

# INSPECTION REPORT

## **CRAB LANE PRIMARY SCHOOL**

Higher Blackley, Manchester

LEA area: Manchester

Unique reference number: 105465

Headteacher: Mr T Matthews

Lead inspector: Miss K Manning

Dates of inspection: 21<sup>st</sup> – 24<sup>th</sup> June 2004

Inspection number: 255899

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

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## INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Primary
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	3 - 11
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
Number on roll:	396
School address:	Crab Lane Higher Blackley Manchester Lancashire
Postcode:	M9 8NB
Telephone number:	0161 7402851
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Appropriate authority:	The governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mrs E Garvey (acting chair)
Date of previous inspection:	January 1999

## CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

Crab Lane Primary is a large school, with 345 pupils in classes from reception to Year 6. A further 49 children attend the nursery full-time and four attend part-time. The number of pupils on roll has changed very little in the last three years although the pupil population changes considerably. This is because the proportion of pupils who start or leave the school after the reception class is much higher than the national average.

When they start in nursery, children's attainment varies considerably, but overall it is well below that expected for their age, particularly in language and in their personal and social development. The school is resourced to provide for eight pupils who have moderate learning difficulties. At present the number is much greater and the school has a higher than average proportion of pupils who have special educational needs. Ten pupils have statements of their special educational needs and a further 114 have been identified as needing extra help from teachers or specialists.

The area in general is more disadvantaged than most. This is reflected in the proportion of pupils who are eligible for free school meals, which is well above the national average. Most pupils come from British families and only a small number speak English as an additional language. A similarly small, but increasing, number of pupils come from travelling or asylum seeking families and a very small number are looked after by carers who are not their parents. The school receives funding to support three of these pupils.

The school is involved in several national projects such as, Excellence in Cities, Space for Sports and Arts and the Children's Fund. It is also a member of a Network Learning Community and one of the schools included in the Manchester Arts Education Initiative. Participation in these, and other

projects, has helped the school achieve several awards in recent years. These include a Healthy School award, a gold Artsmark and the Manchester Inclusion Standard.

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
20267	Miss K Manning	Lead inspector	English
			Art and design
			Geography
			History
			English as an additional language
9511	Mrs A Longfield	Lay inspector	
29188	Mrs G Ulyatt	Team inspector	Foundation Stage
			Music
			Science
20301	Mr P Isherwood	Team inspector	Special educational needs
			Mathematics
			Design and technology
			Religious education
11510	Mr K Oglesby	Team inspector	Information and communication technology
			Physical education

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## PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

**This is a very effective school.** Teaching is good and often very good and consequently pupils achieve very well and have positive attitudes to learning. Very good leadership and management from the headteacher enables senior staff to offer a curriculum of outstanding quality. The school manages all of this at a slightly lower than average cost and provides good value for money.

### OVERALL EVALUATION

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- Very good teaching ensures that standards in art and design are well above those expected.
- The school makes very good provision for pupils, spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
- The curriculum is vibrant and exciting, particularly with regard to the performing arts.
- All pupils get the same good deal from the school.
- Despite substantial efforts by the school, attendance remains well below average.
- Although satisfactory, provision in the nursery is not as strong as it is in reception classes.
- Standards in information and communication technology (ICT) are not high enough by the end of Year 2.

The school continues to be very effective, particularly with regard to promoting pupils' personal development. This is one of the main reasons for its success. All of the key issues from the previous inspection have been tackled systematically and the school continues to develop and improve at a good rate. The school's provision for children in the nursery is not as good as it was at the time of the previous inspection and standards in ICT in Years 1 and 2 have fallen.

### STANDARDS ACHIEVED

Results in National Curriculum tests at the end of Year 6, compared with:	all schools			similar schools
	2001	2002	2003	2003
English	E	E	E	D
mathematics	E	E	E	C
science	E	E	E	D

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

**Pupils of all abilities achieve very well over time.** In the Foundation Stage children achieve well though few attain the goals that they are expected to reach by the end of reception. In Years 1 and 2, pupils achieve very well and most reach the levels expected for their age in reading, writing, mathematics and science. In ICT, achievement is unsatisfactory and standards fall below those expected by the end of Year 2. Pupils continue to achieve very well between Years 3 and 6 and most reach the levels expected for their age in English, mathematics, science and ICT. Standards have risen considerably this year because fewer pupils have had to overcome the barrier of starting school part way through their education. They have benefited from good, and often very good, teaching and as a result, the proportion who have reached the expected level by the end of Year 6 has increased. Throughout the school, standards in religious education match those prescribed in the syllabus used by local schools. In national tests, pupils in Year 2 generally perform better than those in similar schools. In 2003, pupils in Year 6 performed as well as those in similar schools in mathematics but not so well in English and science. This was due to the high proportion of pupils who had special educational needs mainly for literacy and general learning difficulties, in that year group. Although these pupils achieve very well, few reach the levels expected for their age. However, the extra help they got in mathematics paid off and helped them to do well.

**Pupils' personal qualities, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development are good.** Pupils have good attitudes and generally behave well though there were nine short exclusions in the last year. Attendance is well below average and a small number of pupils are frequently late. Pupils who are frequently absent do not do as well as those who attend school regularly.

## **QUALITY OF EDUCATION**

**The quality of education is very good. There is good teaching and learning** in all years except the nursery where it is satisfactory. There is very good teaching of art and design and a significant number of lessons were also taught very well in other subjects. Very good links with parents, the community and other schools, combined with an exciting and innovative curriculum help pupils achieve as well as they do. In addition, the very good care and guidance provided for pupils and the schools very inclusive ethos plays a crucial part in promoting their positive attitudes.

## **LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT**

**The leadership and management of the school are very good overall.** The headteacher leads and manages the school excellently. The leadership and management of senior staff is generally very good. Governance has improved since the previous inspection and governors now do a good job on behalf of the school, and fulfil all of their statutory requirements. The most significant barriers to raising the school's performance in national tests are the above average proportion of pupils who have special educational needs and the high numbers of pupils who start the school other than in the nursery. The school makes very good provision for these pupils.

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

Parents are mostly delighted with what the school offers their children. Pupils enjoy their time in school and are proud of its success. They forge very good relationships with teachers and other adults and say that this is because staff always listen to them if they have a problem.

## **IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED**

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

- Improve provision in the nursery.
- Raise standards in ICT by the end of Year 2.
- Continue to work with parents to ensure that they see the need for their children to attend school regularly.



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

### **STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS**

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

Pupils of all abilities and backgrounds achieve very well and girls and boys achieve at the same rate. Children in the Foundation Stage achieve well but a significant proportion do not reach the goals that they are expected to reach by the end of reception. Throughout the school, standards in art and design are well above those expected.

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

- Consistently good teaching in most classes ensures that pupils achieve very well over time.
- Children in the nursery do not achieve as well as those in reception classes.
- Standards in ICT are not high enough by the end of Year 2.
- Very good teaching helps pupils achieve very high standards in art and design.
- Comparisons with similar schools are favourable.
- Though the school's results in Year 2 are rising faster than the national trend, this is not the case in Year 6.

#### **Commentary**

1 Last year, the school's results in national tests at the end of Year 2, showed that standards in reading and writing were well below average when compared to all schools. Standards in mathematics were below average. At the end of Year 6, standards in English, mathematics and science were well below average. There is little variation in standards from one year to the next and they have been at this low level for some years.

2 The school's results in national tests are not a true reflection of achievement and comparisons with similar schools are favourable. These show that pupils in Year 2 in Crab Lane do as well as those from similar schools in reading, better than those in similar schools in writing and much better in mathematics. Pupils in Year 6 perform as well as those in similar schools in mathematics. This is a clearer indicator of the school's success than comparisons with schools where the population of pupils is very different and there are fewer barriers to learning. This is despite most of the children starting nursery having a very limited knowledge of reading, number or the world beyond their own families. Two other characteristics of the school also have an adverse impact on the school's performance in national tests. The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs is above average and few of these pupils reach the levels expected for their age. A small number of pupils speak English as an additional language and this has an adverse impact on the school's results in national tests. In addition, a higher than average proportion of pupils start the school after the reception class. Pupils who start in Years 5 and 6, where mobility is high, do not benefit from the continued good teaching throughout the school. As a result, in recent years far fewer pupils have reached the expected level or achieved a higher level. In 2003, so few pupils achieved a higher level in science that the school was in the bottom five per cent of all schools nationally. All of these factors provide reasons why standards are well below average, despite good teaching and learning.

3 Consistently good teaching ensures that children in reception classes achieve well and make good progress towards the early goals in all areas of learning. This is not the case in nursery where teaching is not as strong. The methods used to teach children in the nursery and in particular the lack of structure to their play or activities means that, although they make steady progress it is not good enough to help these children gain the ground they need to do well.

4 Over the last three years, the school's results in national tests at the end of Year 2 have been rising faster than the national trend. This is a direct result of good teaching and shows that pupils in Years 1 and 2 achieve very well and make rapid progress. Inspection evidence shows that

this pattern is continuing with most pupils in Years 1 and 2 reaching the levels expected for their age in reading, writing, mathematics and science. However, progress is slower in ICT, where pupils do not have enough opportunities to use computers and consequently standards are below those expected for their ages. This is largely because these classes do not have the same regular access to the computer suite as those in Years 3 to 6. Too often their use of computers is limited to using familiar programs and not to learning new skills.

5 Initial impressions suggest that things look different in Year 6, where results have not been rising as fast as the national trend. However, the three factors outlined above have had a significant impact on pupils' performance in national tests and in many cases teachers are not building on a firm foundation, but starting again from a low point. This makes it extremely difficult to keep standards rising every year. It is also the main reason why the school did not meet the targets it had set for raising standards last year. However, inspection evidence shows that throughout Years 3 to 6 pupils continue to achieve very well. As a result, standards are improving this year with more pupils reaching the standards expected for their age in English, mathematics, science and ICT than in previous years. The proportion of pupils achieving a higher level is similar to last year.

6 Standards in art and design are particularly impressive and reflect the gold 'Artsmark' award the school received recently. From Year 1 onwards, the teaching of art and design is very good. Specialist teachers and visiting artists bring the curriculum to life and motivate pupils to produce work of a high quality. Teachers and teaching assistants have benefited from training by these experts and consequently the standard of teaching is always high. The evidence of this leaps out from walls, floors and ceilings. There are large-scale sculptures in the school and garden and small scale but extremely detailed sketches in pupils' personal sketchbooks. Parents believe that standards are high and pupils are proud of their work.

**Standards in national tests at the end of Year 2 – average point scores in 2003**

Standards in:	School results	National results
reading	13.3 (12.1)	15.7 (15.8)
writing	13.6 (12.2)	14.6 (14.4)
mathematics	15.9 (15.0)	16.3 (16.5)

*There were 40 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year*

**Standards in national tests at the end of Year 6 – average point scores in 2003**

Standards in:	School results	National results
English	24.5 (24.3)	26.8 (27.0)
mathematics	25.5 (25.2)	26.8 (26.7)
science	26.4 (26.0)	28.6 (28.3)

*There were 53 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year*

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

Pupils gain significantly from the schools very good provision for their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development and for other aspects of their personal development. They respond by having positive attitudes to learning and behaving well most of the time. Attendance is well below average though punctuality is generally satisfactory.

**Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The school does all it can to promote good attendance but it remains well below average.
- Staff are very successful at promoting pupils' self-esteem.

- There are lots of opportunities for pupils to learn about other cultures.
- Teachers cultivate pupils' social and moral development very well and consequently pupils develop a great respect for the values, feelings and beliefs of others.

## Commentary

7 Despite very good efforts by the school to raise attendance levels, a few parents do not ensure that their children attend school regularly enough. Good attendance is praised and pupils are rewarded by the 'Arthur attendance award'. There are very regular contacts with parents as soon as a child is absent and the school monitors attendance very closely. There are close links with the educational welfare officer and an inter-disciplinary group meet regularly to discuss problems caused by absence. Recently a 'surgery' has been established to meet parents of pupils with poor attendance records. If parents do not attend, a teacher, the school nurse and an educational welfare officer visit the family at home. This process has not yet had time to make a significant impact on raising attendance levels.

## Attendance

### *Attendance in the latest complete reporting year (92.5 %)*

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
School data	6.6	School data	0.9
National data	5.4	National data	0.4

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

8 Raising the self-esteem of pupils is at the heart of everything staff do. Pupils show good attitudes in school because of the very hard work of teachers to ensure that every pupil is valued. Personal development underpins everything the school does. Teachers praise and celebrate good work and good behaviour. They know and really care about their pupils. Pupils work well together in lessons; they discuss complex issues maturely in religious education, when they talk about the purpose of life. Pupils relate very well to adults, they are polite and on corridors open doors for adults. Older pupils are eager to help in school, taking part in the lunchtime 'buddy' scheme and enjoy being reading partners to younger pupils. The growing self-esteem and confidence of pupils is illustrated by the fact that recently a small group of pupils from Year 6 spoke in front of 300 people when the school won the Manchester Inclusion Award.

9 Pupils have a very clear understanding of right and wrong. Teachers discuss the 'golden rules' with pupils and pupils formulate their own class rules. As a result, they feel that the punishment systems are fair and older pupils feel that the school's reward system is effective. Pupils work hard to obtain points, because 'if we do, we get a trophy'. They respond well to praise and are proud of what they do. A number of pupils have emotional and behavioural needs and teachers deal with these pupils very well to ensure that they make progress in line with classmates. When pupils have difficulty with behaviour, there is a very good system of sanctions, which are known and understood by the pupils. Pupils feel that the behaviour in school is usually good, as do a significant majority of parents. No bullying or racist incidents were observed during the inspection period. Where they have occurred in the past they have been dealt with effectively, a point supported at the parents' meeting. In the last school year there were nine short-term exclusions for incidents of an extreme nature. Exclusions are the school's last resort and staff do everything in their power to prevent any situation escalating to this level. Consequently, the number of exclusions has fallen by over half this year.

## Exclusions

### *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	261	9	0
White – any other White background	1	0	0
Mixed – White and Black Caribbean	7	0	0
Mixed – White and Black African	1	0	0
Mixed – White and Asian	1	0	0
Mixed – any other mixed background	2	0	0
Asian or Asian British – Pakistani	1	0	0
Black or Black British – Caribbean	1	0	0
Black or Black British – African	4	0	0
Black or Black British – any other Black background	2	0	0
Any other ethnic group	1	0	0
No ethnic group recorded	3	0	0

*The table gives the number of exclusions, which may be different from the number of pupils excluded.*

10 Since the previous inspection, staff have worked extremely hard to improve the provision for pupils' spiritual and cultural development and as a result very good progress has been made. There is a sense of awe and wonder as you enter the building because of the excellent standard of displays such as the 'model' woodland garden area. Throughout school, the beauty of pupils' work is evident. Work is colourful and very well displayed showing pupils that teachers think it is very important and their efforts are highly valued. There are many opportunities to marvel at the wonder of nature, for example when animals such as foxes and hedgehogs visit the wildlife area. In religious education, pupils have opportunities to discuss and reflect on spiritual matters, such as the purpose of life. In collective worship, pupils are given time to think and reflect. Well planned activities in geography, history and religious education combine with dance, drama, art and design and music to provide pupils with a wealth of information about their own and other cultures. The school very successfully celebrates the cultures present in the city and the local area and in doing so prepares pupils very well for life in a multi-cultural society.

## **QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL**

The quality of education provided by the school is very good. Good and very good teaching and a rich, vibrant curriculum are the main strengths of the provision but very close links with parents, the community and other schools all play an important part. The ethos of the school is warm and welcoming and staff take very good care of pupils.

### **Teaching and learning**

The quality of teaching and pupils' learning is good overall. Though good overall, the school's procedures for assessing and recording pupils' attainment in English, mathematics and science are very good.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- There is very good teaching of art and design.

- The school has a simple but effective means of tracking pupils' progress in English, mathematics and science.
- Teachers are very good at promoting equality of opportunity.
- In most classes, teachers are very insistent on high standards of behaviour and work hard to keep pupils motivated.
- In general, teachers have a very good command of the subjects they teach and this ensures that pupils learn at a good rate.
- Teachers' planning in the nursery is not systematic enough to ensure children benefit fully from all the activities provided for them.

## Commentary

11 Though most of the lessons observed were taught well there are significant strengths to the planning and assessment of teaching that are very good. A significant strength of the teaching is the way that everything staff do is aimed at promoting pupils' personal development and instilling positive attitudes to learning and the ability to behave well. They are very successful at this.

12 One of the ways that teachers help pupils overcome their barriers to learning is through the very good teaching of art and design. The activities and curriculum are exciting and challenging but pupils of all abilities know that they can succeed. Teachers use a wide range of methods to teach this subject, including the use of talented artists and teaching assistants.

13 The co-ordinator for assessment has devised a particularly simple means of tracking pupils' progress in English from one year to the next. The system is computerised and shows at a glance what progress pupils have made against the levels of the National Curriculum and also whether this progress has been sufficient. The system is open to expansion to include all other subjects and effective in giving teachers a clear, instant picture of how well or otherwise each pupil is doing from one year to the next. This willingness to try something new and adapt systems to best suit the school is testament to the pioneering way that teachers in this school approach their work. Throughout the school, teachers make good use of assessment procedures to fix a starting point for work and identify which pupils need more help or greater challenge. It is one of the key reasons why pupils achieve so well.

14 The school was awarded the Manchester Inclusion Award in 2003 and this is reflected in the very strong emphasis teachers place on ensuring that pupils from all backgrounds and of all abilities get the same fair deal. Girls and boys are given the same chances to play sports or join after-school clubs. In lessons, boys and girls are expected to complete the same work and are given a fair chance to air their views. Pupils say that teachers are fair and that they are treated in the same way. Pupils who have special educational needs get a very good deal from the school. They are given all the help they need to achieve very well in lessons. Each pupil has a programme of work very closely linked to targets aimed at helping them overcome their learning difficulties. Whenever possible they are given extra help from teaching assistants and other adults and they sometimes work with the special educational needs teacher. All of this is effective in ensuring that they achieve their full potential and play a full part in lessons. When asked, pupils said that the help they get makes them feel more confident and that they enjoy their work because teachers tell them when they are doing well. The school's provision for pupils who are gifted and talented is just as good. When appropriate, pupils who are very able academically are taught with older pupils so that they are challenged by their work. These pupils sometimes have individual programmes in the same way that those who need support do. The school helps pupils who are talented to further their skills by providing expert coaching in some sports and music and by encouraging pupils to attend special classes at weekends. The very good provision for pupils of all abilities has helped the school gain an award for its inclusion policies and practice.

15 One of the main reasons why the teaching is effective is that teachers have very high expectations that pupils will behave well and try their best. In lessons, pupils are expected to follow the school's rules and to pay attention. Unacceptable behaviour is dealt with quietly and firmly and good behaviour is reinforced by praise and rewards. The procedures work well and ensure that

pupils who have special educational needs linked to behavioural problems do not disrupt the learning of others. Teachers also ensure good behaviour and positive attitudes from pupils by planning activities that are interesting and challenging. The best lessons move along at a brisk pace and pupils have to concentrate and work hard in order to keep up.

16 Pupils achieve very well because teachers have a very good command of the subjects that they teach. They do this predominantly by ensuring that the work pupils are given matches their abilities. In the Foundation Stage, teachers in reception classes make good use of their understanding of the development of young children to plan a wide range of challenging activities that interest young children and help them to make good progress in all areas of learning. In Years 1 to 6, teachers are confident enough to change and adapt the national strategies to good effect to teach English and mathematics and in doing so ensure that pupils' work is pitched at the right level. In ICT, where their knowledge had previously been weak, training has ensured that teachers are now significantly more competent. This is not the reason why standards are below expectations in Years 1 and 2. In other subjects, teachers use their expertise to challenge, inspire and stimulate pupils. As a result, pupils acquire skills and knowledge at a good rate. When asked, pupils say that they enjoy lessons because they are interesting and fun.

17 Though teaching is good overall, there are weaknesses to the teaching in the nursery that prevent it from being better than satisfactory in that class. The main reason for this is that activities are not planned or directed sufficiently and children are left too much to their own devices during sessions. They are at liberty to choose activities for themselves and not expected to either complete the activity or tidy away after them. As a result, too many children wander aimlessly from one area to another, never getting the best from anything that the nursery staff have to offer unless they are working in a small group led by an adult.

**Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 42 lessons**

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
0	6 (14%)	17 (41%)	19 (45%)	0	0	0

*The table gives the number of lessons observed in each of the seven categories used to make judgements about lessons; figures in brackets show percentages where 30 or more lessons are seen.*

**The curriculum**

The curriculum is of an outstanding quality and is enriched substantially by an extensive array of after-school activities and first-hand experiences for pupils. Very good provision is made for teaching sex and relationship education and helping pupils make choices about healthy lifestyles. Good accommodation and a wide range of resources promote good learning and help pupils achieve very well.

**Main strengths and weaknesses**

- A highly innovative curriculum inspires pupils and frees staff to help pupils enjoy their work.
- The provision for pupils who have special educational needs is very good.
- Staff do everything in their power to ensure that all pupils get the same fair deal from the school.
- Though the outside grounds are very beautiful they are not used often enough in the Foundation Stage.

**Commentary**

18 Staff know how important it is for pupils to enjoy school and they are constantly looking for ways of making the curriculum rich and exciting. While literacy and numeracy remain vital to the curriculum, teachers are not afraid to seek ways of bringing subjects together and have responded positively to the Primary Strategy aimed at providing excellence and enjoyment in schools. These responses have worked well and the topics or projects taught have a significant impact on pupils' learning. For example, reading, writing, mathematics, ICT and a host of other subjects all came

together for a day of 'super learning' about China. Pupils of all ages talked animatedly about what they had done and learned and the whole school is resplendent in Chinese art, craft, culture and language. Parents say that these types of activity are of great benefit to their children.

19 The school pays very close attention to the inclusion of all pupils and has recently won an award for its efforts. The Crab Lane Inclusion Project was developed by a team of professionals working with pupils and their families. Using a grant from the City Council the school created the Rainbow Room, where pupils learn through play and social communication. However, inclusion is wider than just the project. Pupils who have special educational needs or are gifted and talented, those who speak English as an additional language and pupils who join the school part-way through their education all have equal access to the curriculum and equal opportunities to learn. They are given extra help when it is needed and teachers work hard to ensure that they play a full part in lessons.

20 The school provides very well for the high number of pupils who have special educational needs. They are included in all aspects of school life, for example, they help and support younger pupils at lunchtime, and as a result they develop very well both academically and socially. The school is successfully providing for pupils on transition programmes from special schools. There is effective identification of pupils who are particularly talented or gifted. These pupils receive work set at levels, which challenge them and at times work with older pupils. Opportunities to access support outside school, such as Saturday clubs, also enhance provision for these pupils. Pupils whose particular attributes and talents in the creative and performing arts are encouraged very well by the school through clubs, working with professionals and experts and tuition for those pupils talented in music. All of this helps these pupils do well.

21 In the Foundation Stage, teachers do not make sufficient use of the school's exciting grounds to promote children's learning. This is most obvious in the nursery where children do not get enough opportunities to spend time outdoors other than for play or physical development.

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

Pupils are cared for very well. The school ensures their welfare, health and safety and teachers provide them with very good advice and guidance. Pupils are very much involved in the school's work and have a say in matters that are important to them.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Staff always have the best interests of pupils at heart and consequently pupils feel safe in school.
- The school council is a powerful way of sharing pupils' views with teachers.
- Staff and pupils have gained a healthy school award and are proud of this.
- Pupils move on confidently to the next stage of their education.

### **Commentary**

22 The school continues to take very good care of its pupils. Day-to-day health and safety procedures are followed closely by staff, many of whom have been trained in the use of first aid. Child protection arrangements are also very good and are implemented with great vigilance. There are clear guidelines and procedures for helping pupils who are new to the school settle in and feel welcome. The success of these procedures is evident in the way that pupils who start after the reception class say that it has been easy to make new friends.

23 Pupils know that their views matter. They help devise class rules and through the school council they are encouraged to think of ways of improving school routines. Pupils throughout the school are invited to offer suggestions in a variety of ways such as through 'class boxes'. The ideas are thoroughly discussed at school council meetings and several innovative ideas have been addressed resulting in improved facilities at playtimes and at lunchtimes. Pupils organise fund

raising events and use the proceeds to purchase, for example, leisure resources such as board games.

24 The school promotes the long-term well-being of its pupils by encouraging a healthy lifestyle. Staff are vigilant in ensuring that pupils are carefully supervised at all times. The school has achieved the Gold Award for healthy schools through an extensive range of activities. During teaching time pupils are encouraged to drink plenty of water. At lunchtime they can choose a healthy option from the school menu. Parents and pupils enjoy the healthy options available at the school café each week. This is a lovely social event when parents, staff and pupils come together after school to buy and enjoy food prepared by pupils as part of their work. The oldest pupils also serve the food and collect the money, with profits going towards the next café event and to buy resources. The importance of physical activity as part of a healthy lifestyle is promoted very effectively in many ways. For example, dance and drama classes encourage pupils towards healthy and enjoyable exercise and a safe place to store bicycles was provided at the request of the school council.

25 There are satisfactory arrangements for children starting nursery and very good arrangements for pupils' transfer to secondary school. Children in the Foundation Stage are included in many of the school's activities and consequently they make the move from the reception classes to Year 1 confidently and without upset. Working in classes close by pupils in Years 1 and 2 and playing outside with them on occasions helps children from both key stages to form friendships with pupils from other classes and year groups. The very close links that the school has forged with local secondary schools helps pupils in Year 6 make their move with equal confidence. Most said that they are ready to move on and several said that they have siblings or friends in the secondary school. The increasing amount of homework that pupils in Year 6 get also helps them prepare for the volume of work they will get in secondary school and most parents said that they find this helpful.

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

Pupils benefit from the very good links that the school promotes with other schools, the local and wider community and from its working in very close partnership with parents.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The school's involvement with the Creative Partnership has a tremendous impact on standards in the performing arts and on pupils' sense of success.
- Parents receive extremely useful information about their children's progress and parents show their involvement by publishing the 'School Chronicle', which is a good read.

### **Commentary**

26 Pupils benefit considerably from the very good links that the school has with the local and wider community. The school is one of a small number participating in a project aimed at establishing partnerships between creative agents and education. In the period since its initial involvement, staff and pupils have learned together and enjoyed working with artists of the highest quality. With diversity and inclusion at the heart of its ethos, the project has something for everyone and pupils are delighted with the experiences they have gained from it. Their confidence in art and design, drama, music and dance has rocketed and this is having a positive affect on pupils' behaviour and attitudes.

27 The partnership between home and school is very good. Parents and pupils say that they look forward to reading the school magazine. Pupils say that this is because it is full of 'funny things about the teachers'. Parents say that it gives them a lot of useful information about the school. The magazine is of excellent quality; it is colourful and professional and comes out three times a year. It covers real issues faced by the school and pupils, such as vandalism, bereavement and bullying. It also gives useful dates and the times of after-school clubs and activities. The magazine is just one of the ways that parents are kept informed about what is happening in school. In addition, they receive regular letters from the headteacher and there are notice-boards in the school where



they can catch up on events and news. Once a year, parents are given written and detailed reports of their children's progress and attainment. Parents say that these are very helpful because they let them know what their children can do in each subject. The parents or carers of pupils who have special educational needs are always invited to take part in review meetings where their children's progress is discussed and targets are set for further work.

## **LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT**

The headteacher and senior staff lead the school extremely well. Management is very effective and the governance of the school is good. Staff are very good at helping pupils overcome their barriers to learning and this is one of the key reasons why leadership and management are very good.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The headteacher inspires and motivates staff and pupils very well.
- Governors now keep a close eye on the quality of teaching and learning.
- Staff with responsibilities reflect on their work and in doing so have a very clear understanding of what is effective and what needs improving.
- Teaching and learning are improved through the school's very good arrangements for staff development and training.

### **Commentary**

28 The headteacher's leadership has continued to gain pace and direction since the previous inspection and is now of an excellent quality. Reflecting on previous successes the headteacher has continued to encourage senior staff to introduce innovative elements to the curriculum. This has led to many successful and effective initiatives in the past few years. For example, a writing project whereby pupils wrote, illustrated and produced their own versions of Mr Men books, helped a number of pupils in last year's Year 2 classes achieve a higher level in national tests. Teachers value these opportunities tremendously and are passionate about the projects they get involved in. Morale is extremely high and it is a measure of the headteacher's success that when staff leave the school it is generally to take up a promoted post elsewhere. Pupils are equally motivated by the headteacher and know that he has high expectations of them. They are always very proud to show him their work or go to his room for praise. In part this is because the headteacher knows every pupil and they in turn feel that they are important and valued in school. When asked, parents said that the headteacher runs the school very well and that he is always available to talk over any of their problems or concerns.

29 Governors do a good job on behalf of the school. Following criticisms in the previous report governors have established a systematic approach to monitoring the quality of teaching and learning. This means that they are more fully aware of the strengths and weaknesses of teaching and have been able to use this information to help them make decisions about school priorities and targets. They keep a close eye on the work of the school by requiring the headteacher to provide them with a written or verbal evaluation of the school's progress towards its declared targets at each meeting. In addition to this, senior staff are expected to keep governors up to date with any proposed changes to teaching approaches resulting from training or the school's involvement in projects or initiatives. Governors competently fulfil all of their statutory duties, such as ensuring that the race equality policy is in place and working well.

30 Staff with leadership and management responsibilities are very effective. They have a very thorough understanding of their roles and carry them out diligently. This is a school where everyone keeps up to date through training and association with professional bodies and other educationists. As a result, they are extremely well informed and able to train and help their colleagues so that teaching and the curriculum are constantly improving. One of the key features of why this level of leadership and management is so successful is that the headteacher encourages staff to show initiative and become part of projects that interest and stimulate their own educational thinking. This is the background to many of the liveliest and most popular projects in school. Alongside this, senior staff monitor their subjects or areas of responsibility rigorously and consequently have a very clear view of what is working and where improvements need to be made. They are not afraid to try new ideas and to adapt national schemes to best fit the needs of the school.

31 The headteacher and governors believe strongly that training is the key to good teaching and learning. To this end staff are encouraged to take advantage of training whenever it is available

and fits in with the school's declared priorities and targets. For example, considerable training has taken place as a result of the school's involvement in the Creative Partnership Project and this has had a tremendous impact on the quality of work on display around the school. The headteacher ensures that teaching assistants also have opportunities to attend training and the result is a well-qualified workforce. The school makes good use of performance management to promote the continued professional development of staff. All teachers have personal objectives and targets, which they say are challenging but also enjoyable. These targets reflect those in the school's operational plan and there is a definite feel of everyone pulling together for the sake of the children in Crab Lane.

## Financial information

### *Financial information for the year April 2002 to March 2003*

Income and expenditure (£)	
Total income	1,062,484
Total expenditure	1,076,549
Expenditure per pupil	2,788

Balances (£)	
Balance from previous year	56,365
Balance carried forward to the next	42,300

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

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

32 The school's provision for children in the Foundation Stage is not as good as it was at the time of the previous inspection, though it remains satisfactory. Teaching in the nursery is satisfactory. In reception classes it is good and it is in these classes that children achieve well. Good leadership and management have rightly identified this as a key area for improvement in the coming year.

33 When they start nursery very few children know about reading, writing or numbers and many have few experiences outside of their immediate homes and families. Their social skills are often limited and they lack confidence. This is well below what is typical for children of nursery age. By the end of the reception year, though children have achieved well over time, few reach the early goals that they are expected to achieve in all areas of learning.

34 Only three areas of learning were inspected in depth. The areas relating to children's knowledge and understanding of the world and their creative and physical development were sampled. This was done by looking at work on display, observing a small number of activities and talking with children.

35 In **knowledge and understanding of the world** teachers plan many opportunities in the classroom for children to explore and find things out for themselves. For example, children plant seeds and watch them grow then draw pictures to record their observations. Children learn about their past and the area that they live in. For children in the reception classes this often involves visits to local places, such as the post office. Computers are available in classes and children develop ICT skills while playing games and watching others. In the nursery, not enough use is made of the school's exciting outdoor gardens and areas to promote children's knowledge and understanding of the world.

36 In **physical development**, photographs show that children in the reception classes use a good range of equipment indoors and learn to balance and climb through planned lessons. They learn to dance and move to music. All children use paintbrushes, dough, pencils and scissors to improve their fine finger skills. There are missed opportunities to use the outdoor area more regularly to promote the skills of reception children through play. In the nursery, children use wheeled apparatus and small equipment to promote co-ordination skills. However the time allocated to outdoor play is very limited.

37 In **creative development**, children have many worthwhile activities. In the nursery they learn to tap out rhythms with instruments and to clap and sing. Art displays throughout show that children use collage materials, paint and pastels. Staff display the work in an inspirational way to show children how much they value their efforts. Children use their senses well when modelling in three dimensions. They use glitter rice and sand with dough in the nursery and clay in reception classes. They dress up and pretend when playing in the supermarket in the nursery and when making up their own story about the three bears in the reception class.

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

Provision in personal, social and emotional development is **satisfactory**.

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

- Though few reach the goals expected, children develop confidence and self-esteem because staff are caring role models
- Good teaching in reception classes means that these children are more interested and motivated to learn than those in the nursery.

## Commentary

38 Teaching in this area of learning is satisfactory in the nursery and good in reception classes. As a result, children achieve steadily in the nursery but well in reception classes. Few reach the early goals expected by the end of the Foundation Stage.

39 Throughout the Foundation Stage, staff establish constructive relationships with children. This is one of the key reasons why children achieve well in this area of learning. Children learn to be respectful and kind to one another because this is the way that they see adults behave. In nursery and reception classes, children are praised for their efforts and success and this has a positive impact on their self-esteem and confidence.

40 One of the reasons why teaching is good in the reception classes is that teachers make sure that there is a good balance of activities led by an adult and opportunities for children to choose their own activities. In the nursery, when children are left to choose their own activities they often wander from one to another without completing a task or tidying away after they have used equipment. Too often this results in unsatisfactory behaviour such as running around the room or shouting.

## COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY

Provision in communication, language and literacy is **satisfactory**.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Throughout the Foundation Stage there are daily planned sessions to teach early reading and writing skills but few children reach the early goals by the end of reception.
- Though teaching is satisfactory in the nursery, teachers do not plan enough opportunities to develop children's speaking and listening skills.

## Commentary

41 Teaching is good in reception classes and satisfactory in the nursery. Consequently, children achieve steadily in nursery and well in reception classes. Few children achieve the early goals by the end of the reception.

42 Although teachers in both years plan daily opportunities for children to read and write, in the nursery the activities are not promoted as well. For example, books are not always displayed in an attractive, quiet setting that would encourage children to choose to read. Similarly, though there are pens and paper available for writing in role-play areas, without direction from an adult children often choose not to. This was not the case in reception classes where Crab Lane beach shop promoted reading, writing and speaking activities through imaginative play that involved adults. Each day, children in nursery and reception have the chance to listen to stories and read with an adult. This helps children learn to concentrate and listen and promotes reading skills. Staff use a good and systematic way of encouraging children to recognise and use letter sounds and most reception children write simple words from memory.

43 There are too few focused speaking opportunities planned in the nursery and consequently children's vocabulary does not develop at a fast enough rate. This is largely because of the way that the nursery is organised with much of the day devoted to children choosing their own activities and not necessarily engaging in discussions with adults. It is noticeable that in structured activities, where children work in a small group they quickly grasp new words. This was evident when a group were cooking and learned to use the terms such as, 'turn the dials' and 'mixture'.

## MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision in mathematical development is **satisfactory**.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children make good progress in number recognition and early counting skills.
- Pattern, symmetry and size are taught through a range of interesting activities.
- There are missed opportunities to use the area outside to promote mathematical development.

### Commentary

44 Good teaching in reception classes enables children to achieve well. In the nursery, where teaching is satisfactory, children achieve steadily. Few children achieve the early goals by the end of the reception.

45 Children in the reception classes count objects and match numbers accurately. More able children understand numbers beyond ten. Teachers encourage children to use different materials, including dough to help with number recording. Displays and activities promote number recognition well and staff teach children a range of songs and rhymes to further their understanding. In the reception classes teachers make good use of assessments to make sure that the work and subsequent activities match children's stage of development. Because of this, all children achieve very well. Staff place good emphasis on mathematical language; this helps children in their understanding. For example, when learning about height, staff in the nursery encouraged children to use the words *tall* and *short*, however the cutting activity provided to develop their understanding does not motivate children enough. In the reception classes children use Russian dolls and building blocks when size grading and children find this stimulating, so their understanding is secure. Reception teachers plan a range of exciting activities to teach children symmetry. These include making symmetrical insects with clay and playing challenging board games. The Foundation Stage has an attractive and secure outdoor area, but teachers do not use this to full advantage to promote mathematical development and planning for outdoors does not include the promotion of mathematics.

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

### **ENGLISH**

Provision in English is **good**.

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

- Teachers are very good at promoting pupils' speaking and listening skills through drama.
- Pupils achieve very well with reading because teachers are good at teaching the basic skills.
- Though teachers provide many opportunities for pupils to write they do not give enough attention to handwriting and few pupils achieve a fluent style by the end of Year 6.

#### **Commentary**

46 Teaching is good overall, but the teaching of speaking and listening is very good. With very good leadership and management from the co-ordinator, teachers have developed very effective ways of using drama and role-play as a means of developing pupils' language and vocabulary and increasing their self-confidence. In doing so, pupils gain an understanding of the formal language of stories and widen their vocabulary, so that standards match those expected by the end of Year 2. Drama continues to be an important part of the curriculum in Years 3 to 6. Teachers in Year 6 make exceptionally good use of the expertise of drama tutors to give pupils the confidence and skills they need to give a polished public performance of the play 'A Winters Tale'. Their high expectations help pupils learn and speak their lines expressively and with a good degree of confidence. Pupils who had asked for a small part in the play said that they now feel confident enough to perform in front of a large audience and that they could have taken on a bigger part. Pupils who have special educational needs or who speak English as an additional language achieve equally as well as others, though they do not often reach the levels expected for their age. By the end of Year 6 standards match those expected and the success of the teaching is evident in the confidence with which boys and girls act as ambassadors for the school when receiving awards.

47 Most pupils in Years 2 and 6, attain standards in reading that match those expected for their age. This reflects a significant improvement on standards in recent years when the school's results have been consistently well below the national average. This is largely because teachers in Years 1 and 2 are good at teaching the basic skills of reading and teachers in Years 3 to 6 build on this prior learning when reading with small groups of pupils. In Years 1 and 2, pupils are taught the sounds and names of letters and learn how to use this knowledge well to read unfamiliar words. This happened in Year 1 when the teacher prompted pupils to read out the words 'letter' and 'self' which they managed to do successfully. Pupils were also taught to look for clues in the pictures and by doing so, read 'skateboard' easily. As they get older, pupils learn to use their knowledge about groups of letters and to think about the meaning of a sentence. As a result, average and higher attaining pupils in Year 6 stop to think about what a word might be and correct themselves when they have got a word wrong. Though pupils who have special educational needs do not read at the levels expected for their age, they make use of the same strategies to achieve very well and reach the levels of which they are capable.

48 Teachers plan many opportunities for pupils to write, in English and other lessons. However, without an agreed scheme for teaching handwriting pupils do not develop a fluent or consistent style as they get older. By the end of Year 2, very few pupils write in a joined style because this is not taught. As a result, few pupils achieve a higher level in writing tests and this prevents standards from being higher than they are. In Years 3 to 6, teachers are generally good models for handwriting but again, there is no corporate style for pupils to copy and aspire to. In a school where pupils have proven themselves capable of producing fine and detailed works of art they are not being given the same chances to excel with their handwriting.

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

49 Pupils make very good use of their language and literacy skills in all subjects. In most lessons, not just in English, time is set aside for discussion. As a result, most pupils give their views willingly and are prepared to listen to what other pupils and adults have to say. From Year 1 onwards, pupils read to find information from books and the Internet and they write about their work and experiences in many subjects. This is a contributory factor to the improving standards and a reason why pupils' achieve very well.

## **MATHEMATICS**

Provision in mathematics is **good**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Good teaching of number ensures that most pupils reach the levels expected for their age.
- Teachers make good use of assessment to pitch work at the right level for pupils of different abilities.
- Thorough marking and the setting of clear learning objectives mean that pupils have a very good understanding of how they can improve their work.

### **Commentary**

50 The basic skills of mathematics are taught well throughout the school and pupils achieve very well over time. This is largely because teachers have a very good command of how to teach mathematics and make good use of the National Numeracy Strategy to plan work that is interesting and challenging. Briskly paced mental mathematics sessions promote pupils' accuracy and recall of the pattern and relationship in number. For example, a game of number bingo helped pupils improve their recall of multiplication tables. Teachers use an effective range of methods to teach number and this ensures that most pupils reach the levels expected by the end of Year 2 and Year 6. Whiteboards and number fans are used effectively to check if pupils have got the right answer. In Year 2, pupils add and subtract two digit numbers, identify odd and even numbers and multiplies single digit numbers. In Year 6, most pupils show good understanding of the four rules of number though a significant minority have difficulty in applying these to problem solving. This has been recognised by the school as an area for development.

51 Very good leadership and management have helped teachers develop useful and effective procedures for assessing and recording pupils' progress. Teachers make good use of tests, observations and questioning to determine what pupils know and where they need to improve and use this to set a starting point for work in lessons. When planning lessons teachers are very mindful of the wide range within their groups and they set work at different levels to meet the needs of all pupils. As a result pupils achieve very well. Very careful planning results in pupils who have special educational needs achieving very well and those who are gifted and talented being challenged well by more difficult work.

52 One of the main reasons why teaching is good is that teachers share the aims of each lesson with pupils. Teachers continue to refer to these aims and to pupils' group or individual targets throughout the lesson. This ensures that pupils know what they should be learning and how well they are doing. As they get older, pupils take on responsibility for setting their own targets. For example, a pupil in Year 5 set herself the target of 'improving my division skills'. This approach to teaching also helps motivate pupils. When asked they said that this is because they understand where their work is leading and so they enjoy it more. At the end of the lesson, teachers generally summarise and refer to the aims so that pupils have a clear view of how they have succeeded and what they need to do to improve. Throughout the school, the quality of marking is good. Pupils' work is always marked and teachers write useful comments that show pupils exactly where they have gone wrong as well as providing praise for effort and accuracy.

### **Mathematics across the curriculum**



53 Pupils use their mathematical skills well in other subjects. They measure in design and technology, use mathematical programmes in information and communication technology and learn about the significance of mathematical patterns in religious education.

## SCIENCE

Provision in science is **good**.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- There is good provision for experimental and investigative science.
- Pupils enjoy science lessons and want to learn.
- Though standards match those expected pupils' limited scientific vocabulary prevents them from being higher.
- Although the procedures for assessing pupils' attainment are very good they are not always used well enough in planning pupils' work.

### Commentary

54 One of the reasons why teaching is good overall is that teachers are good at teaching investigative and experimental science and consequently pupils achieve well over time. From Year 1 onwards teachers show pupils how to plan, conduct and record investigations in a scientific way. For example, in a well-taught lesson pupils in Year 1 worked out a plan to investigate the growth of plants. With prompting from the teacher they decided what they wanted to find out, what they needed to do in order to achieve this, what they would need and how to make their test fair. Pupils in Year 6 investigated how magnets attract and repulse in a similarly practical way; working as teams to ensure that only one variable was changed in each test. This method of teaching is effective and pupils say that the experiments they do in science are their favourite parts of lessons. Pupils are clear about the importance of fair testing and recognise that scientists sometimes get it wrong the first time. They plan, carry out and record investigations and present their results using charts and diagrams. These are key reasons why pupils achieve very well in this aspect of science.

55 When asked, pupils say that they enjoy science and 'finding things out'. In lessons, they try hard and put a lot of effort into their work, even when they are unsure about what to do next. Teachers have high expectations that pupils will work co-operatively in science lessons and pupils generally respond positively. When stimulated by the work pupils come up with good ideas. This happened in Year 2 when pupils liked the idea of creating a data card by writing first about a friend and set about the task enthusiastically. In Years 3 to 6, teachers have to work hard to capture and keep pupils attention, but they generally succeed when the work is interesting.

56 Most pupils in Years 2 and 6 are working at levels expected for their age. They have a sound knowledge of the scientific concepts that they study but are occasionally prevented from doing better because their vocabulary is limited. For example, though they had a fair idea why animals chose their habitats, pupils in Year 4 lacked the vocabulary to describe this in terms of 'nutrition', 'food chain' or 'consumer'. This has rightly been identified by the co-ordinator as an area for further development in the coming year.

57 The school has a very good, simple and effective system for tracking pupils' progress from one year to the next but teachers do not always use this to set a starting point for work. Teachers' marking is generally of a good quality. They make constructive comments that help pupils know what they need to do to improve their work, however, they do not always make sure that mistakes and misunderstandings are revisited and corrected. Through sound leadership and management this has been identified as a priority for development in the coming year. The school's provision for science has been maintained and proposed changes are intended to boost the quality of provision in the coming year.

## INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

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

## **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Teachers do not provide enough opportunities for pupils in Years 1 and 2 to practise their skills.
- Good teaching in Years 3 to 6 has helped raise standards since the previous inspection.
- Very good leadership and management have helped improve the quality of provision significantly.
- The computer suite is too cluttered for efficient teaching and learning.

## **Commentary**

58 Standards have not risen sufficiently in Years 1 and 2 since the last inspection and remain below those expected. In these years, teaching is satisfactory, but there are weaknesses that prevent it from being good and pupils do not achieve well enough. The main weakness to the teaching is that, teachers do not plan enough opportunities for pupils to practise or consolidate their skills. Until recently, pupils in Years 1 and 2 had few chances to use the computer suite and their opportunities to use the one or two classroom computers have been too few and far between for them to develop secure basic skills. Almost all; for example, are very slow at finding their way around the keyboard. As a result, most pieces of writing are very short or unfinished. Now that pupils have been given more regular access to the computer suite, they are already making faster progress and beginning to catch up. For example, pupils do better with a graphics programme and they are reasonably confident in using the menus and tools because they have had more practice. They are learning to use the Internet sensibly.

59 Teaching is good in Years 3 to 6. Consequently pupils in these years achieve very well and standards match those expected by the end of Year 6. Teachers make commendable efforts to prepare before they begin unfamiliar units of work. They explain clearly and concisely, so pupils spend the maximum time practising rather than listening. A strength in the teaching is the way teachers try to make lessons purposeful by linking technology with other subjects or events. Pupils in Year 3, for example, were fired up because their spreadsheets were going to the local planning department as evidence in a dispute over playing fields. In Year 6, pupils worked long and hard on their art programme because their efforts were to be used in an ambitious drama production. Another strength is that teachers do not spoon-feed pupils. They expect them to listen carefully and then work responsibly. Consequently, most pupils are willing to persevere and find solutions themselves. They are well on the way to becoming effective independent learners.

60 Notwithstanding the shortcomings in the teaching in Years 1 and 2, very good leadership and management by the co-ordinator have helped the school come a long way since the previous inspection. There have been significant improvements to the curriculum and resources, including a new, well-equipped computer suite. Teachers' expertise and confidence have also improved as a result of very effective training. This in turn, has helped raise standards in Years 3 to 6. There is no difference in the enthusiasm, or progress, of girls and boys.

61 The computer suite is a good place to learn and has had a significant effect on improving standards and achievement. However, the school has recognised that larger classes and the improving skills of pupils are beginning to push the effectiveness of the facility to its limits. In addition, although the school has improved the system for technical support, during the inspection there were problems in nearly half of the lessons. Consequently, the school has drawn up ambitious plans to further develop the provision in the near future.

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

62 Pupils make sound use of ICT in other subjects. For example, in Year 1, pupils enjoyed watching the story of the Three Little Pigs on computer and were keen to explain what happened to the wolf. In Years 3 to 6, pupils increasingly use computers to research work in subjects such as geography and history and they enjoy playing games during lunchtime and after school. The school is determined to look beyond merely teaching basic skills, and identify the gains that technology can bring to the whole curriculum. As part of this, the co-ordinator has completed an impressive review of teachers' yearly planning. This sets out clearly where computer activities can enhance learning

within each year group's units of work. Teachers are beginning to use this advice in their planning and there are many good links now, particularly in art and design. However these are set to become even better as resources and teachers' expertise improve.

## HUMANITIES

63 Religious education was inspected in depth. Geography and history were sampled by looking at displays and pupils books and by talking with them about their work.

64 In **geography**, teachers use field trips, photographs and a range of other evidence to help pupils understand the physical and economic features of the places they study. For example, pupils learned about cliff erosion from looking at photographs and discussed whether money should be spent propping up the cliffs in order to save homes and businesses. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 learn to use simple maps and those in Years 3 to 6 increase their skills and use symbols, keys and co-ordinators to locate places on Ordnance Survey maps. When asked, pupils said that they enjoy field trips in geography and would like more of this type of work.

65 Pupils are particularly fond of the gory bits of **history**. Pupils in Year 2 talked with relish about the Great Fire of London and about the filth and rats in hospitals at the time of the Crimean War. They said that they have enjoyed learning about Samuel Pepys and Florence Nightingale. This was evident in that they could remember many facts about the lives of both. Older pupils were equally graphic in their descriptions of the mummification processes used by ancient Egyptians and about the demise of the wives of Henry VIII. As with geography, they said that their favourite lessons involved visiting museums, because these help to bring the subject to life.

## Religious Education

Provision in religious education is **good**.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Good teaching ensures that pupils have a sound understanding of the religions they study.
- Religious education makes a significant contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
- Very good leadership and management have ensured that provision has improved since the previous inspection.

## Commentary

66 One of the main reasons why teaching is effective is that the work is interesting to pupils. Learning from first-hand experiences such as visiting a local church or looking at the religious books and dress of Jews and Muslims help to bring the subject to life and make it meaningful to pupils. Pupils say that they enjoy learning about other faiths and finding out how they differ and where they are similar. Teachers use the syllabus taught in local schools effectively to ensure that pupils study Christianity and other major world faiths. As a result, standards match those prescribed by the syllabus by the end of Year 2 and Year 6. In Year 2 pupils recall the Christmas and Easter story and they talk about special times and things. Their knowledge of other faiths is not as well developed. In Year 6, pupils talk about aspects of all religions studied. They understand that Christians believe that Jesus came back to life. Pupils compare and contrast religions; for example, when studying the use of colour and pattern in worship.

67 The work that teachers plan in religious education has a significant effect on pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. In learning about the similarities and differences of the Christian, Jewish, Islamic and Sikh religions, pupils develop a great respect for the beliefs and cultures of others. They gain in spirituality when they visit places of worship or look at the sacred objects, clothes and rituals of each religion. Pupils say that they enjoy these visits, though at present, these are sometimes limited to what is available locally. As pupils explore each religion they

discuss its teachings and moral codes, such as the Five Pillars of Islam and in turn, this leads to further discussion about rules, citizenship and society.

68 The co-ordinator has initiated several changes to the curriculum and to teaching that have improved the school's provision well since the previous inspection. For example, strong links have been established with local churches and local Christian clergy visit the school and sometimes lead assemblies that are of a Christian nature. These visits and visitors help pupils gain a sound knowledge of the Christian faith. Though first-hand experiences are planned for other faiths, these are not as well developed and the co-ordinator has rightly identified this as an area for further work. Teaching has improved as a result of the wider range and improved quality of resources, which stimulate pupils' discussions and catch their interest. For example, in a corridor, resources, posters and objects are so interesting that pupils stop to look, touch and talk about world religions. In addition to this, teaching has improved with the introduction of simple but effective procedures for assessing and recording pupils' progress towards the skills and knowledge prescribed by the syllabus used in local schools.

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

69 Art and design was inspected in depth. Music, design and technology and physical education were sampled by looking at books and photographs, talking with pupils and observing a small number of activities and lessons.

70 Throughout the school, teachers often use calm, classical **music** as a background to lessons. Pupils understand the reason for this and most said that they enjoy listening while working. Pupils in Year 5 said that the music being played helped to give them ideas about their art and craftwork. This good practice ensures that pupils become aware of a broad range of musical styles and learn how music can create and reflect different moods and emotions. In the one lesson seen, pupils learned that music is often used to reflect different moods. Pupils in Year 6 talked about music that they had composed for percussion instruments. Specialist tuition in the violin and trumpet is available for some pupils. Clubs including the recorder and Samba also help to raise the profile of music in the school. Some pupils were involved in making a 'Sound Board', which is displayed in the school hall for all to enjoy. Music also plays an important part in festivals and arts productions in which pupils are involved.

71 Pupils said that they enjoy the making in **design and technology** better than the designing. In Year 2 pupils design and make musical instruments and carry out simple evaluations. A calm atmosphere was very conducive to pupils in Year 2 designing some very elaborate patterns for a coat for the Biblical character Joseph. Their painstakingly transferred their designs from paper onto fabric and, in almost all examples, the end result looked very much like the design. In Year 6, pupils research, design and make slippers of a good quality. In food technology they sample breads and make their own, which is very popular.

72 **Physical education** is clearly an important part of the curriculum and pupils are taught, gymnastics, swimming, games, dance and athletics. There are good links made with topics in other subjects. For example, pupils in Year 2 said they had particularly enjoyed the dance they created for their Great Fire of London project. There are a small number of sports clubs; most include boys, girls and younger pupils. Girls and boys say that they have a fair deal. All pupils learn to swim and several compete in the local gala. The school has a good stock of equipment. Pupils like being allowed to use small apparatus at lunchtime. Space indoors and outside is good, despite the current building work.

### **Art and Design**

Provision in art and design is **excellent**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Teachers make exceptionally good use of artists and stories to stimulate pupils' interest.
- Pupils produce work of a very high quality and the displays in school are stunning.
- Art is used to promote pupils' learning in other subjects.
- The school has achieved an award for its work in art and design.

## Commentary

73 The teaching of art and design is very good. Teachers plan regular opportunities for pupils of all ages and abilities to work with artists or talented adults. As a result, pupils achieve extremely well and learn to use and explore many techniques that help them create art of a very high quality. For example, guided by a well-qualified and talented teaching assistant, pupils in Year 6 experimented confidently with colour, paint and glue to achieve the texture and impact that they wanted in two pictures of Green Men. The resulting work was a pair of very contrasting Holly and Oak Green Men. Other sources of inspiration for pupils have been stories from other cultures and periods. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 produced colourful and detailed plates, with careful attention to detail and brushstroke, after hearing the ancient Chinese story of the Willow Pattern. They also produced an exhibition of drawings and collages based on the traditional African story of the Abiku, or spirits of children. This collection of work is currently being shown to the public in the Cube Gallery in Manchester. In a very good lesson in Year 5, pupils were engrossed in the task of creating an Egungun or warrior costume as part of their work on the Orisha project, which involves art, music, dance and drama. Their extremely positive attitudes to learning were clear from comments such as, 'Its great because 'you can just try what you want and it always looks good'.

74 Standards are well above those expected for pupils' ages. From Year 2 onwards, pupils explore ideas and collect visual and other information to help them develop their work. The books created by pupils in Year 6 are exquisite to look at and contain their thoughts and feelings, which all become part of the final work of art. This ability to communicate ideas and meanings and interpret visual and tactile qualities in order to realise their intentions and plans is what enables pupils to achieve so well in art and design. Teachers and other staff play a very important part in that they clearly value pupils' work and show it off to its best advantage. When visitors walk into the school they are met by an array of two and three-dimensional work that is, quite simply, stunning.

75 The art and design curriculum is rich and varied and extends to all subjects including dance and drama. Teachers expect pupils to use their art and design skills in much of their work. For example, as part of their geography work, pupils in Year 4 were challenged to use clay, wire, foil and household items to create models of the facilities they would like to see on a field adjacent to the school. The resulting models were of a good quality and would form part of pupils' future work on the local environment.

76 Very good leadership and management have helped the school recently gain a Gold Artsmark Award. Projects such as the 'big arts week' inspired pupils and staff and has given pupils an insight into the art of other cultures at the same time as it helped them gain confidence and self-esteem. With clear guidance and encouragement from the co-ordinator, staff continue to take advantage of the school's involvement with the 'Creative Partnership Manchester/Salford' to participate in further training and improve their teaching. As a result, the opportunities that teachers provide for pupils' creative and cultural education are greatly enriching the lives of pupils in this school.

### Example of outstanding practice

#### **An example of how the performing arts are used very effectively to promote pupils' personal development.**

The mob was turning nasty. The husband was unsure if he was the father of the child and the wife was accused of being a witch. Things looked bad, but more than fifty pupils in Year 6 were thoroughly enjoying themselves. They were rehearsing 'A Winter's Tale', which they would later perform before a large audience at the Contact Theatre in Manchester. The sheer drama of the play had forced pupils to consider some very adult issues about relationships and prejudice. Acting out the parts and pondering on the motives and lines of each character helped pupils gain an insight into life in Elizabethan and Jacobean England. As a result, pupils' acting revealed

a high level of maturity and self-confidence that was not always evident in other aspects of their work.

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

77 The schools provision for pupils PSHCE was sampled by talking with pupils and observing a very small number of activities. Promoting pupils' personal development is a major part of the work of the school. Pupils follow a formal programme of lessons aimed at helping them make sensible choices about lifestyle, growing up and relationships. Pupils confront and learn to deal with many of the issues that they will face as adults through drama and stories. Working on the school's social communication programme, or playing in the Rainbow Room helps pupils gain self-esteem. Some pupils have regular, targeted sessions in the room, while others act as role models within the sessions. Parents also have access to the Rainbow Room for structured programmes designed to help them and their children. Staff and governors feel that this initiative is particularly effective in promoting pupils' personal development and pupils are proud of the fact that they chose the name for the room and created its logo.

## PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

<i>Inspection judgement</i>	<i>Grade</i>
<b>The overall effectiveness of the school</b>	<b>2</b>
How inclusive the school is	2
How the school's effectiveness has changed since its last inspection	3
Value for money provided by the school	3
<b>Overall standards achieved</b>	<b>2</b>
Pupils' achievement	2
<b>Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities</b>	<b>3</b>
Attendance	6
Attitudes	3
Behaviour, including the extent of exclusions	3
Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2
<b>The quality of education provided by the school</b>	<b>2</b>
The quality of teaching	3
How well pupils learn	3
The quality of assessment	3
How well the curriculum meets pupils needs	1
Enrichment of the curriculum, including out-of-school activities	1
Accommodation and resources	3
Pupils' care, welfare, health and safety	2
Support, advice and guidance for pupils	2
How well the school seeks and acts on pupils' views	2
The effectiveness of the school's links with parents	2
The quality of the school's links with the community	2
The school's links with other schools and colleges	2
<b>The leadership and management of the school</b>	<b>2</b>
The governance of the school	3
The leadership of the headteacher	1
The leadership of other key staff	2
The effectiveness of management	2

*Inspectors make judgements on a scale: excellent (grade 1); very good (2); good (3); satisfactory (4); unsatisfactory (5); poor (6); very poor (7).*