- Classrooms are organised to celebrate what pupils have done, and in several classes, to stimulate new learning. This is at its best in the nursery and reception class, where the children's work is very attractively displayed. Much thought and care has gone into the setting up of learning areas and in the labels, task boards and ideas to prompt the children to do things themselves.
- Most lessons get off to a good start. Lively introductions, games and quick question-and-answer review sessions often grab the pupils' interest. In a very good lesson, Year 3 pupils were highly taken by being asked to look at plaster casts of teeth and using mirrors to look at their own. The pace and sense of purpose in the teaching ensured the pupils made the expected links between new and old knowledge.
- Good teamwork between the teachers and support staff ensures the pupils are given support when needed, especially those with English as an additional language. The teachers also work well with the staff who support pupils with special educational needs. All are fully aware of the targets in pupils' individual plans and use them effectively to plan learning experiences.

32. There are some common areas for improvement in the teaching that hinder the pupils' learning. Many have been identified in monitoring by subject managers and the headteacher.

- The end part of lessons is not used consistently well to review the pupils' learning and to see how well the purpose of the lesson has been met.
- Information and communication technology equipment is not being used as a learning tool. Classroom computers are often unused and pupils are not gaining enough experience, especially in literacy and mathematics lessons, in applying what they learn in ICT lessons.
- The quality of the activities for groups does not always echo the quality of the lesson introduction. In some classes the pupils complete a lot of worksheets. While the worksheets sometimes help to frame the pupils' responses, they also constrain them, especially in science.
- The transitions from class to group activities are often ragged with time and impetus lost as items are given out.
- Teachers' marking is too cursory and not linked well enough to targets or the purpose of lessons. In many cases, the teachers accept work that is not up to standard in its quality of presentation. Few teachers give clear points on how the pupils can improve their work. Older juniors are not gaining an overview of how well their work measures up to national levels in writing and mathematics.
- Homework is not consistently mentioned as part of lessons. Not all junior pupils are getting regular homework.

33. The teaching by the EMAS support team is good. They use a variety of approaches from team-teaching with class teachers to teaching groups and/or individual pupils withdrawn from the classroom. In a very good lesson for nine multilingual Year 6 pupils, the EMAS support teacher used cards very effectively to identify stages in the headteacher's life, highlighting how her experiences of learning English as an additional language had links with the pupils' own lives. The pupils rose to the challenge of putting them in chronological order and responded to her prompts in how to explain their choices. Throughout the session, the teacher referred to the pupils' targets and noted how well the pupils were doing in using English. The staff use information gained from their regular assessments of pupils' progress against specific targets in reading and writing to plan new work. For example, in a Year 3 guided reading session, the teacher used her notes from the previous session to remind all pupils what they needed to concentrate on. Well-organised and extensive records show that this is a regular and effective process. During the inspection, a multilingual worker, newly deployed to the school, was highly effective in ensuring that pupils with limited understanding of English understood what they had to do by using Urdu, Pashto and English to discuss aspects, such as unknown words and phrases.

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

34. The overall quality and range of the curriculum is good, as in the last inspection. A new strength of the school is the very good curriculum for the children in the nursery and reception year. The same high quality is not so evident in the provision for infant and especially for the junior pupils, although there are strengths in the good programme of extra activities, especially in sport and music, and also in the use of visits and visitors to enrich the pupils' experiences. The school also makes good use of the adjoining park and chances to be involved in local community projects to heighten pupils' awareness of citizenship.
35. The quality of the curriculum planning for the youngest children is outstanding. It echoes fully national principles in placing high emphasis on the children learning through play and first hand experience indoors and out. Themes are used very effectively to provide imaginative activities that stimulate the children's interest. The staff have a good understanding of how such experiences foster the children's development in several areas of learning. The planning is tightly linked to the staff's assessment of the children's stage of development in each of the six areas of learning and what they need to do and learn next. As a result, there is clear continuity of experience and also consistency of content for those children who attend the morning and afternoon nursery sessions. Progression in the children's learning is very clear, particularly in language, literacy and mathematics. In the reception year, due consideration has been given to providing sessions throughout the day to develop the children's awareness of letters, words and numbers. A particularly strong feature is the daily use of the outdoors and the increasing level of challenge as the children become more confident and competent.
36. The curriculum for the infant pupils is good and is satisfactory for the juniors. It includes all subjects of the National Curriculum and religious education and is suitably broad and relevant to the needs and interests of the pupils. The school has adapted nationally recommended schemes of work in most subjects to meet the needs of the pupils and to relate them more closely to the pupils' experiences. The teachers have good guidance on what is to be taught each term and how this may be done. A good

feature is the planned inclusion of visits. For example, junior pupils go to Quarry Bank Mill as part of their work in history on Victorian life.

37. The school is systematically following the frameworks for teaching of the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies. This is effective in ensuring the pupils learn to read, write and deal with number but not enough is done to amend the guidance to meet the needs of the pupils fully. For example, many pupils enter Year 3 only just reading and writing independently, but the English curriculum does not reflect their need for systematic and continuing experience in word identification skills and guidance in writing. A good feature is the use of additional and booster programmes to help those pupils who do not make the progress expected in reading, spelling, writing and number. However, too often chances are missed to reinforce the content of these programmes in work across the curriculum. The use of national schemes to promote spelling has helped to raise standards in spelling in the infant years. It has yet to show in the junior years where there is some inconsistency in the curriculum for spelling, handwriting and reading development. While some action has been taken to deal with the key issue concerning the weakness in pupils' research skills, the systematic development of pupils' skills from the nursery onwards remains an area for improvement.
38. A weaker strand in the curriculum is the planned development of the pupils' understanding and use of language. The school recognises the need to foster the pupils' oral language skills but curriculum planning does not explicitly identify where this is happening. The popular drama club provides good opportunities for junior pupils to explore language and characterisation. However, there are few examples of planning in the different subjects to develop pupils' skills in presenting their findings orally, debating or discussing what they know.
39. The literacy curriculum is modified effectively to meet the learning needs of those pupils who have English as an additional language, particularly those at an early stage of learning to speak English. The specialist teacher from the local education authority (LEA) support team works with school staff to plan the curriculum and to advise on where amendments need to be made.
40. Similarly, the school makes effective provision for pupils with special educational needs. However, curriculum planning does not always explicitly indicate where amendments and adaptations are made to reflect the content of pupils' individual learning plans. All, including those pupils with a Statement of Special Educational Need, are fully included in all aspects of school life.
41. Several weaknesses in curriculum planning and organisation result in gaps in some pupils' learning and attainment. The curriculum for ICT makes good use of sessions in the computer suite when pupils are taught new skills and introduced to new programs. Although the weekly computer club provides opportunities for some pupils to develop their knowledge, too little is done to ensure that pupils use class computers to practise and apply their skills as part of their learning in other subjects. Not enough time is allocated to art and design to refine pupils' skills and experience in a range of media and techniques. The school includes opportunities for pupils to learn to play steel pans and to practise their singing as a choir as part of teaching time. As these times clash with work in other subjects, participating pupils do not receive their full subject entitlement. For example, choir members in Years 5 and 6 miss out on design and technology lessons in the autumn term.

42. The school's good links with the local community make a positive contribution to the pupils' learning. For instance, links with the local cricket club help to raise the profile of the sport and many boys attended the after school cricket training session led by a local coach. The school choir performs for local residents and last year pupils enjoyed the experience of performing at the Royal Northern College of Music. The school liaises with other local primary schools, takes work experience students from local secondary schools and provides work placements for trainee teachers and support assistants.
43. The provision for pupils' personal development is satisfactory but is not as strong as judged in the last inspection. The provision is stronger in spiritual and cultural development than in moral and social development where inconsistencies in practice lead to instances of pupils' immature behaviour being condoned. A growing strength is the effective community links that enhance pupils' moral and social development and their awareness of aspects of being a good citizen. A good example is the school's involvement in the 'Youth in the Community Project'. Year 6 pupils have met professionals from a range of agencies, including the police and local wardens, and also visited the magistrates' court and prison cells. The spring term project is specially designed to alert pupils to the dangers of joy-riding. In all year groups, time is given to allow pupils to discuss and reflect on feelings, emotions and social and moral issues. The school also includes sex and drugs education as part of science and 'Healthy Living'.
44. The pupils' spiritual development is well promoted through acts of worship, the curriculum and the emphasis placed, especially in the classes of younger pupils, to developing an enthusiasm for learning. In line with the school's motto, 'Our children come first', all are made to feel part of the school community and everyone is valued. Pupils' achievements are celebrated openly. The very large display of photographs in the corridor to illustrate pupils' successes was much visited by the pupils. Musical experiences are used well to raise pupils' self-esteem and Year 6 pupils talked of how taking part in a concert at the Bridgewater Hall in Manchester made them feel good. Those in the choir also learn that improvement is a result of personal commitment. They worked very hard to perfect their singing and their final rendition was of a high quality and a moving experience for those listening. The adults also use music to help pupils become aware of how composers represent the natural world and events. For example, in an assembly, an adult commented on how the music portrayed the differences between lightning, wind and rain. However, less is done in lessons to ensure that pupils have a good understanding of their own learning and how they may improve and achieve better.
45. The provision for pupils' moral development is satisfactory overall with some weaknesses. Although the school places an emphasis on this area through extensive displays of school rules and also posters to reflect moral issues, many pupils do not respond positively. In some instances, the adults prompt mature work from the pupils and good levels of understanding. For example, Year 6 pupils' written commentaries show a well-reasoned understanding of why fire hoaxes are so dangerous. Similarly, the inclusion of discussions with some elderly local residents led Year 6 pupils to take a personal stance on the moral dilemmas of war. Such profitable experiences are less evident in the provision for pupils in other year groups, although Year 1 pupils have looked at ways to improve life in Longsight. A particular concern is that the provision for moral development has not resulted in encouraging pupils to take responsibility for their own actions. Many pupils have yet to learn the requirement for self-discipline as part of learning.

46. A strength of the satisfactory provision for social development is the mix of pupils from different social and ethnic backgrounds. The staff plan many opportunities for pupils to work as groups, such as reception children having to co-operate to make milk shakes. In assemblies and class discussions, themes are used to alert the pupils to friendship issues and how their actions may affect others. During the inspection, the learning mentor led several sessions with pupils from different years on thoughts and feelings. A good aspect was the discussion on "How can we cope with nerves?" for Year 5 pupils which helped pupils to share personal strategies.
47. Much attention is given to developing pupils' appreciation of cultural diversity and the overall provision is good. The school's commitment to having respect for different cultures and backgrounds is emphasised through extensive displays such as the 'Do you know?' quiz that encouraged pupils to compare features of the Hindu, Muslim, Jewish and Christian faiths. Although English is the language of the classroom and playground, the school has displays and notices in a variety of community languages. In all year groups there is a focus on local heritage and culture and pupils take part in community events, such as bulb planting in the park. A well-planned topic on the local neighbourhood raised Year 6 pupils' awareness of the history and culture of Longsight. The staff also ensure that personal and cultural celebrations, and important events in the pupils' lives, are given a focus through discussion and daily activities. The reception children bobbed for apples as part of Hallowe'en festivities and staff talked to pupils about Ramadan and planned Eid celebrations.

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

48. The procedures for child protection, for monitoring and supporting attendance and for ensuring pupils' welfare are good. Although there are satisfactory procedures for the educational and personal support of pupils, those for monitoring and promoting good behaviour are unsatisfactory.
49. This is a school where all the adults in the school community provide good day-to-day care and support for pupils. The school is fortunate in having two fully qualified members of staff to administer first aid and all other adults trained in giving emergency first aid. Teachers and support staff make themselves readily available for pupils who have concerns or problems with their work or personal life. Year 6 pupils said that there is always someone they can turn to if they are worried or anxious. Likewise, pupils with special educational needs and those with English as an additional language receive good support. The school has an agreed policy to counter racism, sexism and also bullying, and pupils are helped to discuss these matters openly. As a result, from starting in the nursery, pupils feel secure and generally enjoy their learning. The children transfer to the reception class either in September or January depending on the date of their fifth birthday. Most children make the move to the reception class without any concerns because the nursery and reception classes work as one unit and the staff and children have warm and close relationships. Similar care is shown in ensuring that the Year 6 pupils make a smooth transition to high school.
50. The school contacts a range of support agencies on behalf of all pupils. Child protection procedures are good, with clear guidelines for all staff. The designated teacher has updated her training and ensures that all adults are aware of the action to take if they have a concern.
51. The health and safety of pupils have high priority in the school and governors are assiduous in ensuring all statutory requirements are met. This is evident in the

practice of giving all the staff a copy of the health and safety policy to read, sign and put into effect. Governors are also aware of the need to ensure pupils' safe use of the Internet. The safety committee of the governing body conducts an annual audit of the school and its buildings. The findings are well documented and prioritised according to urgency or available finance. Documents show a thorough analysis of identified hazards and potential risks, including visits out of school. As identified by the school, the state of the pupils' toilets is poor. The site supervisor and staff do a sterling job in keeping them clean and relatively sweet-smelling. Their hard work is also reflected in the cleanliness of the school inside and out. All staff, including the kitchen staff, are playing their part in the school's submission to gain the Healthy Schools award.

52. The procedures for monitoring and promoting good behaviour are unsatisfactory and not as successful as those noted at the time of the last inspection. The school is not meeting its aim of developing pupils' self-discipline. The guidelines for staff are not implemented consistently, which detracts significantly from the efforts of some staff to establish a climate of good behaviour. The teachers and support staff are not working as a team to ensure that all pupils receive the same message about what is acceptable and unacceptable behaviour in class and around school. The impact of the current system of rewards and sanctions is lost on too many pupils. The inaction of some adults when pupils behave unacceptably condones the behaviour. Because of this, a fresh approach to the promotion of good behaviour is needed if all pupils, but most especially those in Years 2 to 5, are to realise that they come to school to learn.
53. The good procedures for monitoring and supporting attendance have led to an improvement in attendance rates since the last inspection and a decline in unauthorised absence. A good initiative has been the immediate call to parents when their child does not arrive at school. Parents at the meeting with inspectors saw this as a good aspect of the school's "caring but strict attitude". The governing body has also taken a firm stance in monitoring applications from parents for holidays in term time and, as a result, there is no longer a problem of extended holidays abroad and the removal of pupils from the school roll.
54. The procedures for assessing pupils' attainment and progress are satisfactory overall. There are particular strengths in the work of the nursery and reception staff to assess the progress of the children, and also in the procedures to monitor the development of pupils who have English as an additional language and those with special educational needs. Good liaison with external agencies means that evidence is shared as part of decisions taken in planning the provision for pupils with particular needs. The staff from the LEA's EMAS team keep good records of their regular assessments of pupils' progress and attainment, especially in literacy, and use the information to plan new work and to set new targets for learning. A similar approach typifies the work of the special educational needs coordinator.
55. The arrangements for assessing the youngest children's attainment and progress are a model of good practice. The teachers and support staff work together to monitor the progress of different groups of children, boys and girls, children whose first language is not English, children from ethnic minorities, refugee children and those with special educational needs. Their initial assessments are thorough and involve discussions with parents. Day-to-day observations and assessments are recorded on 'post-it notes' and used to plan the next learning step and targets for individual children as well as to record children's progress. The staff share information so that successes are celebrated and concerns are followed up appropriately.



56. Such coherence is less evident in the work of other teachers and support staff. The development of a calendar for assessment and reporting has highlighted the good range of procedures used to track pupils' progress and attainment. As well as the statutory tests at the end of Years 2 and 6, the school has a range of procedures to assess the children's attainment on entry to the school and then at regular intervals. The tests, checklists and records provide much data on pupils' attainment and allow progress to be evaluated. However, this is not always used to best effect. An analysis of pupils' results in the 2002 national tests has indicated general areas of weakness, but not enough has been done to identify specific weaknesses in reading, writing, mathematics and science. For example, school evidence shows that too few pupils made the progress expected in mathematics from Year 2 to Year 6 over the years since the last inspection, but the action plan for 2002/3 is not linked to specific areas for improvement.
57. The procedures for monitoring pupils' personal development are satisfactory. The nursery and reception staff keep detailed records of the children's personal, social and emotional development but this is not built on in the infant and junior years although the staff know the pupils well.

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

58. The parents' responses in the questionnaires, at the meeting with inspectors and in conversation with inspectors during the inspection, indicate that they are generally well satisfied with what the school provides for their children. Most parents view Crowcroft Park as a good school and feel fortunate that their children gained a place. This was also the case at the time of the last inspection. Some parents have had a long association with the school and have seen it grow and develop. The inspection team agrees with the parents' positive views which typify what the school does well. They are less in agreement with the parents' concerns about homework, although some junior classes are not keeping to the agreed timetable shared with parents.
59. The information that parents receive is good. The school sends regular letters to keep parents updated on events and makes translations available as requested. The school has staff who can converse with parents in several languages and day-to-day communication is good. Parents were observed bringing and collecting children to and from school and taking time to share news and concerns with teachers. The school welcomes this informal contact and has a true 'open door' policy. The prospectus and the annual report of the governing body fulfil legal requirements and most of the information is in 'parent-friendly' language. Parents appreciate the information the school sends on what their children will be learning as this offers them the opportunity to offer maximum support at home. The two formal meetings with school staff during the year provide parents with an opportunity to look at their children's work and to discuss their progress.
60. The good links with parents start in the nursery. The nursery and reception year staff are highly committed to involving parents in the children's learning. Two good strategies are the worksheets of ideas for activities for parents to share at home and the provision of stationery packs to encourage the parents and children to write together. By translating the details of current topics to meet the different languages of the parents, the nursery and reception staff try to inform as many as possible. The staff welcome parents and have gained the trust and willingness of the parents to help and support their children in school as well as at home.

61. The annual reports to parents on their children's progress are mainly satisfactory but are not always written in language that is easily understood. Reports are not translated but teachers and support staff are always willing to discuss the content with parents. The comments on the pupils' personal development show that the staff know the pupils really well. While the reports give parents information on the progress their children have made in different subjects, they do not specify clearly what pupils need to do to improve. This limits the value of the reports for future development.
62. The overall contribution of parents to children's learning at school and at home is satisfactory. Pupils' reading records show that some parents give much help to their children in reading but this is not a consistent feature. Only a few parents help regularly in school but more offer assistance when visits out of school are planned or to support school social events such as fairs, concerts and sporting events. The headteacher has sought parents' views on homework and most have signed the home/school agreement.
63. The school reaches out to parents by offering a community room in the school in which there is a toy lending library. A Mother-and-Toddler group meet regularly in the school and a range of courses is offered for parents under the auspices of the adult education service. The school has also offered workshops to inform parents about mathematics and ICT in the curriculum. Recent workshops on how to help with reading, run by support staff, including a Bengali speaker, were well attended by 34 parents. The headteacher is encouraging parents to reform the Friends' Association that was a good feature noted at the time of the last inspection.

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

64. The overall quality of leadership and management is satisfactory. Strengths in the work of the headteacher and governors are offset by weaknesses in the work of others. Although the teachers hold subject responsibility, they are not all giving a clear lead or working to best effect as a team to drive up standards. As a result, there are some inconsistencies in how school policies are followed and the school lacks a united front in tackling identified priorities. Leadership is not as strong as at the time of the last inspection when it was judged to be excellent. Underlying the four key issues from the previous inspection was the need to involve subject managers more in leading and managing school improvement. The school has not dealt fully with this over the last few years and gaps in managers' expertise and experience mean the school has fallen some way behind many other primaries nationally in refining the process of how it evaluates its own effectiveness and works to meet new challenges.
65. The headteacher has wisely taken a cautious line in making changes since her appointment in April 2002. She has astutely reviewed current practices and taken time to get to know staff, parents and pupils. In so doing she has fostered a positive team spirit and a willingness to accept change. She was quick to respond to aspects emerging from the inspection and to consult other staff and the governors in how to deal with them. This strong commitment and determination to ensure that Crowcroft Park provides the best it can for its pupils were also evident in the documents submitted as part of the inspection. The headteacher's detailed review and evaluation of the school indicated her awareness of the school's strengths but also where things need to change. She has a clear vision for the school and parents commented on how she has brought "a fresh, different approach". This is also evident in the comprehensive school development plan which sets out a good programme of action to deal with relevant priorities, many of which pre-empt the findings of this report.

66. One aspect of this 'fresh approach' is the development of shared school leadership and management. Two senior teachers are sharing aspects of the day-to-day running of the school until the deputy headteacher takes up her post in January 2003. The headteacher has realigned the senior management team to include the managers of the Foundation Stage, infant and junior teams. This has raised the profile of the Foundation Stage in the school and ensured all managers have a clearer understanding of how the work of their teams fits into the overall school picture. Staff comment how this has engendered a stronger feeling of being valued and consulted. The high level of commitment, loyalty and integrity shown by teaching and support staff, as well as the school's success in regaining Investors in People status early in 2002, indicates there is good potential for the school to improve.
67. One strong element of this potential is the work done recently to heighten managers' leadership roles through an agreed programme of procedures to monitor the quality of the curriculum and also the quality of teaching and learning. This has already identified aspects of teaching to strengthen, including the quality of teachers' questioning. However, not enough focus is given to evaluating the pupils' learning and identifying the links with the teaching. By refining well-established systems to record pupils' performance in tests and assessments, the headteacher has developed an effective indicator of the rate of progress. This has highlighted the variable progress in the junior years, especially pupils' slower progress in mathematics and consequent indications of underachievement, as well as weaknesses in teaching and learning. The headteacher is aware of the need to analyse school data much more rigorously to give governors and staff an informed view of trends, factors and their implications.
68. As noted in the last inspection, the governing body plays a full and active part in school life. The governing body is well organised and efficient. Committees and governors with specific roles deal competently with curriculum, financial and school matters and ensure that all statutory requirements are met, particularly in the area of health and safety. Governors have agreed a racism policy and drafted policies on sex education and also homework following consultation with parents. The governors' three year action plan sets out clear priorities to guide and focus their work. Minutes from committees are a good record of discussion points and the action decided. However, there is little in the minutes to indicate that governors have critically questioned and evaluated the impact and effectiveness of what is done to raise standards and deal with key issues.
69. The governing body has appointed a working party to manage the change resulting from the impending building work to extend the school and refurbish areas including the pupils' toilets. Although accommodation is adequate, the temporary classrooms are in a deteriorating state. After several years of having to take a cautious line in spending to ensure a balanced budget, the governing body has prudently accumulated healthy reserve funds to meet the costs of furnishing the new rooms without stinting on staffing and essential learning resources. Grants and specific funds are being used appropriately. For example, national funds have been used to set up a computer suite in a spare classroom and to ensure that all staff have updated their ICT skills. As a result, the school is making good use of computer technology in school and subject administration. Similarly, effective use has been made of a small room to act as base for the learning mentor.
70. Governors are conscious of the need to apply the principles of best value. They compare the school's results with local similar schools, set challenging targets, consult the parents and also seek best value in goods and services. A good example of this is the way the governors have weighed up the tenders submitted for all building

works and sought assurances that the work will minimise the disruption to the life of the school.

71. School improvement since 1998 has been satisfactory. The four key issues have been dealt with in part but they remain as areas for improvement. Nevertheless, the school has sustained some of the strengths then identified and also acquired new ones, notably the high quality of the Foundation Stage and the procedures adopted to deal with extended absences. Standards have risen in the national tests for seven and 11 year olds but this improvement is not evident in the standards in every year group or in all subjects. The low standards and variable progress in the junior years does not indicate that there has been a concerted effort to improve the quality of teaching and learning. For instance, in relation to the key issue in science, there is evidence of practical work but Year 6 pupils have poorly developed knowledge of how to plan, carry out and evaluate their own fair tests and scientific investigations. Given that these pupils were in Year 1 at the time of the last inspection, they have not benefited enough from steps taken “by placing greater emphasis on the teaching of experimental and investigative work”.
72. The acquired strength in the Foundation Stage reflects the very good leadership and management skills of the nursery teacher. Her vision and in-depth knowledge of the principles of early years education are clearly evident in all aspects of her work. She has taken the initiative in establishing highly effective administrative systems and good communication within the team. The regular, honest and thorough evaluation of what the team provide for the children has ensured that relevant priorities are identified and effective action is taken. As a result, there is a high level of consistency in the work of the nursery and reception staff and all feel part of a successful team.
73. The nursery teacher has also successfully used her skills to compile a thorough and realistic action plan to ensure that the school meets fully the principles of the revised national guidance relating to the provision for pupils with special educational needs. She gives a clear, good lead in working with staff to review pupils’ progress in meeting their individual targets and in liaising with parents, the nominated governor and also external agencies.
74. Although there is no named coordinator for the work of the EMAS team, the part-time teacher takes a leadership role and the headteacher keeps an effective overview of the team’s work. The EMAS staff work closely with the teachers and other support staff, are well integrated into school life and are deployed effectively to meet the language needs of qualifying pupils.
75. For the number of pupils, the school has an adequate number of teaching and support staff. A good aspect in their deployment is the placing of a learning mentor in the nursery in the autumn term and then into the reception class with the children moving from the nursery at the start of the spring term. The quantity and quality of learning resources are satisfactory overall and good in the Foundation Stage. Many staff make their own good quality resources, including worksheets and support material.
76. Day-to-day school and financial administration is efficient and effective. The long-serving school secretary knows the families very well and she plays a central role in developing and sustaining the good links with the community.
77. Overall, the effectiveness of the school is satisfactory and the school gives satisfactory value for money.



## WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

78. In order to raise standards and accelerate the programme of school improvement, the governors, headteacher and staff should:

1. improve the quality of pupils' writing by implementing a programme to enrich pupils' competence in using language, ensuring greater consistency in handwriting, accuracy in spelling and use of punctuation, providing a wide range of reasons and audiences to foster pupils' use of writing, and ensuring that the teachers use their marking to indicate to pupils what they need to do to improve;  
(paragraphs 2, 6, 8, 28, 32, 37, 38, 90, 110, 111, 112, 117, 118, 119, 160)
2. improve the quality of pupils' behaviour, self-discipline and independence in learning by ensuring that all staff consistently follow agreed school practices in managing and promoting good behaviour, setting explicit high standards in how pupils are to behave in lessons and around the school, and encouraging pupils to take more responsibility for their own learning;  
(paragraphs 8, 16, 19, 20, 29, 45, 48, 52, 128, 134, 165, 171)
3. heighten pupils' achievement and rate of progress, especially in the junior years, by raising the teachers' expectations of what pupils can do for their age and ensuring that more attention is given to providing learning experiences that reflect the pupils' needs;  
(paragraphs 2, 13, 25, 26, 32, 38, 41, 56, 115, 123, 132, 151)
4. ensuring that all subject leaders are clear about their responsibilities and have the skills, expertise, time and resources needed to take an active role in raising standards, managing change, and improving the quality of teaching and learning throughout the school.  
(paragraphs 52, 56, 64, 67, 71, 111, 120, 139, 149, 155)

In drawing up the action plan, the governing body may also wish to include the following minor issues:

- the use of ICT across the curriculum;  
(paragraphs 15, 32, 41, 118, 128, 136, 143, 149, 159, 160)
- the gaps in teachers' subject knowledge on the teaching of writing;  
(paragraphs 8, 26)
- the slower progress of girls in the junior years in mathematics and science.  
(paragraphs 13, 56, 67, 127)

## PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

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

Number of lessons observed	53
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	24

### Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Number	0	10	17	22	4	0	0
Percentage	0	19	32	41	8	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)	30	196
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	N/A	85

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	30

#### English as an additional language

	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	122

#### Pupil mobility in the last school year

	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	38
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	31

### Attendance

#### Authorised absence

%
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#### Unauthorised absence

%
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School data	5.9
National comparative data	5.6

School data	0.3
National comparative data	0.5

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



### Attainment at the end of Key Stage 1 (Year 2)

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2002	18	12	30

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	15	16	18
	Girls	12	11	12
	Total	27	27	30
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	90 (93)	90 (93)	100 (100)
	National	84 (84)	86 (86)	90 (91)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	16	18	18
	Girls	11	12	12
	Total	27	30	30
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	90 (na)	100 (na)	100 (96)
	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	15	14	29

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	10	11	12
	Girls	9	10	13
	Total	19	21	24
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	66 (55)	72 (59)	83 (79)
	National	75 (75)	73 (71)	86 (87)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	10	10	10
	Girls	10	10	14
	Total	20	20	24
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	69 (na)	69 (na)	83 (na)
	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	52	0	0
White – Irish	0	0	0
White – any other White background	0	0	0
Mixed – White and Black Caribbean	12	0	0
Mixed – White and Black African	2	0	0
Mixed – White and Asian	6	0	0
Mixed – any other mixed background	1	0	0
Asian or Asian British - Indian	3	0	0
Asian or Asian British - Pakistani	80	0	0
Asian or Asian British – Bangladeshi	15	0	0
Asian or Asian British – any other Asian background	1	0	0
Black or Black British – Caribbean	8	0	0
Black or Black British – African	4	0	0
Black or Black British – any other Black background	5	0	0
Chinese	0	0	0
Any other ethnic group	7	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)	8
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	24.5
Average class size	28

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

Total number of education support staff	13
Total aggregate hours worked per week	227

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

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	1
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	30
Total number of education support staff	3
Total aggregate hours worked per week	44
Number of pupils per FTE adult	10

*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)	0
Number of vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of a term or more (FTE)	0
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	678,338
Total expenditure	626,430
Expenditure per pupil	2,632
Balance brought forward from previous year	73,337
Balance carried forward to next year	125,245

## Results of the survey of parents and carers

### Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	226
Number of questionnaires returned	30

### Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	73	27	0	0	0
My child is making good progress in school.	60	37	3	0	0
Behaviour in the school is good.	63	27	7	0	3
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	33	30	27	3	7
The teaching is good.	70	23	0	0	7
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	53	33	7	3	3
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	63	30	3	0	3
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	73	20	3	0	3
The school works closely with parents.	57	37	3	0	3
The school is well led and managed.	57	43	0	0	0
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	60	40	0	0	0
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	57	30	3	0	10

## **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**

79. The overall provision is very good and is a key strength in the school. The children benefit highly from their time in the nursery and reception year because the exciting, imaginative activities have been planned with great care to develop the children's knowledge and skill in all six areas of learning.
80. The nursery provides places for 30 children in the morning and afternoon sessions. When children first start, their attainment is lower than expected for their age especially in speaking and listening. Many have little understanding of number and limited general knowledge. They make really good progress and achieve well. On entry to the reception class, children's attainment is much closer to, but remains below, the standard expected. The children continue to make good progress and, with the exception of communication, language and literacy, most children are likely to achieve the expected standard at the end of the reception year. This is a significant achievement for the children and the school and reflects the high quality of the teaching and support they receive.
81. The overall quality of teaching is very good. It is slightly stronger in the nursery than the reception year. The teachers and support assistants form a skilful, hardworking and committed team who clearly enjoy their work. Their flair and ingenuity show in the excellent organisation of the nursery and reception rooms, the corridor and the outdoor area, as well as in the outstanding displays to prompt and celebrate the children's learning. All creates a vibrant and purposeful learning environment where the children and parents feel comfortable.

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

82. The children make very good progress and most are likely to attain the expected levels by the end of the reception year. The high priority given to this area of learning and the very good teaching are key features in the children's successful learning. The adults show much care and concern for the children and they know their personalities and characters very well. They ensure all the children participate in the activities and promote harmonious relationships.
83. The nursery children settle quickly because they are made to feel secure and wanted. A strong sense of community typifies the nursery and reception class, where each child is treated as a valued member. The staff have high expectations of the children to make their own decisions and they organise the rooms to help them to be as independent as possible. The nursery children learn to plan what they want to do, and labels such as "Come and take care of puppets" help the reception children to know what they can choose to do. Among the many worthwhile activities to develop the children's confidence, independence and positive self-image are sessions when they work together, as in making the outdoor mini-roundabout move at speed. In the nursery 'Milk Bar' the children often choose a friend to share a chat. While many of the younger nursery children play on their own, the reception children often seek partners to share an activity.
84. The children's behaviour is mostly good because they know the expectations and are so interested in their activities that they have little time to misbehave. In the reception class the children begin to fidget and sometimes call out when they are required to sit

and listen for too long a period. However, they are quick to renew their interest when the teacher introduces something new.

85. The children show much pride and satisfaction in their own achievement because the staff ensure success is shared and celebrated. The children eagerly pointed to their photograph on 'Our Pride Board'. Through well-planned activities the children begin to recognise and respond sensitively to the feelings of others and to offer their own ideas. For instance, among the suggestions from nursery children to help Mrs Large, in the story "Peace at Last", to get some sleep was the ploy of moving into another room. The children get a lot of pleasure and self-satisfaction from their experiences. When they realised they could make milkshakes with different flavours, the reception children were absolutely thrilled. Similarly, nursery children were highly delighted when they successfully made a birthday card for the teddy bear.

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

86. The children in the nursery and reception year make good progress. Those who initially speak no English make remarkable progress in understanding and using English because of the specialist language support and the good quality of teaching. Many other children initially have limited skills in expressing themselves but develop in confidence, clarity and range of vocabulary. Although the staff plan extensive opportunities to develop the children's skills, many will not reach the expected standard by the end of the reception year.
87. The nursery and reception year staff make effective use of themes such as 'My body' to develop the children's interest in books and to promote their use of relevant words and phrases through role play and first hand experiences. For example, over the inspection period, the reception year children made good progress in using the names of parts of the body and in using polite social phrases as they answered the hospital telephone and engaged in dialogue with a patient.
88. The children develop an enthusiasm for books because they have access to comfortable, inviting book areas that are well stocked with high quality picture books. When nursery and reception year children choose to share books with a friend they often talk more confidently than in response to adult questions. They are particularly keen to read the books from group story times. These sessions are very productive as the staff are skilled in encouraging the children to join in, and to predict and describe what they see in the pictures. When the teacher began to read the book upside down, the older nursery children were quick to correct her. By the time they move into the reception year, the children know that stories have a beginning, middle and end and that the title might be a clue to the story content. They also follow the teacher in giving different voices for characters and making the story come alive. In 'Wake up, Isabel' the children added the sounds of owls, cats and dogs. Many learn to recognise their own names and some familiar words.
89. The reception year teacher gradually introduces elements of the literacy hour during the year. However, the timing of these sessions after assembly leads to some lack of concentration as the children find it hard to sit for so long. They are learning the sounds and shapes of letters because the staff use imaginative strategies. For example, to learn the letter 'd' the children were encouraged to repeat the 'd-d-d' sound of a drill. The children are not so quick to recognise words and this slows their move into reading. The reception year children have regular opportunities to read books from the school reading scheme. Many learn to read initially from memory and

only the higher attaining children use clues in the pictures and letter sounds to work out unfamiliar words.

90. The children are confident and willing to have a go at reading and writing because the nursery and reception classrooms are alive with an extensive range of labels, captions and instructions and inviting writing areas. The adults encourage the children to read and write as part of their work and play; for instance, to write a letter to a poorly friend. While some children are still in the stage of making marks, many reception year children are writing letters and a few write their name unaided. Higher attaining children are beginning to form sentences. Very few, however, are on line to meet the standard expected in writing by the end of the reception year.

### **Mathematical development**

91. Over the two years in the nursery and reception class, many children make good progress. A key strand in the very good teaching is the way the adults foster the children's understanding of number, shape and measures through daily practical activities often as part of ongoing experiences and classroom life. For example, in music sessions they ask the children to count the beats of the drum and to sing counting songs. As a result, most children are on course to achieve the expected standard in number by the end of the reception year.
92. The staff use carefully structured sessions to develop the children's counting skills and to extend their mathematical vocabulary. Good use is made of a very large abacus, number lines and displays, including a rocket count down, for the children to practise one-to-one counting and to find the numbers they need. Nursery children often count the fish and plants on the large 'Under the Sea' display. In an imaginative session, the older nursery children became very excited when the toy Mr Panda appeared, as he was known to get things wrong. The children took great delight in correcting his counting mistakes. When they move into the reception year, most know number to ten. Reception year children filled in missing numbers to 20 and higher attaining children rose to the teacher's challenge in giving the number after 107. The children relish other challenges such as seeing how long it will take them to count to 50. Gradually they are introduced to different ways to record their number work in adding and subtracting.
93. The children develop a good understanding of shape and pattern because of the links made as part of a wide range of activities. For example, the children were encouraged to look at the patterns when sorting small objects and to create a pattern of repeating shapes using a computer program. Good use is also made of opportunities in water play to help the children compare the quantities in different containers. The reception year children display an increasing ability to name and talk about the properties of shapes. They thoroughly enjoyed making shapes with rubber bands around pegs and confidently described the differences to others.
94. The children's mathematical skills and knowledge are also effectively developed in the outdoor area because the staff seize on potential opportunities. As part of taking the children on a bear hunt to echo the actions in a favourite story, the teacher emphasised positional language and encouraged the children to solve problems such as how to deal with the cargo net.

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

95. The very good teaching, rich and varied provision, the effective use of the outdoor areas and visits to places of interest, all account for the children's very good progress

in learning to explore and investigate. Most are on line to reach the standard expected by the end of the reception year and their interest and learning form a secure foundation for work in science in the infant years.

96. Through play in sand, water and natural materials the children become aware of the properties and textures of materials. Nursery children were fascinated to see how the water wheel turned more quickly when a child poured the water fast. Well-planned activities stimulate the children's natural curiosity. In the outdoor natural area the reception year children industriously searched for mini-beasts in the bark chippings and under tree stumps with the aid of magnifiers.
97. Children's learning about time, place, cultures and beliefs is successfully promoted through visits and themes such as 'Healthy Living'. The reception year children were enthralled as they watched the teacher use a bath and a doll to demonstrate how to keep body and hair clean. Linked to this, the children put much effort into making a 'Keep Fit Ted' by jointing the arms and legs with split pins and then trying to make him jump and hop. The children regularly visit local supermarkets, the park, other nurseries and the seaside when the staff deliberately take the children on the bus and train as so many have not had these experiences before.
98. A wide range of construction kits is available for the children to explore how components fit together and how to choose particular pieces to make vehicles, buildings and creative shapes. These activities, and the use of small toys, also develop the children's awareness of environmental features such as road lay-outs, farms and buildings. When the adults work with them, the children become increasingly more confident in using correct vocabulary to describe what they know.
99. The children's frequent access to the 'Computer Zones' ensures they become competent in using the computer mouse to click on pictures, drag and drop them, or to guide the screen pencil to copy shapes.

### **Physical development**

100. The children achieve well and develop good coordination skills because they are involved in a wide range of physical activities throughout the day indoors and out. The children want to go outside as they know there are many exciting things to do. This reflects the creativity and good skills of the teaching staff in making the best use of available resources to provide purposeful, energetic and adventurous outdoor play. As a consequence, the reception children are on course to meet the standard expected by the end of the year.
101. A good example of the thought and care given to outdoor play was the focus on the road track during the inspection. The children were learning to steer, manoeuvre and change speed as they pedalled the bicycles and tricycles around the track and responded to the road signs and directions of other children acting as traffic wardens. Likewise, as workers, other children dug up the road, caused diversions and took a tea-break in the hut. They knew that this was one way to warm up after time in a cold wind.
102. The nursery children quickly develop confidence to use the playground equipment as the staff show them what to do. For instance, the children first learn to climb the cargo net by using the portable steps. They learn to coordinate hand and foot movements and then move into climbing the rope steps on the net. In following the lead of the teacher, the nursery children rehearsed different methods of travelling as



they marched, took long and short strides and swung under the bars. Many did this confidently and showed good control for their age in keeping their balance.

103. There is a good range of games equipment and when the adults join in, the children often make marked progress in their learning. A good example was when an adult demonstrated how to aim and throw a bean bag into a hoop. The reception children then went on to improve the accuracy of their throws and to guess what might happen if they used a ball instead. One boy was quite amazed when he threw the rugby ball towards his partner and it bounced back to him.
104. Children's manipulative control of small tools and equipment is often very weak when they first enter the nursery. Their manipulative and handling skills develop well because the staff plan very specific activities to develop control and dexterity. For example, the children were encouraged to cut materials carefully as they made a birthday card and one nursery child painstakingly picked out particular hair clips which she then nipped into place on the dummy head in the hairdressing salon.

### **Creative development**

105. The strength of the creative development programme is in the good teaching and the emphasis given to allowing the children to express their own ideas and feelings. For example, musical instruments are available indoors and out and children are given good support from specialist staff. They are taught how to handle instruments and encouraged to describe the sounds they make. They create shaking and tapping sounds and perform their own music as they march in a circle. Outside, the children use wooden spoons to create sounds from the suspended plastic plant pots, metal colanders and pan lids. In this aspect and others, the children are on track to achieve the expected standard by the end of the reception year.
106. The children also show developing confidence as they explore different art and craft materials and learn to make their own decisions about the best materials to use. Many examples on display show the children learn a wide range of techniques such as bubble printing, marbling and tie-dyeing. They become adept at mixing colours because they do so for a purpose. For example, the nursery children took care to depict the differing skin tones of the children in the class.
107. Role-play activities are well planned, with good quality props and resources to foster the children's imaginative ideas. In addition, the staff make good use of puppets, soft toys and telephones to prompt the children to retell and create stories.

### **ENGLISH**

108. Standards are good at the end of Year 2 and below average at the end of Year 6.
109. Standards have risen considerably since the last inspection although the school no longer has a high percentage of infant pupils who do well in writing. Structured, systematic teaching and higher teacher expectations have helped to raise standards and ensure that pupils achieve well over time. Current good teaching for the infant pupils is ensuring they make steady, good progress in reading and writing. Although satisfactory overall, with strengths in Year 6 and in the support for pupils who have English as an additional language, the teaching for the junior pupils is not consistently strong enough to boost learning in every year group. This means that gaps from previous years are being compounded.

110. The performance of the current Year 6 pupils indicates the school's targets for 2003 are unrealistic. In writing, few pupils show the quality of content and accuracy needed. In reading, only the higher attaining readers are already working at the level expected for their age.
111. The school is aware that one of the reasons why standards are lower at the end of Year 6 compared with Year 2 is the pupils' generally limited skills in using language effectively. However, there is no coherent, shared school programme to raise standards. Pupils who attend the drama club are learning to use language in different ways but teachers do not highlight well enough in their planning how they intend to develop pupils' speaking and listening skills through all subjects. A good step has been the focus on identifying and teaching key vocabulary in topics but classroom displays do not consistently support this. The lack of records to track pupils' speaking and listening skills means teachers have little to guide their planning.
112. Pupils learn to listen to adults and each other and generally listen attentively, especially when there is also something to see. However, there is a significant number of pupils in each year group who only half listen. While some pupils are fluent and articulate and have few difficulties in expressing themselves, more have problems in using a wide range of vocabulary especially to describe and explain clearly. Many pupils make remarkable progress in learning to speak English and they cope successfully in conversation and general discussions. The gaps in their understanding of words, phrases and sayings become obvious when they are questioned about their reading. For example, a Year 2 pupil did not know the meaning of the word 'yelled' and several Year 5 pupils struggled to appreciate what 'a bust of the Queen' might refer to in the poem 'Up in the attic and down in the cellar'.
113. The teachers do not always anticipate and pre-empt language difficulties by encouraging pupils to point out words they do not know or using dictionaries to find their definitions. As a result, in all year groups, many pupils tend to remain quiet when they do not understand and to gloss over unknown words as they read. They get the gist of passages but find it hard to infer, deduce and grasp the nuances of text. This affects their work across the curriculum. When support staff work with the pupils these issues are less apparent. The sensitive translations by a bilingual teacher enhanced the work of the EMAS support teacher in helping Year 3 pupils to understand how a report is structured.
114. Pupils make good progress in reading in the infant years because of the good emphasis on learning high frequency words, letter sounds and word patterns. Year 1 pupils enjoy lotto games and other practical sessions when they play with letters, but they are not so quick to apply this knowledge in their reading. Although they like books they are less willing to talk about the content. By the end of Year 2, most are reading confidently on their own although some read in a stilted, word by word fashion. They respond well to guidance on the use of expression and characterisation but the lack of regular and frequent reading practice holds back some pupils. The school has not developed ways to help those pupils whose parents do not hear them read regularly at home. For example, chances are missed to continue practices started in the nursery and reception class such as pupils reading to soft toys or to a partner.
115. Reading also has too low a profile in many junior classes to boost pupils' progress and ensure that those in Years 3 and 4 consolidate their skills. Year 6 pupils benefit from having topic-related books that are easily accessible and their teacher encourages them to read widely and to complete their own 'wall of reading'. They

talked about reading Harry Potter stories, Enid Blyton books, and cricket annuals, as well as books on current class themes. Such deliberate focus on reading is less evident in other junior classes and is also reflected in the pupils' narrow appreciation of books, authors, and their slow reading of stories. For example, one Year 5 pupil was only a third of the way through 'Dustbin Baby' by Jacqueline Wilson almost two months after starting it. Part of the problem is that the teachers do not all use the time for group reading to teach specific skills and strategies and to discuss books and authors' styles. Consequently, the pupils find it difficult to identify stylistic features and to infer and deduce from what they read.

116. An area of strength in reading is the pupils' awareness of the features of non-fiction texts. Year 2 pupils already know the purpose of contents and index pages and incorporated them, along with a back page blurb, in their own mini-books. By Year 6, most average and higher attaining pupils are confident to scan to find relevant information and skim read to get the gist. Some, however, are less skilled in using their knowledge of the alphabet to locate words in a dictionary or index. Year 6 pupils were so keen to use the thesauruses and dictionaries that some were ahead of the teacher in finding words with the prefix 'auto'. Chances are missed to develop pupils' skills through greater use of the library.
117. Pupils' writing develops more slowly, and the uneven progress, evident from the school's tracking records, reflects gaps in teachers' expertise in teaching writing, most especially for the junior pupils. When the pupils start in Year 1 many are still in the very early stages of writing independently. The lower attaining pupils have a long way to go to meet the standard expected for their age. They are making good progress because of good teaching in spelling and sentence construction. This is enhanced by exciting reasons for writing, such as the need to record how they are making jam sandwiches to give others instructions on what to do later. Marking comments, including, "Good, you have remembered your finger spaces" help to keep the pupils aware of their progress in meeting targets. Many Year 2 pupils write at length but their ideas often ramble and sentence punctuation is insecure. They lift their performance when the task grabs their interest. Their letters, written as Little Red Hen asking the other animals for their forgiveness as she had been selfish, included good phrases and were well organised.
118. Recent steps to make use of national programmes to teach spelling are paying off in the infant classes. Pupils respond well to the games and activities and although their application of knowledge takes time to show in their writing, they show at least satisfactory knowledge of spelling patterns. The lack of such systematic teaching in previous years shows in the erratic spelling of the junior pupils. For example, errors included "drinck" and "sosige" in writing by Year 5 pupils. Little use is made of ICT programs to reinforce spelling or to help pupils draft and correct their own work.
119. Things pick up in Year 6 where the teacher reinforces key spellings, correct punctuation and use of grammar. Her high expectations of the pupils to do well also mean she plugs the gaps in pupils' knowledge of writing features. They know how to plan a story but the quality of their narrative and descriptive writing is not as competent as that of instructional and diary writing. Very few are mature writers for their age. Regular practice in handwriting is helping Year 6 pupils to gain a legible, fluent style. However, in other year groups, pupils' handwriting is often untidy and poorly formed. Different styles are evident in the teachers' writing and how they teach the pupils. Year 3 pupils were keen to practise joining letters but their later writing did not reflect this work. Such inconsistencies typify pupils' work and are not identified by the teachers in their marking. Work seen had comments such as "Super" and "Well

done” when it was of poor quality and riddled with errors in punctuation and spelling. Few comments tell pupils how they might improve and consequently some pupils continue to make the same errors repeatedly.

120. The overall quality of subject leadership and management is satisfactory. The coordinator has a sound overview of standards and where the general areas for improvement are. Her monitoring of some literacy lessons has provided a good start in identifying effective practice to share and areas to improve. The assessment systems, writing portfolios and performance data give good information on where pupils’ learning is problematic but this has not been used critically enough to specify exactly what needs to be done, and by whom, to raise standards.

## **MATHEMATICS**

121. Standards have risen since the last inspection, especially at the end of Year 6 although they remain below average. Standards are good at the end of Year 2 but this does not reflect the school’s very good results in the 2002 national tests when all of the Year 2 pupils reached the level expected for their age. Inspection evidence indicates that with the support of booster work, already in place, the school is likely to achieve the challenging target of 70 per cent Level 4 attainment in the 2003 tests.
122. Infant pupils develop a good knowledge of basic number. They learn to add and subtract number to 20 mentally and begin to try out different ways of calculating such as counting on or breaking numbers into tens and units to make the addition simpler. By Year 2, pupils accurately apply their number skills to money calculations. Given the pupils’ low levels of attainment when they start nursery, they achieve well over time. Most work hard and show an interest in lessons.
123. By Year 6, most pupils have a good understanding of number processes and place value. They cope well when multiplying and dividing by ten, 100 and 1000 and converting percentages into fraction equivalents. Pupils also use different methods of calculation when solving number problems. However, relatively few pupils are doing well for their age. The school has rightly identified problem solving as an area of weakness because many pupils have limited language skills. Too many pupils miss the implications of written number problems. This particularly affects the progress of pupils with special educational needs and those with English as an additional language. They make good progress in developing basic number knowledge because work is planned at the right level for them and the adults, especially the classroom assistants, give effective support. For example, in a lesson seen in Year 5, the classroom assistant’s comments about the task helped one pupil to concentrate and stay on task. This not only met the target in the pupil’s individual learning programme but also meant full participation in the number game with the rest of the group.
124. The school’s implementation of the National Numeracy Strategy, and subsequent professional development for staff, has had a positive effect on the quality of teaching and learning, especially for the infant pupils. The teachers are making good use of published resources to supplement national guidance, and the strong emphasis on practical problem solving has helped to improve the curriculum and to plug previous gaps. There is less evidence in pupils’ books of number investigations and pupils’ explanations of the methods they have used.
125. Numeracy processes are generally taught well throughout the school. Mental and oral number work at the start of lessons provides a good focus for counting, using number

multiples and refining pupils' mental agility in handling number. When the pupils use number cards or small whiteboards to record and show their answers, the level of engagement is high. A good example was in Year 3 when the pupils recorded addition facts and then used the same numbers to show that subtraction is the reverse of addition. Pupils are taught a wide range of calculation strategies and are encouraged to explain how they have worked out their answers. Responses such as, "I put the biggest number in my head first and then add the other numbers" or "I double the tens and then add the units" show that the pupils understand what they are doing. Not all the teachers make the most effective use of the time at the end of lessons to assess and review what pupils have learned.

126. Pupils achieve well in the infant years because of good teaching. The teachers plan lessons carefully and make use of varied activities to keep the pupils interested and move the learning on. The tasks are generally well matched to the different abilities of the pupils. In a very good lesson, Year 1 pupils made good strides in understanding place value because the teacher used small farm animals to show how the one in 15 meant ten animals. Many pupils quickly grasped the concept and went on to split other numbers into tens and units. They concentrated well in their groups and worked conscientiously and quietly throughout the lesson. However, poor recording by some pupils marred their work.
127. Junior pupils do not achieve as well as they should. School evidence shows that pupils' learning slows, especially the girls. By Year 6, there is much to do to catch up and to ensure that pupils do as well as their Year 2 attainment predicted. The dip in achievement is partly because lessons are more mundane and lack the pace and interest factor often seen in the infant years.
128. The teaching in the junior years is satisfactory overall but there are weaknesses in the management of pupils' behaviour and in the methods used to prompt pupils' learning. Pupils in Years 4 and 5 found it hard to sustain their concentration because they were not actively engaged in their learning. The unacceptable behaviour of a few disrupted others. The Year 6 teacher's firm discipline ensures the pupils behave well and, consequently, their progress is better. Higher attaining pupils are already working at a good level in measuring and identifying angles. Pupils know how to collect data and interpret data but have little experience in using ICT for this purpose. Similarly in other classes, there is little to show that ICT is used to support pupils' learning in mathematics lessons. In all classes, there is little systematic use of homework to develop pupils' skills.
129. The subject team leader has only recently been appointed but is aware of the need to improve the quality of the plenary sessions in lessons and the need to raise standards through more rigorous target setting and the monitoring of teaching and learning.

## **SCIENCE**

130. As in the last inspection, standards are average at the end of Year 2. In the 2002 teacher assessments, a high percentage of pupils were judged to be doing well for their age. Inspection evidence indicates this is not as evident this year. Over the last four years, there has been a good improvement in the standards achieved in national tests for 11 year olds, and the school's 2002 results were in line with the national average. However, as in 1998, experimental and investigative work still requires development, and the overall attainment of the current Year 6 pupils is lower than

expected for their age. Pupils from minority ethnic groups attain similar levels to their peers although fewer girls than boys do well.

131. Year 2 pupils are working at the expected level for their age in all aspects of science. They have learnt about healthy eating and living, and the growth of humans and other animals. As part of this good links were made with mathematics in presenting data about favourite foods in bar charts. Pupils have also carried out some investigative work in making simple circuits, and during the inspection spent an afternoon enjoying hands-on experience at the Manchester Museum of Science and Technology. The pupils really enjoy such practical activities. Year 1 pupils explored a variety of torches to see which was the most effective in illuminating words on a sheet in a dark area. They were very keen and made good progress in realising how to test out their ideas. The good intervention and questioning by the teacher and support assistant ensured that all pupils took full part in the activities. The pupils who have English as an additional language did as well as the others because of the good support and visual, practical nature of the tasks.
132. Year 3 pupils built successfully on the good standards achieved last year when they studied teeth as part of a topic on healthy eating. The teacher had prepared the lesson thoroughly and linked it to a visit from a dental nurse to help the pupils understand how best to care for their teeth. Pupils used mirrors to observe and identify their own teeth, comparing them to drawings of molars, canines and incisors on a tooth chart. The pupils carefully handled plaster casts of adult teeth and compared them with an x-ray of an upper and lower human jaw. The good bilingual support available for pupils with English as an additional language played a crucial part in enabling them to take a full part in the lesson and gain an understanding of key vocabulary and concepts. All pupils made very good progress and showed a higher than expected knowledge and understanding of the topic. Such good learning and high standards are not as evident in the work in pupils' books.
133. A scrutiny of work shows that Year 6 pupils have developed their understanding of life processes by setting up experiments to test the optimum growing conditions for healthy plants. This is partly revision of earlier work, but higher attaining pupils have drawn good conclusions from their investigations although their work is only average for their age. After each unit of work, the teacher tests the pupils' knowledge using questions and papers from previous national tests. As a result, the teacher and pupils know precisely how their work measures up to the standard expected of 11 year olds. While Year 6 pupils are improving their scientific knowledge, they do not understand sufficiently how to conduct a fair test, or how to set up, implement and draw conclusions from a scientific investigation. They also have problems in interpreting and responding to questions that ask for explanations. This continuing weakness since the last inspection when the Year 6 pupils were in Year 2, indicates little was done to deal systematically with the key issue of placing greater emphasis on the teaching of experimental and investigative work.
134. The quality of teaching in lessons seen varied from satisfactory to very good, but a scrutiny of pupils' work indicates that it is generally satisfactory. This leads to satisfactory progress for pupils overall, although it is better for the younger infant pupils as the teaching is stronger. Pupils' attitudes and behaviour are generally good, and sometimes very good when the lesson is well planned and they are fully involved in interesting activities. Despite good preparation for a lesson for Year 5 pupils and the teacher's high expectations of the pupils' involvement, many pupils behaved in an immature fashion that slowed everyone's learning. Not enough thought is given to ensuring that pupils know how to ask and answer their own scientific questions. For

example, Year 6 pupils carried out research into books on micro-organisms, but there was no encouragement for them to use magnifying lens or the computer microscope to examine the growth on the various items available to show changes.

135. The two coordinators have only recently taken over leadership of science. They have devised a sensible action plan, and there is good potential, utilising the specialist science knowledge of one of the coordinators, to advance standards and enrich the quality of science education.

## **ART AND DESIGN**

136. As no lessons were observed in art and design it is not possible to make a secure judgement on the quality of teaching and learning. A scrutiny of work on display and in sketchbooks indicates that by the ages of seven and 11, pupils' attainment is below the expected standards. Standards have fallen since the last inspection when they were judged to be satisfactory. Art and design has a low profile in the overall curriculum. Although the school has a range of materials, especially to reflect different cultural genres, pupils have limited experience in investigating a variety of styles and traditions and learning to work on their own and collaborating with others on projects in two and three dimensions and on different scales. There is little evidence of sculpture or of the use of ICT as a process to aid design and production.
137. Pupils make unsatisfactory progress in the infant and junior years in exploring and developing ideas as well as investigating and making art, craft and design. Although many junior pupils have sketchbooks, they are used too sparingly. Pupils are not learning how to use them as a learning support or as a way to record initial ideas.
138. One area of improvement is in drawing from observation. Year 1 pupils' self-portraits show good attention to proportion and facial features. While some Year 2 pupils' drawings of plants are detailed, many are below the standard expected of seven year olds. In the junior years there are some examples of work of a reasonable standard but more examples that reflect immaturity and limited progression in skill development. Although Year 3 pupils' 'Family Portraits' show some good attention to colour and background, their work in the hall is not of a similarly high standard. As in the last inspection, there is limited evidence of the pupils' knowledge of the lives and works of famous artists and craftspeople. Pupils have visited a sculpture park but opportunities to extend and develop this work are missed.
139. The previous report commented on the limited subject knowledge of some teachers. Although the coordinator indicated that teachers' confidence in teaching art and design is stronger, there is little evidence of its impact in raising standards. The school has adopted nationally recommended guidelines with detailed teaching plans. As in many schools, art and design alternates on the timetable with design and technology each half term but there is little to show how natural links are exploited as in pupils using particular art techniques to finish their products.
140. The coordinator has a sound knowledge and understanding of the subject. She has plans to monitor teaching and learning and also to provide more visits for pupils to Manchester Art Gallery where they can gain first hand experience in appraising the work of others supported by specialist staff.

## **DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY**

141. As in the last inspection, standards are satisfactory and pupils' work is typical for their age at the end of Years 2 and 6. Satisfactory teaching overall ensures that all pupils make satisfactory progress in learning how to work with tools, materials and components. Pupils develop an early understanding of the design process and how to record their ideas. Year 1 pupils, for example, commented that designs needed labels and a list of materials as "Otherwise you would not know what your model would look like or what you need to make it".
142. Throughout the school pupils enjoy designing and making and show much interest in what they are asked to do. They are given a range of materials to use and are encouraged to consider their suitability. Infant pupils become competent in cutting, attaching and decorating paper and card as well as the techniques of stitching or gluing materials together. Year 1 pupils successfully used sticky tape, glue and plasticine to fasten, join and secure their models of playground equipment. Very good teaching ensured they discussed critically how they could improve their models. As a result, the pupils benefited from each other's ideas such as threading a long pipe cleaner round the base of a roundabout to steady it.
143. Junior pupils learn to use a design sheet to record their ideas and plan their work. Pupils from Years 5 and 6 worked sensibly in generating ideas for a new musical instrument. They were fascinated by the sound of a rain stick which prompted their ideas of materials to use and how they could make it. Evidence from displays and photographs of previous work show that an appropriate range of work is covered and that pupils learn to evaluate their products. One gap, however, is the use of ICT equipment as part of the process.
144. The subject is led satisfactorily. The school has adopted the nationally recommended scheme of work and there is a suitable range of construction kits, tools, equipment and materials to support pupils' learning.

## **GEOGRAPHY**

145. Standards are satisfactory at the end of Years 2 and 6, as in the last inspection. In all year groups, pupils' attainment is broadly as expected for their age. The teaching is satisfactory overall.
146. A strength of the geography curriculum is the effective use of fieldwork in the local area to develop pupils' enquiry skills and knowledge of places and processes. As part of this they develop skills in using and compiling maps. Infant pupils use maps of the area to find familiar landmarks and to work out the different routes they take to come to school. In walks around the area they look at different buildings and their location. Year 2 pupils worked with the teacher to create a map of the fictitious island of Struay and used simple symbols to represent key features. Junior pupils map local geographical features as part of their study of Longsight in the past and acquire an understanding of scale and grid referencing.
147. Pupils also learn how where people live affects their lives. Year 2 pupils talk about the weather in different parts of the world compared to that in Britain. In a well-planned and interesting lesson, the teacher prompted them to discuss how the mountains and other geographical features of the island of Struay have an impact on the life of Katie Morag. Good use was made of an interactive computer program to involve the pupils in a 'Countryside challenge'.



148. Junior pupils develop an understanding of the links between human activity and its effects. For example, Year 6 pupils highlighted the importance of recycling materials to help deal with pollution in the environment. They drew on their experience to suggest why people dropped litter and had many good ideas to prevent it. The teacher's good questioning and reference to pupils' previous learning, such as the link to thermal insulation in science when discussing the packaging of food products, ensured the pupils were confident in following their own lines of enquiry. Their enthusiasm and interest helped them to produce some good information leaflets.
149. The coordinator manages the subject satisfactorily. The school uses the nationally recommended subject guidelines which have been adapted to meet the needs of the school. Geography alternates with history on the timetable but as the teachers decide when to teach each subject, chances are missed to promote closer links with work in literacy, numeracy and ICT.

## **HISTORY**

150. Standards are similar to those described at the last inspection, and are close to that expected of seven and 11 year olds. While a few pupils do better than expected for their age, a significant minority do not reach the expected level. Similarly, pupils' progress is satisfactory overall but varies between classes and year groups. Pupils with special educational needs generally do not do as well as the others but make satisfactory progress. Many pupils who have English as an additional language do well as they receive effective teaching support.
151. The school has followed a recommendation in the last report to arrange more outside visits to enrich the curriculum. These now include visits to a War Memorial and air-raid shelters, trips to museums in Manchester, and to a historic working cotton mill. These provide the focus for much good work by the pupils because the teachers use the visits to emphasise chronology and historical enquiry. A detailed time line running the length of the school corridor also provides the pupils with a daily reminder of major events in world history. A good initiative was the oral history project on World War II when Year 6 pupils collaborated with pupils from the local high school to research aspects, such as rationing, and interview local people who survived the war. The pupils taped the interviews and showed good skills in carrying out a historical enquiry. Such first hand work is less evident in other year groups although pupils are beginning to use the Internet to access information.
152. The infant pupils learn about people, lifestyles and events in past times. Year 2 pupils have learnt about the record of the Great Fire of London in the diary of Samuel Pepys. While pupils have completed worksheets, their work is often untidily presented. Higher attaining pupils demonstrate good recall of key facts, show some understanding of the causes of the fire and of the limitations of diary accounts. The teacher's marking of the work in this topic is not always helpful in letting the pupils know how well they have worked, and what they should do next.
153. Junior pupils learn about different civilisations. Year 6 pupils' studies of Ancient Egypt and the Roman invasion are well supported by visits to the Roman city of Chester and to the Egyptian collection in Manchester Museum. The pupils' work in their books is sparse. All pupils usually do the same work, although when they make their own topic folders, they express their knowledge and understanding in a variety of ways. Some of the teachers' marking gives little indication as to why the work is deemed 'excellent' or 'well thought out' in relation to skills and knowledge in history. However, current

work on Ancient Egypt has useful comments to help pupils research more effectively and to relate their findings with greater clarity.

154. The quality of teaching is sound. In a satisfactory lesson for Year 4 pupils, the teacher presented pupils with information comparing life and beliefs in the Ancient Greek cities of Sparta and Athens. She had to work hard to motivate the pupils but they settled to the fairly simple task of matching statements to the two towns. This consolidated their factual knowledge but did little to extend their understanding of how we find out about things about the past.
155. The curriculum follows national guidance and covers the required elements. Although pupils study the lives and influence of leaders such as Nelson Mandela, there is little recognition of the form and reasons for the diverse cultural heritage of the pupils in the school, Manchester and Britain. The subject is satisfactorily managed but there is no current action plan to raise standards or to monitor the quality of provision.

## **INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY**

156. Standards are unsatisfactory overall although they are satisfactory at the end of Years 2 and 6 in word processing. This is a lower finding than at the time of the last inspection. Standards are improving as a result of the teaching staff's increased confidence and updated skills in teaching ICT, and also the pupils' growing familiarity with the recently upgraded ICT equipment. In general, pupils, including those with English as an additional language, who have access to computers at home have more confidence in using their skills in school than those who have not. Those Year 3 and 4 pupils who attend the ICT club are making good progress in using a touch-type program. The club is very popular and the school ensures that boys and girls have equal chances to take part.
157. Infant pupils build on the skills they gain in the nursery and reception year. By Year 2, pupils know how to use functions such as delete when word processing. They also know how to use a mathematics program to develop their number skills and have created bar charts using a data-handling package to represent information gained in science.
158. From the work of Year 3 pupils in the ICT suite, it is clear that they have been taught well how to handle the computer equipment. They confidently log on to their own files and work successfully with their partner to redraft scripts they have entered and saved the week before. In this lesson, a support worker gave good support to those pupils who needed her specialist language help in understanding what to do to highlight text and change font size, colour and include pictures. Her work ensured that all pupils made good progress.
159. Standards of attainment in Year 6 are below those expected for their age overall. As part of work in other subjects, such as geography, pupils have good opportunities to locate and download information from CD-ROMs and the Internet. Care is taken to ensure the school follows the local authority's strict guidance to protect the pupils from inappropriate e-mail and Internet sites. Work saved from last year shows that pupils compiled satisfactory multi-media presentations of their stay in the Lake District. Pupils also developed their mathematical work by learning how to produce spreadsheets, but they encountered problems in sorting and interrogating entered data, and the outcomes, such as those showing relative heights of boys and girls, were often misleading or wrong. In these cases, the teacher's marking of the pupils'

work did not indicate sufficiently what the pupils needed to do to improve. During the inspection, the class computer was used mainly as a tool to produce chapter dividers for pupils' work.

160. The quality of teaching is variable but satisfactory overall. Curriculum documentation is clear, and the teachers and support staff are following it effectively. The staff have successfully updated their computer skills and show a growing confidence in using the overhead projector to demonstrate what pupils need to do. The school has the equipment it needs to meet pupils' learning needs but chances are missed to make full use of it. Classroom computers are frequently unused and only incidental use is made of the digital camera and tape recorders. There is little to show that pupils gain the experience they should in control technology. Not enough has been done to highlight the use of ICT across the curriculum as a learning tool and as an integral part of older juniors' work especially in literacy and science. Given the school's priorities, particularly that to develop pupils' speaking and listening skills, this is a waste of resources.
161. There has been no subject leader for some time until the recent short-term appointment of a member of the support staff with specific skills in the subject, supported by the headteacher. This partnership is working well and ICT is gaining a higher profile. Although it is not a current priority for development in the overall school improvement plan, the action plan identifies relevant areas for improvement.

## **MUSIC**

162. Standards are satisfactory at the end of Years 2 and 6. As noted in the last inspection, music is a strength in the curriculum and standards in singing are good. Pupils in the choir or who learn to play instruments often do well because of good specialist teaching and the adults' focus on a high quality performance. In other aspects of music, most pupils' knowledge, skills and understanding are typical for their age. Although the overall quality of teaching is good and pupils often achieve well in lessons, they have too little chance to practise and refine their skills which weakens their learning.
163. The school draws on the specialist expertise of a member of the support staff to work alongside the teachers in teaching music. For the oldest juniors this is a boon as their teacher also has good knowledge and expertise which are used well to develop pupils' singing. Her very good coaching, and insistence that pupils followed conducting signals lifted the quality of the choir's rendition of carols. The pupils improved their phrasing, clarity in singing high notes and two-part singing because the teacher insisted on 100 per cent effort, demonstrated expression in singing and encouraged them to think of ways to improve. The pupils were highly attentive, tried very hard and sang with evident enthusiasm and enjoyment.
164. The same good level of enthusiasm is evident in class lessons particularly when pupils play musical instruments. It was less evident in school assemblies when pupils' singing often lacked tune and tone, especially when they sang unaccompanied. At such times, older juniors, more noticeably boys, seemed reluctant to be involved. In a good lesson, however, they were quick to learn and to sing a complex song from Indonesia. They were also keen to play percussion instruments and tried hard to sustain their beat pattern while others played different ones. Nevertheless, they were not all sure how to use the instruments to best effect and found it hard not to explore

sounds at will. This indicates a lack of experience in using instruments in previous years.

165. The support assistant's enthusiasm, good musical knowledge and confidence ensure she makes effective use of opportunities to develop pupils' skills. For example, in a lesson with Year 4 pupils, she explained clearly how to gain a clear sound in playing the xylophone. However, despite the assistant's comments and attempts to engage all pupils, the restlessness and immature behaviour of a few pupils marred the lesson. The infant teachers lead their own music lessons and often do this well. Year 1 and 2 pupils enjoyed singing and playing instruments as they marched to the beat. All Year 1 pupils, including those with English as an additional language, followed the teacher's hand signals to play and became increasingly proficient in playing either wooden or metal instruments. Year 2 pupils already recognise some musical notation and time lengths.
166. Not enough time is given to allow pupils to listen to and appreciate music. In assemblies, chances are missed to play music from a range of musical styles and cultural traditions, particularly those of the pupils. Having briefly heard marimba music, Year 6 pupils commented on its relaxing qualities and recognised the repeating pattern in musical phrases.
167. The shared coordination of music is effective and there have been improvements to the curriculum since the last inspection. The school is now drawing on the LEA music scheme to ensure the systematic teaching of skills in all required aspects of music. Throughout the year, the pupils benefit personally from taking part in school and local musical events. Last year the choir, wind, brass and steel pan bands performed at several different venues in Manchester and put on a musical evening for their parents. A well-organised music week in March 2002 gave pupils the chance to hear professional musicians and to take part in workshops and competitions. Workshops planned for summer 2003 include opportunities for pupils to hear music from Tudor times and also Russian traditional instruments.

## **PHYSICAL EDUCATION**

168. Satisfactory standards at the end of Years 2 and 6 have been maintained since the last inspection. In games lessons, and in their play outside, most pupils showed skills typical for their age. However, more of the higher attaining Year 6 pupils are boys. Girls and boys are fully included in lessons and make similar satisfactory progress in their development of physical skills.
169. Over the year, pupils take part in a range of activities in dance, gymnastics and games. Older junior pupils engage in outdoor and adventurous activities as part of a residential visit to the Lake District. Pupils learn to swim in Year 4 and most manage to swim 25 metres by the end of Year 6 as required by the National Curriculum. Since the last inspection, teaching staff have undertaken training in gymnastics and games and are about to begin work on the teaching and learning of dance, which has been identified as a school priority. The school has successfully worked with the local community to create a dog-free part of the local park where pupils can take part in athletic activities, and a five-a-side walled football area has also been set out which is used well by the school. Appropriate use is also made of designated funds to provide coaches who take extra-curricular games activities and who sometimes organise competitions against other schools. During the inspection, a local coach also led cricket coaching in the school hall.

170. No observation was made of Year 2 pupils, but Year 1 pupils were observed as they took part in outdoor games. They enjoyed using space within the marked areas of the playground and worked hard to follow the teachers' instructions. Their work was at expected levels for their age. Year 6 pupils also enjoyed their games lesson outside. This was the fourth of a sequence of six lessons in passing and retrieving a large ball, and developing hand and foot skills. Pupils had good opportunities to practise individually, in pairs and in groups. They managed this successfully, so that there was steady consolidation and improvement in their skills. The weakest aspects were their skills in dodging to elude and in marking to block an opponent. The teacher's demonstration of chest and shoulder passes helped two girls who were fairly timid at the beginning of the lesson to gain in confidence and accuracy in their passing, and also in their willingness to intercept a strong throw. It was noticeable, however, how the boys achieved higher standards than girls.
171. The quality of teaching and learning is generally satisfactory, although unsatisfactory teaching and learning were observed in a lesson for Year 3 pupils. Good common features are that all teachers take part in the programme of physical education, and ensure that the pupils have three short lessons each week. Weaker areas are in teachers' often low expectations of pupils' behaviour and achievement. For example, teachers seldom ask pupils how they might improve their performance nor do they offer advice and take a clear lead in coaching skills. This has the double impact of not raising the pupils' own expectations and not involving pupils sufficiently in the evaluation of their own and other pupils' work. Standards could be higher. Time is often lost at the start and end of lessons as pupils mill around and fuss about getting or putting back equipment. Not enough has been done to agree common practices and to ensure that all teachers follow them.
172. Although pupils change into sportswear for indoor work there is not the same requirement for outdoor work. This results in some pupils taking part in games in their ordinary shoes which are often unsuitable. The two subject leaders have a reasonable overview of the subject and their action plan focuses effectively on further development.

## **RELIGIOUS EDUCATION**

173. Pupils' attainment by the end of Years 2 and 6 is in line with the expectations of the locally agreed syllabus. Pupils make satisfactory progress overall and standards have been maintained since the previous inspection.
174. Over time, pupils learn about different religious faiths, festivals and rites of passage and how beliefs and values guide the life of those that follow them. This makes a significant contribution to the pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. The structure of the curriculum ensures that junior pupils learn more about Christianity, Islam, Hinduism, Judaism and Buddhism year on year. However, the limited range and coverage of work in pupils' books reflects the variability of the provision. The school draws on its links with the local community in taking pupils to visit a church and in inviting a practising Muslim to talk to pupils about Islam. While there are also some effective links with other subjects including literacy and music, there is much scope to enrich and extend these aspects, especially to ICT, and art and design. There are some aspects where progression in learning is weak; for instance, there is little apparent difference in the study of different places of worship in the infant and junior years.

175. Year 1 pupils learn about the significance for Christians of stories from the Bible and how many have special meanings. In discussing the parable of The Good Samaritan, pupils talked about the moral issues such as what it is to be a good neighbour. The teacher's good questioning prompted the pupils to give their reasons and to take their thinking further. As a result, pupils had a mature understanding for their age of what they saw as five good ways to be a friend. Year 4 pupils have a satisfactory understanding of the main principles and beliefs of Buddhism. However, many pupils needed much encouragement and prompting to discuss what they saw on a video-film. Too many had paid cursory attention and also needed help to understand what they had seen. The higher attaining pupils were more confident and readily described what they had noticed, such as the importance of meditation and the different ways to pray.
176. Teaching is satisfactory overall and sometimes good, especially when the teachers help the pupils link the content of lessons to life today. Pupils' attitudes to learning about religion are generally satisfactory. Year 5 pupils, however, showed much immature behaviour and their learning was minimal when asked to discuss personal values.
177. The coordinator provides satisfactory leadership within the remit of her responsibilities. Her action plan includes the provision of detailed curriculum planning for Years 5 and 6, alongside the revision of the policy. She is also aware of the need to heighten teachers' subject knowledge and to update teaching and learning resources.