

INSPECTION REPORT

CROSSGATES PRIMARY SCHOOL

Rochdale

LEA area: Rochdale

Unique reference number: 105846

Headteacher: Mr E W Aadahl

Lead inspector: Mr R S Moseley

Dates of inspection: 9-11 December 2003

Inspection number: 255929

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:	Foundation
Age range of pupils:	4-11
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
Number on roll:	252
School address:	Kiln Lane Milnrow Rochdale Lancashire
Postcode:	OL16 3HB
Telephone number:	01706 654573
Fax number:	01706 713722
Appropriate authority:	Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr J Liptrot
Date of previous inspection:	19 June 1998

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

The school is situated in the town of Rochdale. There are 252 pupils on roll and they come from the surrounding area. There are 125 boys and 127 girls. Most children enter the reception class with average skills in all areas of learning, in line with what is expected from the age group. There are no pupils who speak English as an additional language. Ninety-seven per cent of pupils are white and three per cent are from other ethnic backgrounds. The percentage of pupils eligible for free school meals (10 per cent) is broadly in line with the national average. Thirteen per cent of pupils are identified as having special educational needs, which is below the national average. Of these, one pupil has a statement of special educational needs, which is below the national average.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
16886	Mr R Moseley	Lead inspector	Science, Physical Education, Geography, History, Religious Education.
9921	Mrs P Blackshaw	Lay inspector	
28320	Mr R Willey	Team inspector	Mathematics, Information and Communication Technology, Art and Design, Special Educational Needs.
18027	Mrs S Mawer	Team inspector	Foundation Stage, English, Music.

The inspection contractor was:

Serco QAA
Herringston Barn
Herringston
Dorchester
Dorset
DT2 9PU

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

OVERALL EVALUATION

Crossgates is a very good school, which gives very good value for money. Its main aim is to provide a climate where pupils develop confidence and independence. This it does very effectively. Pupils' achievement is good and sometimes very good and standards are above average overall as a result of high quality provision. The quality of teaching is very good. Leadership is very good and management is good.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:-

- Pupils' achievement is at least good in almost all subjects. In science, art and design and history, standards are well above average by the end of Year 6.
- Very good teaching is characterised by very good caring relationships between staff and pupils, which promote very good attitudes and behaviour.
- Pupils' confidence and self-esteem are outstanding by the time they leave the school.
- The leadership of the headteacher is very good. He has raised the profile of the school very well since the previous inspection, in terms of standards, ethos and effectiveness.
- The school's partnership with parents is very good.
- Overall, the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils is very good.
- The curriculum is very well planned to provide a very wide range of well-integrated activities. It is greatly enriched by drama and musical performances, educational visits, many visitors into school and a very good range of extra-curricular activities.
- Delivery in the reception year is not sufficiently focussed on learning through structured play activities.
- Assessment procedures in English, mathematics, and science and in the reception classes are not always used sufficiently well to identify particular learning needs.

Since the school was last inspected in 1998, its improvement has been very good, especially in the area of standards. All key issues have been dealt with successfully through a wide range of appropriate activities.

STANDARDS ACHIEVED

Results in National Curriculum tests at the end of Year 6, compared with:	all schools			similar schools
	2001	2002	2003	2003
English	A	A	A	A
Mathematics	A	B	C	C
Science	A	B	A	A

*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.*

Achievement is good overall. The table shows that Year 6 pupils in 2003 did not do as well in mathematics as they did in English and science and that standards in mathematics have fallen over a two-year period. However, the current Year 6 pupils are doing well in mathematics and standards are above average.

The standards seen in Year 6 are well above average in science, art and design and history and above average in English, mathematics, information and communication technology (ICT), religious education, design and technology, geography and music. Standards in Year 2 are well above average in all aspects of English and above average in most other subjects and pupils achieve well. By the end of the reception year, children achieve soundly and attain the expected goals in all areas of learning.

Pupils' personal qualities, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, are very good. They are very well behaved and have very positive attitudes to their work. Attendance and punctuality are very good. There have been no exclusions for many years.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION

The quality of education provided by the school is **very good**. Teaching is **very good** overall. It is satisfactory in reception and very good in Years 1 to 6. Very good aspects of teaching and learning are common to all classes in Years 1 to 6. For example, there are high quality relationships between adults and pupils and teachers plan lessons which allows the pupils to be deeply involved in their own learning, discovery and research work, developing their independence and thinking processes very well. Teachers use a very positive, enthusiastic and encouraging approach with pupils. This promotes very good behaviour, motivates pupils very well and brings out the best in them. There are comprehensive assessment procedures in English and mathematics. However, the information they provide is not always used sufficiently well to identify particular trends and to set precise targets for pupils. The use of assessment in science is underdeveloped.

The curriculum is very well planned and organised in an effective and integrated way. It is very well enriched by a very good range of additional activities. The school cares for its pupils well and gives them very good support. There are very good links with parents, which enrich pupils' learning effectively. The provision for pupils with special educational needs is good because teachers and classroom assistants ensure their inclusion and involvement in lessons.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Leadership and management are very good overall. Leadership by the headteacher is very good. His thoughtfulness, sensitivity and drive, together with his total commitment to the school's caring, family ethos, has helped to ensure a very good quality of education and many improvements since the previous inspection. The headteacher is very well supported by the deputy headteacher. Together, they promote a strong sense of teamwork amongst staff very successfully. School management is good. The school is organised very efficiently. Essential functions are covered very well. All staff are clear about their roles and responsibilities. All policies are in place for maintaining a safe environment, however, some of these need to be updated and reviewed more regularly. The work of the governing body is very good, they help shape the vision and direction of the school and have a very good understanding of the strengths and weaknesses. The commitment of staff and governors to ensure the inclusion of all pupils is very good, as is their concern for the needs of individuals and they ensure that all statutory requirements are met. The school improvement plan is an effective document, which outlines clearly what the school needs to do to maintain its strengths and continue to improve.

PARENTS' AND PUPILS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

Parents are extremely positive about the school, particularly the leadership. They feel strongly that all staff are very approachable and that their children greatly enjoy coming to school. Pupils are highly motivated by the school and their interest in school life and the range of activities is outstanding.

IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

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

- strengthen lesson planning in the reception year, so that more effective learning takes place through structured play activities;
- improve assessment procedures in English, mathematics, science and in reception, to more clearly identify trends, to set more effective individual targets for pupils in Years 1 to 6 and to plan work which more closely matches the needs of pupils.

PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS

STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

Standards achieved in areas of learning, subjects and courses

Standards are average at the end of reception. By the end of Year 2 and Year 6 they are above average overall. Both boys and girls do equally well throughout the school. Children show satisfactory achievement in reception. They achieve well in Years 1 to 6.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Test results indicate a general pattern of high standards in English and science over a number of years, although they were only average in mathematics in the latest tests in Year 6.
- Inspection evidence indicates that standards in most subjects, where a judgement could be made, are above average by the time pupils leave the school and pupils are achieving well.
- Pupils' standards are very good in all aspects of English at the end of Year 2 and, in science, art and design and history at the end of Year 6.
- Children in the reception class are achieving soundly but, on occasions, do not make as much progress as they could.

Commentary

1. Children enter the reception classes with average attainment. By the time they leave reception, almost all reach the levels expected for their age and achieve soundly in all areas of learning, apart from reading and speaking. In these areas, they achieve well and standards are above average. However, generally, children are not always achieving as well as they could. This is because teachers find it difficult in the large mixed age classes to provide enough opportunities for children to learn effectively through structured play. In addition, not enough use is made of assessment information to always plan work at the correct level for the wide range of abilities.

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
Reading	18 (18.9)	15.7(15.8)
Writing	16.4(16.6)	14.6(14.4)
Mathematics	17.8(19.2)	16.3(16.5)

There were 34 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	28.7(28.8)	26.8(27.0)
Mathematics	26.6(28.1)	26.8(26.7)
Science	30.3(29.6)	28.6(28.3)

There were 31 in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year

2. The 2003 national test results for pupils in Year 2 show that standards in reading, writing, mathematics and science were well above average. Inspection shows that the current Year 2 is also expected to attain similar results in English. Pupils are doing very well in developing their speaking and listening skills and are confident to take part in class discussions. Standards are also above average in science and mathematics. In addition, standards are above average in

ICT, design and technology, history, geography, art and design and music. There was insufficient evidence to make firm judgements on physical or religious education.

3. The 2003 national test results for pupils in Year 6 show that standards in English and science were well above average but average in mathematics. When compared against schools with similar number of free school meals, English and science are well above average again, with mathematics only average. This lower result in mathematics followed a trend over the last two years where standards in mathematics had got weaker. The school analysed this problem carefully, has taken action and standards are now rising again. The inspection evidence shows that the current Year 6 are expected to attain well above average standards in science and above average standards in mathematics and English. The English standard is not likely to be as high as last year, as there is a higher proportion of pupils with special educational needs who find reading and, especially, writing, more difficult than other pupils. Standards in speaking and listening are well above average. The standards in mathematics have risen because of a specific focus on quick and accurate mental arithmetic, together with a strong emphasis on problem solving activities. These areas had been identified as weaknesses in the previous year.
4. In other subjects, standards by the end of Year 6 are well above average in art and design and history and above average in ICT, religious education, design and technology, geography and music. Insufficient evidence was available to make firm judgements on standards in all aspects of physical education. However, pupils reach good standards in swimming. The well above standards in science are a result of, not only the school's emphasis on investigational and experimental science, but also on the way this is carried out. For example, the strong emphasis on pupils being heavily involved in their own education by suggesting ways to carry out experiments. They also answer well directed questions thoughtfully. In art and design, high standards are a result of very good teaching throughout the school, strong and talented leadership and a cross-curricular approach where many teachers use pupils' artistic skills in most subjects. In history, there is a strong emphasis on carrying out a lot of individual and stimulating investigation work using books, documents, artefacts and the Internet.
5. The majority of pupils with special educational needs achieve well. Most of those in Year 6 attained average standards in English and mathematics in the latest national tests. This reflects the good support they receive from teachers and classroom assistants and the well-organised group teaching arrangements in many subjects.
6. Attainment of children when they start school is broadly average. Satisfactory teaching enables them to achieve soundly. By the time they leave reception almost all meet the required standards in most areas of learning. Reading and speaking are above average.

Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities

Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities, such as their spiritual, moral and social development are very good. Pupils behave very well, responding to the very good relationships by working hard and productively. Attendance and punctuality are very good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teachers have high expectations of their pupils who respond with confidence and maturity, which promotes effective learning.
- Very good relationships contribute to the very good attitudes to work and pupils' keenness to share responsibility for their learning. This develops their confidence and self-esteem, which is excellent.
- The strong ethos of the school and strong commitment in all areas of the school by staff provide very good spiritual, moral and social development. Cultural development, although good, could be further developed to extend pupils' understanding of the diverse nature of a multicultural society.

- Pupils are happy to come to school and their interest in school life and the range of activities provided is excellent.

Commentary

- All pupils in school are made to feel valued and special. Expectations are high and pupils show confidence and willingness to have a go when challenged with new ideas and opportunities to learn. Examples of this are the amazing Christmas productions observed during the inspection, involving the talent of every child in the school and enjoyed enormously by parents, grandparents and friends. In lessons this developing confidence and self-assurance means pupils are keen to respond to well-focussed questioning by skilled teachers, so that learning is of a high quality. This is a major factor in promoting good or very good standards. Pupils say they enjoy lessons because they find them interesting and often exciting and readily take the many opportunities offered to be partners in their own learning.
- Relationships within the school are very good and pupils are very confident and know they can talk to an adult if they have a problem. Staff provide very good role models. Pupils are eager to show what they know, are enthusiastic to learn new things and are happy to work things out for themselves. The harmonious and supportive relationships are crucial to successfully promoting these very good attitudes to work and in fostering good academic and personal achievement. Pupils are caring and considerate and behaviour is mainly very good. No children have been excluded from school in recent years.
- Provision for spiritual, moral and social development is very good. The ethos of the school is particularly strong, so values such as inclusion, moral standards and fairness are firmly embedded in all areas of the school. Many opportunities are provided for pupils to experience spiritual awareness, not only through lively assemblies and the very good creative arts but also in subjects such as science and mathematics, where working out solutions to practical activities gives pupils a real buzz. Pupils clearly know the difference between right and wrong and have a strong moral and social awareness. The sensitive approach by teachers help pupils to feel secure enough to express their views and emotions in subjects across the curriculum but particularly in personal and social education through circle time. Inspiring, interactive and imaginative displays of pupils' work of a very high standard are seen all round the school but are mainly based on western culture with very little relating to other cultures. Various different cultures are studied in history and geography, with some input through music, art and design, religious education and the French language and the celebration of the Chinese New Year. There are satisfactory formalised opportunities to prepare pupils for the multicultural society. However, these need to be developed further as there are only a few visitors from other cultures or visits to different places of worship. This is counterbalanced by the good use of the internet, where pupils log-on to explore the inside of mosques and synagogues.
- Pupils enjoy coming to school. Attendance figures support this, being well above the national average. This is a good improvement since the last inspection.
- Pupils' attitudes to learning in the Foundation Stage are good. They behave well and show increasing levels of confidence in their learning and a strong willingness to help and support one another. However, on occasions, children are expected to sit for too long during the morning session and can become rather restless and less inclined to listen.

Attendance in the latest complete reporting year (%)

Authorised absence	
School data	3.7
National Data	5.4

Unauthorised absence	
School data	0.4
National data	0.5

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

QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

The quality of education is very good. The teaching is very good overall and has some excellent features. The curriculum is very good and is very well complimented by very good extra-curricular activities and very good enrichment opportunities. The school cares for its pupils well and has very good links with parents and good links with the community.

Teaching and learning

Teaching and learning are very good overall. This has improved considerably since the previous inspection when teaching across the school was judged to be satisfactory. Although it still remains satisfactory in reception, it is now very good in Years 1 to 6. Overall assessment arrangements are good. The use of assessment information to plan work is satisfactory.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Relationships between staff and pupils are very good, which promotes learning very effectively.
- Teachers use questioning very effectively and plan lessons which involve pupils directly in their own learning. This develops independence and confidence very well.
- Teachers have very high expectations of pupils' behaviour and effort. Consequently, pupils work hard and have very good attitudes to learning.
- The teamwork between teachers and classroom assistants is very good, especially in the lessons organised with a carousel approach.
- Assessment and the use of assessment information, although comprehensive, is not yet developed enough to ensure that pupils' strengths and weaknesses are identified as clearly as they could be and their individual targets are not precise and sharp enough.

Commentary

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 42 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
6 (14%)	15 (36%)	14 (33%)	7 (17%)	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.

12. Teachers use a very positive, enthusiastic and encouraging approach with pupils. This promotes very good behaviour very successfully, motivates pupils very well and brings out the best in them. For example, in a Year 6 French lesson, the teacher's enthusiastic and fun approach enabled all pupils not only to enjoy learning a foreign language but also to speak entirely in French for the whole of the session. In a Year 5 dance lesson, encouraging words from the teacher enabled those pupils with fewer skills to take risks to improve and even demonstrate their movements to others, developing their confidence greatly.
13. Teachers use questioning very effectively to improve pupils' learning and to actively involve them in lessons. For example, in a Year 2 science lesson, challenging questions enabled all pupils to gain a very good understanding of how sounds are made as they eagerly inspected about 15 sealed opaque tubes containing objects which made different sounds when shaken. The skilled teacher, ensured that for almost all the lesson the pupils were totally involved in investigating these containers and discovering the answers for themselves. By the end of the lesson, pupils had a greater understanding of how sounds are made, without being told by the teacher. In this way their thinking processes and understanding were much stronger than they would have been if the teacher had simply told them these facts. This is typical of the techniques used in the vast majority of lessons and the main reason why the teaching and

learning is so successful and pupils' confidence and self-esteem are so outstanding, and standards are above or well above average. In addition, teachers' planning usually indicates extra work for higher attaining pupils so that, if these pupils have successfully completed the main objectives in a lesson, they do not waste time as others catch up. This was a weakness in the last inspection which has been successfully addressed.

14. Classroom assistants make a valuable contribution to pupils' learning and teachers use them well. For example, many lessons are organised in a carousel approach, where two or sometimes three subjects are taught at the same time and small groups of pupils move round and spend about half an hour at each station. This is very effective but it depends heavily on the skills of a number of well qualified and experienced classroom assistants who lead some of these sessions. This was seen to good effect in an art and design lesson for pupils in Year 2. The classroom assistant who took the session was well prepared, had produced some good planning and introduced the lesson well by developing pupils' enthusiasm and clarifying the difference between drawing and sketching. The teamwork between teachers and classroom assistants is very good and results in very good quality, well-targeted support for pupils, which still ensures some good, independent learning, including those pupils with special educational needs.
15. Relationships between staff and pupils are very good, which helps to reinforce the caring family ethos of the school very effectively and also promotes very good learning. For example, in an excellent music lesson for children in the reception class, the teacher's enthusiasm and close relationship enabled the children to work hard and achieve very well in keeping to the rhythm of "three tapping teddies". Teachers also have very high expectations of pupils' behaviour and the effort they expect them to make, which encourages very good behaviour and very positive attitudes and an ability to work hard and persevere to the end of the lesson.
16. There are comprehensive assessment procedures in place for English and mathematics and individual targets for pupils in these two subjects but the assessment information obtained is not consistently used by all teachers to plan work which always closely matches the needs of all pupils. However, because teachers know their pupils very well, this counteracts the potential weakness to some extent and usually the work planned is challenging to all abilities. Nevertheless, a more consistent approach would ensure that appropriate work is always planned. In addition, although pupils' individual targets are helpful in identifying to pupils what they need to do to improve, they are not precise enough and pupils are only occasionally involved in discussing these targets with their teachers. This means that they do not know well enough just what they need to do to improve. However, teachers' marking in books is mainly good, so teachers' comments, where they exist, do give some guidance to pupils. There are no effective assessment procedures in science to enable the teacher to know precisely the curriculum level each pupil is at and always ensure the work planned is appropriate. The co-ordinator is reviewing various procedures and has plans to introduce these shortly.
17. The teaching and learning in reception is satisfactory. The teaching of two large classes of reception and Year 1 children together is making it difficult at times for teachers to plan and provide enough opportunities for children in reception to learn effectively through structured play. This particularly applies to the morning sessions. Because there are only a few formal systems in place to assess how well children are doing, the work planned is not always at the correct level for the wide range of ability. There are however many positive features to the teaching. In particular, the warm and supportive relationships, which help the children to quickly settle and feel secure and the provision for the teaching of reading, which is good. The teaching for the pupils who are in the same class but who are in Year 1 is mainly very good.

The curriculum

The provision for a range of curricular opportunities is very good. The opportunities for the enrichment of the curriculum and for extra-curricular activities are very good. The quality and quantity of accommodation and resources are good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The curriculum is very well planned and organised.
- Very good use is made of visits, visitors, school productions and musical performances to enrich the pupils' learning experiences.
- The school has been able to introduce a small number of lessons in French to the pupils in Years 5 and 6.
- The number of clubs and activities provided outside the school day is very good.
- There is a good match of teachers and support staff to deliver the curriculum.
- Accommodation and resources are good.
- Year 6 pupils are not prepared for secondary school as well as they should be.

Commentary

18. The curriculum is very well planned and organised. The headteacher has established a very rich curriculum, which covers all the requirements of the National Curriculum and religious education. It is enriched by a very good range of additional activities. For example, pupils visit the Harlequin Theatre, the Pythorn Reservoir, the Egyptology Gallery in Manchester, Clegg Hall and the Air and Space Museum, to complement their learning in English, science and history.
19. Visitors to the school, such as actors and artists, enhance literacy and art and design. Pupils in Year 6 take part in a residential visit, which not only supports subjects very well, but also pupils' personal and social development. All these additional activities and visitors help to support the standards and achievements of pupils and widen their horizons and understanding of the world around them. In addition, the school has been able to introduce a small number of lessons in French to the pupils in Years 5 and 6. This has also widened the pupils' horizons and is developing a better understanding of the European geography. The curriculum is also planned so that pupils appreciate that subjects are often closely linked and learning is not confined to narrow subject lines. Therefore, cross-curricular links are a strength of the school. For example, pupils study World War II in history, make good paintings of The Blitz at night in art and design and construct a model of a bomb shelter in their design and technology lessons. To facilitate this broad approach, the curriculum is often planned in carousel form where a number of different subjects take place at the same time and pupils move around in small groups to each one in turn. This is a great strength of curriculum planning as it uses the specialist knowledge of teachers and classroom assistants very well, as well as giving small group learning, which allows for more individual support.
20. The quality of the curriculum in the Foundation Stage is satisfactory overall. Planning has improved since the last inspection and, although it is now adequate, it lacks some breadth and enough opportunities at times for children to learn effectively through play. There is a good focus on helping children to read fluently and speak confidently.
21. Personal, social and health education and citizenship education is an important area and pupils get at least two periods a week when they discuss these personal aspects of their lives. This is helping pupils to understand their responsibilities to each other, as well as the importance of caring for themselves. The curriculum for pupils with special educational needs is good. All staff has access to pupils' individual education plans but these are not always written as clearly as they might be, as the targets are not arranged in a systematic way. The school plans to adopt a sharper, more specific form. Support assistants are fully involved in the planning of lessons across a range of subjects so that they can be used to lead group work. This ensures support for all pupils, including those with special educational needs. Support assistants' report

regularly to teachers about the work they have done. All pupils, including those with special educational needs, are fully involved in all aspects of the curriculum.

22. Staff give generously of their time to provide a very good range of sports and other clubs for pupils beyond lessons. These opportunities include football, steel band, drama, dance, cooking and netball, as well as gym, art and design and badminton. In addition, the school is noted for putting on a number of good performances, which includes plays and musical presentations and which involve all the pupils in the school. These are particularly effective in developing pupils' speaking, singing and acting skills and giving pupils a great deal of confidence by the time they leave the school.
23. There is a very good match of teachers and learning support staff to the needs of the curriculum and a very good range of experience amongst the staff, which supports the good teaching of the curriculum and above average standards. The accommodation is very well maintained and a good number of the classrooms have been enlarged since the time of the last inspection. The smallness of the rooms was an issue at the time of the last inspection so this has been a very good improvement. The school has many areas which are open-plan design, with extra areas between classrooms. These are used very well for the carousel activities and all contain a good range of computers. Outside, the grounds are well laid out and there is an adventure playground, good playing fields and a nature reserve. Teaching resources are good and have a positive impact on lessons.
24. There are no specific curriculum links with the secondary school and the contact with the secondary school and the pupils in Year 6, who are to go there, is limited. The headteacher and the chair of the governing body have tried very hard and made many contacts and suggestions to the secondary school on how to improve these links, as they do recognise how important these links can be. The school does its best to prepare pupils for their move to secondary school, by getting them used to homework and taking responsibility for their own learning wherever possible.

Care, guidance and support

Pupils' care, welfare and safety are good. Staff have a strong commitment to the interests and welfare of their pupils. The involvement of pupils in the life of the school through seeking, valuing and acting on their views is very good. They know the pupils very well and readily respond to their needs. The advice and guidance given to pupils is good. Good practice ensures pupils are known before they come into reception and a very good induction programme helps them settle in well.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils and parents have full confidence in the care and support provided by all staff.
- Staff encourage pupils to contribute to their own learning and to wider aspects of school life.
- There is a very good induction programme.
- Provision for child protection and welfare is good.
- Policies and procedures are in place for the health and safety of staff and pupils but these need to be more regularly reviewed and updated.

Commentary

25. The school successfully provides a very caring and positive environment in which each individual pupil is helped to flourish. Staff expect and give high levels of respect so everyone is valued for their ideas and contributions. Teachers really know their pupils well and are always alert to their needs, ready to be flexible so they maximise the effectiveness of their support and guidance. The general support and advice given to pupils, based clearly on the knowledge teachers have of them, is good. Pupils are successfully encouraged to share and support each other, which is evident in most lessons and at break times.

26. Pupils have a shared responsibility for school and class rules, which they are expected to take seriously. The school council functions well as a conduit for pupils' opinions feeding into school decision-making. An example of this is the new play area for younger pupils, which was achieved through the persistence of the council. Older pupils take on the role of 'Best Buds' support for younger pupils. This is taken very seriously with potential 'buds' going through a process of written application, interview, selection and training so that they are rightly proud of the support they so successfully provide.
27. New pupils starting in reception settle quickly as a result of a very good induction programme. Parents in the pre-inspection questionnaire confirmed this with unanimous agreement for this question. A pre-school programme for pupils of four half-days in school with their parents, helps remove children's anxieties in the knowledge that their parents are close at hand. The truly open and welcoming nature of the school is reassuring for parents as well as their children and they are regularly to be seen before school talking to staff or staying to help in the classroom.
28. Good arrangements are in place for child protection, with staff training to be updated during this school year. Procedures for specific medical support and storage of medicines are good.
29. All practices and policies are in place for ensuring the safety of pupils and staff, including general risk assessments. However, these need to be updated and reviewed more regularly. Safety checks are done well but need to be more formally recorded, along with risk assessment for visits out of school. Recording and analysis of minor accidents is not carried out rigorously at present and this is to be reviewed. The local education authority carries out an annual building check. The playground is well supervised at all times.
30. The care and support that children receive in the Foundation Stage receive is good. As a result, the children are secure and valued and well cared for. Regular meetings take place with parents to discuss the children's progress and there are very good procedures to introduce both parents and their children to the school when they start in reception.

Partnership with parents, other schools and the community

Partnerships with parents and the community are very good. Links with other schools are good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Partnership with parents is very good, reflected in the high level of confidence and trust parents have in the school.
- Formal and informal information systems provided for parents are very good, keeping parents well updated on children's progress and events in the school.
- Annual reports are informative and helpful to parents.
- The active involvement of the parents in the school and at home, makes a valuable contribution to the learning and wider success of the school.
- Community involvement is very good.
- Links with other primary schools are good, those with the secondary school are weak.

Commentary

31. Parents are enthusiastic and proud of their school and are pleased with the education and care it provides. Over half the parents replied to the inspection questionnaire with every question having a very positive score of well over 90 per cent. Almost all agreed that teaching is good, that their children were expected to work hard and that the school is well led and managed. As a parent who has just moved to the area commented, "I had been impressed by how fast my child was progressing and the outstanding opportunities available". This reflects the confidence many parents have in the school, strengthened by the open access, which helps parents feel a strong sense of partnership.

32. A very good standard of information is provided for parents. The prospectus is full of information about the school and about individual curriculum subjects, written in an easy to read style making it interesting and helpful to parents. The same easy style is carried through other communications, such as the recently established web site (with over seven thousand visits since September), the half-termly lesson information leaflets and the regular newsletters. Equally important are the day-to-day informal contacts most parents have with the school in which the staff are encouraging and very friendly. Annual reports are full of detailed information about what pupils can do and what they have achieved over the year both academically and socially.
33. The 'Friends of Crossgates School' are very active. Because of the quality and enthusiasm of the organisers many functions are enjoyed by supporters, from around the area. Good use of the monies raised enhances the quality of resources in the school. Volunteer helpers are made very welcome in school, successfully assisting teachers in promoting pupils' learning, such as in reading and ICT. A group of parents are helping very well to improve standards in reading in the reception class.
34. The local community is used well to reinforce what pupils are working on in school, with visits for example to the local village, farms, Hollingworth Lake and the church. Residential visits to Wales are offered to older pupils with other pupils going on day visits to such places as Southport, Todmorden Toy Museum, Science and Industry Museum, Jodrell Bank and the Egyptology Gallery at Manchester Museum. The school would like to establish more fruitful links with the High School, particularly in curricular areas, so there is continuity and progression for transferring pupils, as well as opportunities to enrich pupils learning through collaborative work. Progress has been slow despite many efforts made by the school. Links with other primary and pre-school groups in the area are good.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Leadership and management are good overall. The leadership of the headteacher is very good. The governance of the school is very good. The leadership of other key staff is good. Management is good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The headteacher promotes the school's very good caring, family ethos very effectively.
- Staff work very well as a team and are very good role models for pupils.
- Governors have a very good understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses.
- Staff and governors promote inclusive practice very well, as a result of which, good attention is paid to the needs of individual pupils.
- The role of the subject co-ordinators is good.

Commentary

35. School governance is very good. The governing body makes a major contribution to the leadership of the school and its successes. It is fully involved in strategic planning and formulating policies and supports the staff in implementing them. Governors apply their manifold skills to the continuing process of school improvement and have a very good understanding of the school's performance. This enables them to help shape the vision and future of the school very well. They have established relationships that enable them to fulfil the role of 'critical friend' and support for the head, very effectively.
36. The headteacher provides very good leadership for the school. His calm, thoughtful and co-operative approach to moving the school forward has enabled staff and governors to share a joint vision. He is dedicated to ensuring the highest possible standards and achievement and,

although improvements in reception have only been modest since the last inspection, elsewhere they have been mainly very good. In addition, he has taken urgent and effective action as soon as problems have become apparent. For example, when the mathematics results dropped over a two-year period. The headteacher motivates teachers very well through his involvement in teaching and his sharing of the development of the school curriculum. He values the contributions that teachers make through the skills they bring to the school. These are fostered well. Teachers are constantly suggesting ways of improving the quality of education provided. For example, ideas about curriculum development are well received. The present group teaching arrangement for many subjects in carousel form, is a good example of this. The school has no retention problems, as teachers and support assistants feel valued and make a positive contribution to the work of the school. As a result, the school provides a well-ordered, welcoming and caring environment that is totally inclusive. The headteacher is well supported by a very able and committed deputy headteacher. Both command high respect and loyalty from colleagues, governors, pupils and parents.

37. The leadership of the headteacher has contributed significantly to the very good improvement made since the last inspection.
38. There are good management systems in place for the school to monitor its performance. The headteacher has established a very rich curriculum that covers all the requirements of the National Curriculum and the National Strategies for Literacy and Numeracy. It is very well monitored and lessons are frequently observed and evaluated. Pupil performance data is analysed well in order to determine areas for development, such as problem solving skills in mathematics. The school is organised efficiently. Essential functions are covered well. All staff are clear about their roles, responsibilities and personal objectives.
39. The headteacher and governors have developed a school improvement plan, which is a thorough and realistic document that embodies the areas of development and contains contributions from all subject leaders. This document is discussed and debated with all staff and governors, who analyse each area very carefully.
40. The leadership and management of the Foundation Stage are satisfactory. The unit is organised efficiently and runs smoothly and classroom assistants are generally well briefed and clear about their roles. Adults work well as a team. While the provision, teaching, standards and achievement remain satisfactory as they were at the last inspection, some of the weaknesses from the last inspection have been slow to improve. In particular, a stronger focus is needed on planning and assessment to ensure that children in reception receive all aspects of the Foundation Stage curriculum, particularly during the morning sessions.
41. The headteacher is the co-ordinator for special educational needs and leads this area well. He liaises effectively with all teachers to identify these pupils and track their progress. He knows and cares for them extremely well, stays in close touch with their parents and knows of changes in their circumstances that may affect their learning. There are, however, some weaknesses in the format of individual education plans. They do not allow for regular monitoring of targets and do not sufficiently involve the pupils themselves in deciding when targets have been met. Well-informed support assistants work closely with teachers and give regular verbal feedback to the class teacher on pupils' achievements.
42. The performance of the subject leaders is good overall. Some are new to their role, others are very experienced. All produce a detailed development plan, which is attached to the main school development plan and is very effective in ensuring progress and development. Leaders are clear about their roles and monitor standards in a variety of ways, including work sampling. Some leaders have carried out lesson observations and provided feedback to teachers. The headteacher supports this by monitoring classroom practice regularly and he has a clear understanding of its strengths and the areas requiring development and support. The school administrative officer and school caretaker make a valuable contribution to the smooth running of the school and are highly regarded by pupils, parents and staff.

43. Governors work very hard to ensure that they get best value from their spending. They have a very good understanding of the principles of best value and, in addition, bring their considerable business experience and expertise to bear. This is much valued by the headteacher. School finances are very capably administered by the school secretary and supported by the highly qualified chair of finances. Governors monitor spending very thoroughly. Prudent use of funding has enabled good levels of staffing and good resources and money reserved for future developments to buildings, including the imminent enlarging of three of the classrooms.

Financial information for the year April 2002 to March 2003

Income and Expenditure (£)		Balances (£)	
Total Income	648,674	Balances from previous year	47,824
Total expenditure	666,299	Balances Carried Forward to the next	30,199
Expenditure per pupil	2,574		

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

AREAS OF LEARNING IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

Satisfactory provision has been maintained from the last inspection. Children enter the two mixed reception and Year 1 classes with average attainment. By the time they leave reception almost all reach the levels expected for their age and achieve soundly in all areas of learning apart from reading and speaking. In these areas they achieve well and standards are above average because of good teaching. This is an improvement since the last inspection. The leadership of the Foundation Stage is satisfactory. Adults work well together and classes are organised efficiently so that lessons run smoothly. Teaching overall is satisfactory but rarely stronger than this. This is because teachers find it difficult in the large mixed age classes to provide enough opportunities for children to learn effectively through structured play and there is not a strong enough focus on assessment to ensure that reception children receive work which always matches their need.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Relationships are good and children are well supported.
- They work well independently and in small groups.
- Most behave well and are interested in activities.
- Some are less attentive when they have to sit for too long.
- There are fewer opportunities for the children to plan their own learning.

Commentary

44. There is a good focus at the beginning of the year in helping children settle to classroom routines by providing effective levels of support. After only a short time in school, children confidently dress and undress for gymnastic lessons. Their behaviour is good, knowing clearly what is expected of them from the good focus in lessons on personal and social development. One good example of this was when children prepared together a 'teddy bears picnic' and learnt important skills of co-operation and sharing. When working with adults on tasks that are appropriate to their needs, they show good concentration and are keen to learn. At times however, in the mornings, the children are expected to sit too long in the formal literacy and numeracy lessons with Year 1 and they become restless and easily distracted. A significant number of them are less willing to wait for their turn to speak or listen to others in these large class sessions. There are fewer opportunities for children to learn through planning their own play. At times this impacts negatively on learning and achievement.

COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children are achieving well in reading and speaking.
- Reading progress is accelerated by help received at home.
- Listening skills are weaker than expected for pupils' ages.

Commentary

45. Speaking skills are above average and developed well through good teaching. When children, for example, learn about moving toys, they are encouraged to use the language of direction.

Most speak confidently about toys brought from home and explain fluently how they work, using words such as backwards and forwards. In the afternoon sessions children have more opportunities to extend their speaking skills through play. In the 'toy shop' they carry out some very good dialogue as the 'shopkeeper' and 'customer'. One child said to the shopkeeper, "I've only got a cash card and no money. Will you take that?" Listening skills are weaker than spoken language mainly because young children are expected to sit for too long with the Year 1 pupils when class teaching is taking place. Children's early reading skills are good because regular sessions take place to hear them read individually and together. Through good teaching, many children are already on a reading scheme with the more able reading confidently, building unknown words and talking about the characters in books. Most children receive a lot of help with reading at home and this is valued highly by the school because it makes a very positive contribution to their learning. Nearly all children write their own names and are learning letters and a few words. By the end of the year, higher attaining children write simple sentences such as, "I went for a walk to look at the ships". Although they have good opportunities to write freely, at times there is too much emphasis on adults writing words for them instead of helping them to use their skills so that they try to do so independently.

MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision in mathematical development is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- There is a good focus on helping children to learn their numbers to ten.
- There is less focus on children explaining their ideas or learning practically.

Commentary

46. The whole class emphasis in the numeracy lesson is used well to help children acquire a basic understanding of numbers to 10 and above. However, there is too much concentration on activities that follow in completing work sheets that do not help children to explain their ideas to others or to become skilled at problem solving. Good resources, for example, were used in a lesson to explain the passing of time and children talked about their favourite days of the week. In the activities that followed however, there was no practical focus to help reinforce the learning and for most of the time the children coloured and cut out pictures and sorted them into different times of the day. During this session they received no focused support and the classroom assistant spent most of the time managing the group rather than helping them to learn. More meaningful opportunities take place in the afternoon to help children learn their mathematical skills practically when there is a much more informal approach. They learn about different shapes with play dough and how to give change in the 'toy shop' from 20 pence. A registration session was used productively to help children learn about subtraction, with one child quickly working out that, as there were six children out of thirty absent, then twenty-four were present. Although water play is present, a lack of space makes it difficult to provide regular time for playing in sand area.

KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE WORLD

Provision in knowledge and understanding of the world is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- There is a good focus on visits and visitors to enhance learning.
- Children have good opportunities to celebrate major religious festivals.
- There are too few opportunities for investigations, such as in simple science observations.

Commentary

47. Visits and visitors are used well to help children learn about their world. Grandparents visit to help children understand about the past and present and a visit to a local farm increases the children's understanding of growth and how to care for animals. In religious education they celebrate many of the important festivals. At the time of the Chinese New Year they prepared Chinese food and dressed up to perform a special dragon dance together. A good session was observed in which children learnt design and technology skills well by making a 'jack in the box'. Although planning shows that children have recently examined objects with magnets, there are not enough of these practical activities taking place regularly. Computers are used well to support the different areas of learning. Most children are moving the mouse confidently to make patterns and can use the keyboard to write out their own captions for the pictures they draw.

PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision in physical development is satisfactory.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The hall is used well to develop pupils' control and co-ordination skills.
- The outdoor adventure playground and other outdoor areas are used often but their use is not carefully structured or planned for.

Commentary

48. Although there is an outdoor area near the reception classes, which has recently been improved with a good range of fixed equipment, almost all planning in physical development relates to lessons in the hall. The co-ordinator has identified the need to use this area more widely. On a few occasions the area is used for children to move freely on wheeled vehicles and to balance on the climbing frame and other equipment. A regular session in the hall was observed. The children moved and balanced in different ways with satisfactory levels of co-ordination and control. They were very pleased to show others what they could do when asked to demonstrate a particular movement.

CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT

Provision in creative development is **satisfactory**

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Formal music is taught very well
- There are very few opportunities for children to make music independently
- There is not enough choice in the mornings for creative play

Commentary

49. The children benefit considerably from a short weekly music session with a specialist teacher, who is helping them to gain a strong enjoyment for the subject. This teacher was very skilful in helping them to keep to the beat and vary the dynamics. However, there are few occasions when children play instruments regularly and the results of this were seen in the music lesson, when some found it difficult to hold the instrument correctly. There are good opportunities for children to work with adults on a range of art and craft activities, such as making wrapping paper for Christmas, or painting their favourite toys. However, there is little free access to paint and other materials for children to experiment and try out their own ideas. Listening centres are also not always freely available for children to listen to songs or tape their own stories. Nevertheless the focus of the creative play area is changed regularly to keep interest levels high and develop children's imagination.

SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 1 and 2

ENGLISH AND MODERN FOREIGN LANGUAGES

English was inspected fully and is reported in detail below. French was sampled.

50. Two lessons were seen in French. It was not possible to make a judgement on standards and achievement. Pupils in Years 5 and 6 get one lesson per week and the subject is led and taught by a very talented and enthusiastic part-time teacher. The teaching seen was very good. A particular strength is the obvious enthusiasm for the subject demonstrated by the teacher. She makes learning fun and challenging. For example, in one lesson, the pupils had to describe clothing in French and say what colour it was or if it was striped. The teacher had brought fashion clothes to wear and had set up the room with a microphone and carpet to represent a fashion show. Pupils worked in pairs to prepare their words and sentences. Then, while one pupil paraded down the catwalk, the other described what their partner was wearing in French. Pupils helped each other very well with difficult words and worked hard to gain some perfection. In another lesson on 'the family', the teacher and pupils worked for at least 30 minutes talking and answering questions entirely in simple French. The lessons and work seen in pupils' books indicate that pupils listen and respond to French and they read and write in French whenever it is appropriate. They are becoming familiar with French sounds, have a simple knowledge of the written form and grammar of the language and are increasing their knowledge of French and European culture.

English

Provision in English is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- There have been very good improvements to provision since the last inspection because of very good leadership and management of the subject.
- Standards are well above average in Year 2 and above average in Year 6.
- The teaching and learning is very good and because of this pupils achieve well.
- There are many opportunities for pupils to extend their speaking skills.
- English is promoted exceptionally well across the curriculum.
- Assessment is still underdeveloped although marking is very good.

Commentary

51. The subject leader has shown a clear vision and commitment in tackling the weaknesses from the last inspection. Every aspect of provision, apart from assessment, has shown good improvements and teaching has risen from satisfactory to very good. Very good provision has been achieved through rigorous monitoring of teaching, by tracking pupils' progress and then taking effective action. Above all, the subject leader, through her own outstanding practice and high aspirations, has supported and led a staff who share her ambitions for high standards and are teaching very effectively. She has also ensured that the subject is further enriched by inviting authors, poets and theatre groups into school as part of regular 'arts weeks'.
52. English is taught exceptionally well not only in literacy but across all subjects; that is why pupils are achieving well and making very good gains in their learning. Standards are above average by the end of Year 6 in reading and writing and well above average in speaking. Although this is lower than the well above average standards in the 2003 national tests, it is explained by a higher number of pupils than usual with special educational needs in the current Year 6. The standards by the end of Year 2 are well above average and match the 2003 national tests.

53. There is a strong commitment by everyone to improve pupils' learning in English by providing a rich range of opportunities. The teaching is consistently very good and with examples of excellent practice. The successful teaching is characterised by high expectations of what pupils can achieve and a confident and imaginative delivery of the lesson, which captures pupils' enthusiasm for learning. Every minute is spent productively and creatively in helping pupils, including those with special educational needs, to learn rapidly. So successful was one teachers' demonstration on similes that pupils, in their enthusiasm to write their poems ran to their desks and immediately became totally engrossed for the next half hour. In these class demonstrations, explanations are clear and questions are always lively and challenging, encouraging pupils to consider and think carefully about their answers. One of the strongest features of teaching is the enthusiasm of teachers to bring the language of English alive in all subjects and help pupils to express their own ideas very powerfully in their writing. Excellent examples are seen everywhere around the school. In Year 4, a pupil wrote after a visit to a local wood, "Midday and the fresh, sweet and warm smell of summer was in the air. A hiss of wind cools down the trees and butterflies happily playing are wishing summer will never end." In contrast a very strong piece of journalistic writing about World War Two written by a pupil in Year 6 ends, "At last we can report the joyful news we have all been waiting for during the last six terrible years. The war is over. Today is Victory Day in Europe".
54. Teachers use every opportunity to develop pupils' speaking skills. There is a strong climate of encouraging pupils to express their opinions in discussions and take part in assemblies and productions. It is not unusual for pupils to demonstrate a science experiment on their own in assembly. The recent Christmas concerts have given pupils outstanding opportunities to extend their drama skills by performing to an audience. Because speaking is given such a strong focus, pupils, by Year 6, are highly articulate and confident speakers and performers. Their levels of self-confidence are high. The very good relationships in the school encourage pupils to express their ideas freely because they know they will be listened to sensitively.
55. Progress made in reading is very good because of a structured programme, a wide range of books and very good opportunities to practise reading regularly at home and school. The methods for teaching reading have also improved significantly from the last inspection. Not only are pupils heard to read during the literacy lesson, but time is also found to hear them read individually. This regular practice and the very good support pupils receive with reading at home have a very positive impact on their learning and achievement.
56. The procedures for assessment, although detailed, are not used consistently across the school. Individual targets are set but they are not always very precise and are not reviewed regularly enough. Marking, however, is very good and clearly shows pupils how well they are doing and the next step in their learning.

Language and literacy across the curriculum

57. The teaching of literacy skills in all other subjects is excellent and significantly enriches speaking and listening, reading and writing. History is used exceptionally well to extend the range and variety of writing and as a powerful tool in generating an interest in writing from boys who, in the past, have been less keen to write. Already pupils in Year 4 are writing a balanced report on the changes in industrial life in Victorian times, while in Year 2, pupils carry out their own research into what different people thought about Florence Nightingale. ICT is often used to edit work and produce writing to very good presentation standards.

MATHEMATICS

Provision in mathematics is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards have improved since the last inspection and are above average by the end of Year 2 and Year 6.
- Pupils learn and achieve well because of well planned lessons and good teaching.
- The subject is well monitored and pupil performance data analysed to determine areas for further improvement in pupil attainment. This is ensuring that standards are rising.
- Assessment information is not used accurately enough to set individual targets that are sufficiently precise.

Commentary

58. As a result of analysis of pupils' performance in national tests and especially the average result in 2003, the subject leaders recognised that pupils in Year 6 could neither calculate quickly and accurately enough when carrying out mental arithmetic, nor use their knowledge and skills to good effect when solving problems. These areas have now become a focus for teaching in the upper part of the school so that more pupils will attain the higher levels in national tests. This is already beginning to have an impact as standards of pupils in Year 6 are now above average. Pupils in Year 2 continue to attain high standards as they have done over the past few years.
59. Teachers use the National Numeracy Strategy to good effect to provide a structured approach to learning and ensure that pupils achieve well. No matter what their attainment, pupils work hard and produce work that reflects all aspects of the subject. Tasks are adapted to suit each age and attainment level. Extension material is provided for higher attaining pupils, whilst those with special educational needs are supported well during lessons, enabling them to take a full and active part. Teachers' own subject knowledge is good and they use investigational approaches well to challenge and develop pupils' thinking skills. The quality of teachers' questions and their focus on mathematical vocabulary also help to develop pupils' learning well. They give pupils time to explain the strategies they have used to reach their answers and this both develops their speaking and listening skills and provides alternate models of working. Their high expectations of pupil performance, behaviour and work rate ensure that learning is purposeful and levels of achievement are good. Good resources are often used to illustrate concepts, as in a lesson for pupils in Years 5 and 6, when the teacher used shapes on a whiteboard to demonstrate rotation.
60. The subject leaders observe lessons and monitor teachers' planning for lessons and pupils' work. As a result of the very careful analysis of pupils' results in the tests taken at the end of each year, they are able to track pupils' progress as they move through the school. Individual targets for pupils to work towards are not currently used consistently. Similarly, whilst marking is done regularly, teachers' comments do not always challenge pupils' thinking and help them to develop concepts further.

Mathematics across the curriculum

61. Mathematical skills are used in science to measure and present data in the form of bar charts and graphs. Pupils also use measuring in design and technology, whilst in geography they analyse data from surveys, use co-ordinates in map work and time lines in history.

SCIENCE

Provision in science is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards are above average. Pupils achieve well by the end of Year 2 and very well by the end of Year 6.
- Stimulating teaching challenges pupils in most classes by involving pupils heavily in their own learning.
- Assessment procedures are not detailed enough to indicate to both pupils and teacher the National Curriculum levels achieved, or to indicate any weaknesses that may need more support.

Commentary

62. Standards are above average by the end of Year 2 and well above average at the end of Year 6. This represents a very good improvement at the end of Year 6 from the findings of the previous inspection where they were satisfactory throughout the school. The 2003 test results for Year 6 were well above average. All but one pupil reached the expected Level 4 or above.
63. Lessons focus on an investigative, experimental approach, which gives pupils a very practical feel for the subject. For example, Year 6 improved their understanding of light by using a torch to cast a shadow of cardboard cutout onto a large white sheet. They were trying to find out if the size of the shadow increased or decreased if the position of the torch changes. Pupils are given good opportunities for discussion and to make conclusions based on practical experience. For example, Year 2 pupils discussed the many ways that light is very important, such as during an operation in hospital, at the cinema, or using a computer. Their conclusions on how light is produced and its importance were good.
64. The quality of teaching and learning is good. Teachers introduce lessons well, plan the main content using stimulating and motivating ideas and ensure pupils have fulfilled all the objectives well by building a strong conclusion to the lesson, which tests understanding. A great strength in the teaching of science is the way the teacher involves the pupils in their own learning. For example, pupils in Year 3 were given a well selected collection of materials like tin foil, clear plastic, wood, coloured paper, felt and a piece of paper towel. They had to predict which they thought would let no light through, which would let a lot through and which would only let some light through. However, because they were told not to hold the material up to the light before their prediction, this resulted in a very good group discussion with pupils making different suggestions, sometimes disagreeing with each other as they brought their wide experience to bear. This discussion stimulated interest very well. Pupils made thoughtful predictions, which were at a much higher level than would be expected for that age group. It was obvious that pupils are very familiar with this kind of personal approach and very rarely get lessons directed entirely by the teacher. Work seen in their books also confirmed this approach. Many examples were also seen where pupils use books, documents, CD-ROMS and the Internet for discovery and research. Pupils thoroughly enjoy this approach, gain a great deal of confidence and tackle problem solving with enthusiasm and success.
65. Leadership and management of the subject are good. The key issues in the previous report have been addressed and more time is now given to the teaching of science. The co-ordinator monitors the teachers' planning and pupils' work on a regular basis and gives advice and support. There is a good scheme of work and, although science is taught through different topics, the co-ordinator has ensured that all areas are covered even if they do not fit into a topic format. Some assessment procedures are carried out but these are not detailed enough to indicate to the pupil or the teacher the National Curriculum level achieved. Nor does it clearly indicate any areas that may be weak and it is more difficult to set work which always matches the needs of pupils. The co-ordinator is aware of this and is shortly to introduce some more appropriate assessment procedures.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

66. No lessons were seen during the inspection so no judgement can be made on provision or teaching. However, from an analysis of pupils' work and a discussion with the joint leaders of the subject, it is clear that most aspects of the subject are covered, although aspects of control technology are limited. The school has plans in place to improve this aspect. The subject leaders have developed an excellent website that is updated weekly. It is used to communicate with parents and governors as well as providing a reflection of the work of the school for the community at large.
67. During the inspection, almost seventy per cent of the school's computers were seen in active use at any given time. Although the school has chosen not to have a computer suite, the good use of classroom computers, all linked to the Internet, together with the equally effective use of the small number of laptops available, has ensured that pupil attainment is above average throughout the school and achievement in the subject is good. This is also the result of small group teaching in specific skills and good use of ICT across the curriculum to practise, apply and extend what has been learned. The school has a good range of software to support teaching in literacy and numeracy and is developing a similar bank for other subjects. The staff are enthusiastic about the possibilities the subject opens for the whole curriculum and their lively approach has resulted in higher standards than were seen at the last inspection. The school has yet to develop a portfolio of pupils' work although samples of individual work are included in pupils' records of achievement, which helps parents to have a clear picture of what pupils are doing.
68. The use of ICT across the curriculum is a strong area of work in the subject. Teachers provide many opportunities for pupils to use ICT to foster learning in other subjects. Word processing software is used well to present work in an eye-catching way in a number of subjects. Pupils in a Year 1/2 class were writing letters to Father Christmas on a pre-determined, colourful backdrop and they already understood the technical process needed to print and save their work. Links between ICT and English, mathematics, science, art, history and geography are working well. During the inspection pupils in Year 6 were observed working on spreadsheets showing the results of the weight bearing properties of materials in design and technology.

HUMANITIES

Religious education was inspected in full and is reported in detail below. No lessons in geography and history were seen, but evidence was gathered from work samples, displays in classrooms and teachers' planning.

69. Teaching **in geography** grows from a study of the pupils' local environment and experiences and moves on to the wider world. By Year 2, pupils undertake simple fieldwork and make maps and plans. Older pupils study geography within topics, such as weather, environmental change, and look at the impact of human activity. By the time pupils reach Years 5 and 6 they have a knowledge of Europe and are beginning to understand aspects of the wider world, such as life in an Indian village. The examples of pupils' work indicate that, as in other aspects of teaching, a lot of the work is based on pupils' own research using maps, books, documents and data collected by field work. There is very good use of computers to draw graphs and carry out research using the Internet. The work seen indicates that standards are above average at the end of Years 2 and 6 and pupils are achieving well. This is a good improvement on the standard attained in the previous inspection.
70. No lessons in history were seen but evidence was gathered from work samples in classrooms and teachers' planning. Teaching **in history** grows from younger pupils getting their first understanding of the passage of time through looking at the changes in their own lives and those of their family and other adults. They listen to stories from the past about famous people, such as Florence Nightingale. As they get older, they study the invaders and settlers that have affected our country, such as the Romans, the Anglo-Saxons and the Vikings. Those pupils in

Years 5 and 6 are involved in work associated with the Ancient Egyptians and the Victorians. A particularly good investigation is carried out on Britain since 1930, including work on World War Two. As with other subjects, it is clear that pupils carry out a lot of personal investigation work using books, documents, artefacts and the Internet. In addition, many of the skills developed in literacy lessons are transferred very well to history. For example, pupils write extensively in history for a wide range of purposes. Some very good descriptive pieces were seen, expressing feelings of what it must have been like to be caught up in the Blitz in London. Pupils also pretended to be evacuees and wrote emotional letters home to their parents. The topic books produced by most of the pupils are of high quality. They indicate that standards are above average at the end of Year 2 and by the time pupils leave the school their standards are well above average. Pupils achieve very well. This is a good improvement at the end of Year 2 compared to the standards attained in the previous inspection. Improvement is very good at the end of Year 6.

Religious Education

The provision for religious education is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- By Year 6, standards are above those set out in the locally Agreed Syllabus.
- Teaching in Years 3 to 6 is good and supports the good achievement of pupils.
- Pupils use the debating skills well to explain their thoughts to others.
- On occasions, the facts of religion are discussed without a great deal of reference to the feelings and emotions that go with a religious belief.

Commentary

71. By Year 6, pupils have a good knowledge of Christianity, Judaism and Islam. Their achievement in religious education is good and is an improvement since the previous inspection. No lessons were observed in Years 1 and 2 and the evidence available to judge standards, achievement and teaching was limited. Therefore, no judgements can be made for Years 1 and 2.
72. Important aspects of the curriculum provided in religious education are good and meet the requirements of the locally Agreed Syllabus. Work effectively focuses on learning about religious and human experiences. The principal focus is the teaching of Christianity, with Islam and Judaism studied in appropriate depth. The subject fits in well to the school's approach of teaching through topics. For example, during the topic of light in science, the religious education lesson covered the importance of light in some of the world religions, such as candles at Christmas, Jesus being the light of the world, the Jewish festival of Hanukah and the Islamic Festival of Light.
73. Teaching overall in Years 3 to 6 is good. There is a good expectation by teachers that pupils will respect the opinions and beliefs of others and this is very evident in pupils' everyday behaviour and in their discussions in lessons. Debating skills are often good, well related to pupils' outstanding confidence and their very good speaking skills. Pupils' understanding of the importance of the church in Christianity and in the community is enhanced by visits to the local Church of England building and fairly regular visits from the local vicar. Pupils also are encouraged to use the Internet to research places of worship in other religions and they view the inside of a mosque and a synagogue on the screen. However, the school does not regularly visit other places of worship other than Christian Churches. This limits their preparation for life in a multi-faith and multi-cultural society. On a few occasions, there can be an over emphasis of the facts of religions and religious practices without a reference to the emotions and feelings associated with those practices.
74. The leadership and management of the subject is good. The co-ordinator has a good knowledge of the subject. She has improved coverage by setting up good links with related

lessons like circle time and personal, social and health education and citizenship education. Special themes discussed in assemblies are carefully planned and are linked on occasions to topics in religious education. Teachers make good use of opportunities to develop pupils' literacy skills in lessons, which supports the high standards in English.

CREATIVE, AESTHETIC, PRACTICAL AND PHYSICAL SUBJECTS

Art and design, music and design and technology are reported in full below. Physical education was sampled.

75. Not all aspects of **physical education** were observed and it is not possible to make an overall judgement on standards. However, standards in swimming are above average as almost all pupils swim the nationally expected 25 metres before they leave school and many swim much further.
76. Teachers plan lessons well. They start with some good ideas for warming up and skills are developed throughout the lesson, building well on early skills. A real strength of teaching results from the high expectations teachers have of pupils' behaviour and effort. This was demonstrated clearly in a good lesson for pupils in Year 5. Pupils responded with enthusiasm to their teacher's request to practise and refine their dance skills as they interpreted Celtic music. They persevered well to the end of the lesson, clearly improving. A strong feature of the lesson was the way the teacher chose pupils to demonstrate to others the way they had interpreted the music and the sequence of movements they used. This developed pupils' confidence very well and they gained from the comments of other pupils, who thoughtfully and sensitively would point out ways to improve. The co-ordinator is dedicated to improving standards. She has analysed the provision well and identified that dance is an area that is in need of further development and has organised several training sessions with the local education authority. Extra-curricular activities greatly enhance the provision of physical education. There is netball, rounders, football, cricket, gymnastics, badminton and athletics. These are often carried out as competitions with other primary schools. In recent years, the school has won tournaments in rounders, netball and a five-a-side football knock-out competition. Participation in sport is good.

Art and Design

Provision in art and design is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards attained by pupils, especially in Years 3 to 6, are high as a result of the rich curriculum.
- Teaching is often very good and inspires pupils to achieve very well.
- The subject is very well led and managed.
- Links between art and design and other subjects are well developed.
- Opportunities for pupils to experience three-dimensional work are less well developed.

Commentary

77. There has been significant improvement in the standards attained by pupils in art and design since the last inspection. Attainment by the end of Year 2 is above national expectations and pupils are achieving well and by the end of Year 6 it is well above and pupils achieve very well. This is the result of good or very good teaching throughout the school and strong and talented leadership of the subject that has persuaded staff to use pupils' artistic skills in all subjects. The work on display was evidence of the high standards pupils attain and the progress they make as they get older.

78. Teachers are confident when teaching art, as their own subject knowledge is very good and the increase in the number of classroom support assistants has enabled smaller teaching groups and more individual help to be given. Teachers' own skills allow them to demonstrate techniques effectively to their pupils. Pupils experience a wide range of two-dimensional activities including pencil, charcoal and chalk drawing, water-colour painting and printing with sponges, fingers and feet. In a lesson for pupils in Years 4 and 5 on still life, the teacher skilfully introduced the lesson as a quiz, challenging pupils to identify the media used in a range of large photographs of still life works by various artists. This was followed by pupils constructing their own still life arrangement prior to representing it in pencil, pastel or paint. A Year 4 pupil when asked why she was smudging her work with her finger, replied that she was "blending" it. The standard of work in the lesson was of a high order and pupils achieved very well. Collage work is popular and pictures of Victorian dress produced by this technique had linked well with pupils' work in history. The school has its own kiln so pupils work with clay and examples of tiles and pots were seen during the inspection. Good three-dimensional sculptures are also made using Modroc, a modelling material.
79. Leadership and management of the subject are very good. The subject leader monitors teaching and learning by checking pupils' work and teachers' planning. She has ensured that the subject is very well enhanced in a number of ways. For example, visits out of school and visitors in. Links are established with the local art gallery and local artists visit the school. The school will host an artist in residence during the spring term and there is a popular art club for pupils in Year 6. As a result of the high profile enjoyed by the subject, pupils value art and the subject makes a very good contribution to their appreciation of western art and to their development and understanding of western culture. There is limited art and design work linked to other cultures.

Music

Provision in music is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils achieve well and enjoy music.
- The quality of teaching and learning is excellent.
- Pupils play a wide range of instruments.
- There is considerable enrichment of music through school performances.
- ICT is not effectively used effectively to support the subject.

Commentary

80. Standards by the end of Years 2 and Year 6 are above average and have been maintained since the last inspection. A specialist musician is used very effectively to teach music in all classes. Her challenging and exciting teaching is enabling pupils to achieve well in all aspects of music and to find lessons very enjoyable and stimulating. During the inspection, most classes were observed being taught by the specialist musician and her teaching was outstanding. An excellent lesson, observed for pupils in Years 2 and 3 and described below, demonstrates the skilful knowledge of the teacher in exploring rhythm and pulse and pupils' enthusiasm and keenness to learn. Most of the excellent features of this lesson appeared in all other lessons observed.

Example of outstanding practice

A Year 2 and 3 lesson was planned in such an exciting way that pupils were totally engrossed in exploring rhythm and pulse and the structure of music

Not a minute was wasted in this lesson to teach and develop important skills in a very challenging way. When the teacher was sure that pupils could keep to a steady beat she raised expectations higher by asking them to chant their names to the beat. Then they moved on to explore the pulse of different words and by the end of a short lesson they could clap confidently the rhythm of different animals in a four part round and skilfully maintain their own part. When they used instruments to create different rhythms they were totally engrossed, because they were given exciting things to do. As well as learning to play some complex musical patterns, the structure and language of music was taught at the same time in a very practical way. In this inspirational lesson, the pupils achieved very well

81. There are excellent opportunities for pupils to broaden and enrich their musical experiences by joining a choir, steel band and recorder groups. About half the pupils in Years 3 to 6 also learn to play a variety of orchestral instruments and are taught by visiting musicians. Whenever possible the pupils learning instruments and the choir perform regularly in lessons and at concerts and assemblies. As a result, they develop the confidence and skills by performing to an audience and their self-esteem and interest in school life improve significantly. They also have a lot of fun and pleasure, as was clearly seen by pupils in Years 5 and 6 who were preparing for their Christmas performance of 'Smike' and by pupils in Years 3 and 4 who moved on to country dancing in the middle of their music lesson to extend their knowledge of rhythm and develop an appreciation of traditional music.
82. The music specialist's expert knowledge of the curriculum is used very effectively to plan lessons that are closely matched to pupils' needs. She leads the subject very well. She is fully aware that more opportunities are needed to include ICT into the curriculum for music and in her role as co-ordinator she is currently looking at various programs to extend the teaching and learning.

Design and Technology

Provision in design and technology is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils have a good understanding of the design process and they use this well to create good constructions. They constantly refer back to their design when evaluating their work.
- Standards are good throughout the school and pupils achieve well because of the good teaching they receive.
- Good resources are used well to promote pupils' learning.

Commentary

83. Since the last inspection, standards have improved throughout the school. They are now good and pupils achieve well. This is, in part, because resources have been improved during this time so that pupils can be encouraged to make a reasoned choice of materials and tools with which to work. The subject leader has ensured that all aspects of the subject are covered well and that pupils have a good understanding of the design process. They produce clearly annotated design briefs, carefully executed products and honest evaluations, knowing that these will help them to improve their work and enhance their skills. She has also introduced more opportunities for disassembly into the curriculum so pupils can learn from the construction processes used by others.
84. All teaching seen during the inspection was good as lessons were well planned and provided suitable challenges for pupils. Teachers' questions stimulate rational predictions as in a Year 6

lesson when pupils were using the concept of fair testing to decide which material would make the strongest handle for the bags they had made. They reasoned that if handles that had been constructed using glue were left to dry overnight they would be stronger than they were when the glue was still wet.

85. During the inspection, pupils were observed giving good accounts of the construction processes they had used and describing the changes they had had to make. This provided not only a good opportunity for the class to focus on how work might be improved but also provided good opportunities for pupils to develop their speaking and listening skills. As yet, class teachers keep informal records of pupils' attainment and progress, which they report to parents at the end of each year, but no formal system of record keeping has been developed. The subject leader gives good guidance and monitors the subject well.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP

Provision in personal, social and health education (PSHE) and citizenship is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The development of pupils' confidence and self-esteem is developed well through circle times and PSHE lessons.
- Pupils benefit well from the school's involvement in the Healthy Schools Project, as a result of which their knowledge of issues such as healthy eating is good.

Commentary

86. All teaching seen during the inspection was good as lessons were well planned and provided suitable challenge for pupils, as well as good opportunities for discussion and debate. Circle times and PSHE lessons are used effectively to enable pupils to consider issues, such as behaviour, decision-making, conflict resolution and care of others. For example, Year 6 pupils considered the reasons why we give gifts and send cards at Christmas. They discussed the reasons in depth and some felt it was more important to send a photograph or a little personal message with the card. "It makes it more meaningful and shows that you care".
87. The school's involvement in the Healthy Schools Project is having a positive impact on pupils' understanding of healthy eating. For example, most pupils bring a piece of fruit to eat at playtime instead of sweets. Parents have supported this initiative well. The subject leader is organising all activities well but still needs to produce a whole school approach and a scheme of work which links topics more closely in circle-time, PSHE, assemblies and religious education.

PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

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

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

