

INSPECTION REPORT

MOSSCROFT PRIMARY SCHOOL

Huyton, Liverpool

LEA area: Knowsley

Unique reference number: 104439

Headteacher: Mrs G Lucy

Lead inspector: Susan Walker

Dates of inspection: 12th – 15th January 2004

Inspection number: 256971

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Primary
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	3 – 11
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
Number on roll:	229
School address:	Bedford Close Huyton Liverpool Merseyside
Postcode:	L36 1XH
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Appropriate authority:	The governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Cllr Joan Quillam
Date of previous inspection:	23 rd March 1998

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

Mosscroft Primary School is about the same size as other primary schools; there are 193 pupils, plus 36 part-time children in the nursery. Attainment on entry is well below average at this point. Numbers of pupils have fallen since the previous inspection due to demographic factors. Some classes have markedly uneven numbers of boys and girls. The school is situated in an area of high social disadvantage and high unemployment and pupils live on three local authority housing estates. The percentage of pupils eligible for free school meals is well above average. Few pupils moved in and out of the school in the last academic year and most remain in Years 1 and 2, but in Year 6 about 25 per cent of pupils did not start at the school. The pupils are predominantly of white British ethnic origin with very low numbers from any other ethnic group. The percentage of pupils with special educational needs is above the national average, but the number of pupils with a statement of special need is broadly in line with the national average. The infant and junior classes have just moved on to one site. The school is involved in the Excellence in Cities initiative that has funded the work of a learning mentor. The school gained a school's achievement award in 2002.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
21678	Sue Walker	Lead inspector	Foundation Stage, English, the humanities.
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20010	John Sangster	Team inspector	Science, creative, aesthetic, practical and physical subjects.
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REPORT CONTENTS

	Page
PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT	7
PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE MAIN INSPECTION FINDINGS	
STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS	9
Standards achieved in areas of learning and subjects	
Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities	
QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL	12
Teaching and learning	
The curriculum	
Care, guidance and support	
Partnership with parents, other schools and the community	
LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT	17
PART C: THE QUALITY OF EDUCATION IN AREAS OF LEARNING AND SUBJECTS	20
AREAS OF LEARNING IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE	
SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 1 AND 2	
PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS	32

PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

OVERALL EVALUATION

Mosscroft is an **effective school** where children flourish and develop as well as acquire skills. The school provides good value for money because the highly effective leadership of the headteacher supports good teaching, well-behaved pupils, and a school where achievement is good. Standards are below average in English and mathematics and well below average in science by Year 6, because of the number of pupils with special educational needs.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- Pupils achieve well, whatever their ability.
- The excellent support of the special educational needs co-ordinator makes pupils want to learn.
- The very good leadership of the headteacher has developed an inclusive school.
- There is very good care and guidance of pupils by all members of the school community.
- The school places a very high priority on pupils' social and moral development.
- Teaching is well matched to pupils' needs and so they achieve well.
- Teaching is consistently good for children in nursery and the reception classes.
- There are very good links with other schools and colleges, which broaden pupils' experience.
- Pupils are given effective opportunities to achieve in music and art and design.
- Pupils' grammar, handwriting, punctuation, and spelling skills are unsatisfactory.

The school has made good improvement since the previous inspection in 1998. It has dealt well with its areas for improvement in information and communication technology (ICT) and religious education and providing better provision for pupils' spiritual development. There has been significant improvement in leadership, the curriculum, pupils' progress, and the care of pupils.

STANDARDS ACHIEVED

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

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

Pupils' achievement is good.

The above table shows that Year 6 pupils in 2003 did not perform as well as schools nationally in English, mathematics, or science. However, these results show good improvement in English and mathematics, and satisfactory progress in science since the pupils took the national tests when they were seven years old. The results in 2003 were fairly representative of results over time. The school is actively dealing with pupils' weakness in grammar and sentence structure. The present Year 6 pupils are unlikely to do any better overall, because the proportion of pupils with special educational needs in the class will lower the number of pupils who attain the expected level.

The 2003 results for Year 2 pupils were well below average in reading writing and mathematics. Against similar schools, standards were well below average in reading and writing and below average in mathematics. The results in 2004 are likely to be similar. This is because pupils are still catching up from their low starting point, and the number of pupils with special educational needs. Few reception class children are likely to attain the targets set for their age by the time they enter

Year 1. However, from nursery to Year 6 children achieve well because of good teaching and a well-planned curriculum. Their skills in English are a barrier to learning in other subjects. Pupils reach above average standards in art and design and music.

Pupils' personal qualities, including provision for spiritual, moral, social and cultural development are **good**.

Pupils' attitudes are good and they behave well and this aids their learning. Attendance is satisfactory and improving because the school is working hard to ensure that this happens.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION

The quality of education is **good**. Teaching is **good** and meets pupils' needs well. Teachers' effective explanations, good questioning skills and the lively use of the electronic whiteboards all aid pupils' learning well. The school is generously staffed because the school has put a priority on supporting pupils' learning and this enables pupils to achieve well. Lessons are well planned and motivating tasks are provided because there are enough adults in the classroom to support practical learning. The pupils with special educational needs are outstandingly well taught by the special educational needs co-ordinator. The curriculum is rich, varied, and much appreciated by pupils. The care of pupils is very good and is based on providing a safe, lively environment where pupils can learn. The school involves pupils in decision making as much as possible.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

The leadership and management of the school are **good**. The leadership of the headteacher gives the school a very clear sense of purpose, which is embodied in the school aims. The deputy headteacher and other key members of staff provide good support in enabling the school to run smoothly. The school uses its finances well to carry out its priorities. Governors carry out their duties well and meet all statutory requirements

PARENTS' AND PUPILS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

Pupils' views of the school are very positive.

Pupils enjoy coming to school. By Year 6 pupils are keen to carry out their responsibilities and appreciative of their innovative curriculum.

Parents are very happy with the school.

Parents have very positive views of the school, with particular praise for the welcoming approach to both parents and children. They appreciate the good facilities provided for those children who need support with their learning.

IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

The most important thing the school should do to improve is:

- Improve the standard of pupils' grammar, handwriting, punctuation, and spelling skills.
- Give pupils more opportunities to record what they know in their own words, in a permanent form, so that they have something to refer back to in future lessons.

PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS

STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

Standards achieved in areas of learning, subjects and courses

Standards reached by pupils in Year 6 are **below average**. All pupils, regardless of background, ethnicity, or ability, **achieve well**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils achieve well in all subjects.
- The school is skilled at identifying pupils who need extra provision to boost their learning.
- Pupils reach above average standards in art and design and music.
- Pupils reach unsatisfactory standards in grammar, punctuation, handwriting, and spelling.

Commentary

1. Standards are well below average in Year 2, and below average in English and mathematics and well below average in science in Year 6. In all year groups pupils do a little better in reading than writing. This is because the school has sufficient quality resources and has successfully put in place this aspect of the national strategy. From their earliest days children enjoy stories, but they are not nearly so keen to get involved with the early skills of writing. Teachers recently analysed where pupils lost marks in national and school tests and identified that pupils are weak in the skills of grammar and punctuation. Good action has resulted in all pupils having personal targets to improve their sentence construction and punctuation in this year. Pupils achieve well in mathematics because tasks are well matched to their abilities. Teachers are well aware that pupils' skills in reading are holding back their ability to read and to solve problems. All pupils achieve well in science because they have interesting tasks to find out about. The pupils' lack of writing skills is holding back their ability to record their findings in their own words.
2. Standards in music in Years 3 to 6 are good because the school employs a visiting teacher who has very good expertise and high expectations of pupils' performance. Attainment in art and design is better than average throughout the school because activity days support the development of skills. In all other subjects where it was possible to make a judgement, standards are average.
3. Pupils achieve well because teaching is largely good and sometimes very effective. The teachers have tried hard to discover how each pupil learns most effectively and to incorporate some of these strategies into day-to-day lessons in order to maximise achievement, such as using rhymes and mnemonics to remember facts or using prompt cards. It is, however, undoubtedly true that girls achieve better than boys, until about Year 4 when boys begin to catch up. The school is well aware of this issue and is doing its best to combat the effects of the local culture. The work of the learning mentor is an asset in this respect.
4. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress, and achieve well, because their needs are identified early in their schooling. The quality of pupils' individual education plans is good, and this enables pupils to progress in small, well-defined stages, set against their individual learning targets. All pupils with statements of special educational needs achieve well due to the good quality of work set for them, and the very good quality extra support they receive from school staff and visiting specialist teachers. The school identifies those pupils who are gifted and talented and provides them with good opportunities to learn at their own pace.
5. By the end of the reception class, few children will attain the early learning goals for each of the areas. However, this represents good achievement because children are well below average on

entry to nursery. A varying number of children, usually the higher attaining children, move to other schools at the end of nursery and do not enter the reception class.

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
Reading	13.0 (14.3)	15.7 (15.8)
Writing	11.7 (13.2)	14.6 (14.4)
Mathematics	14.0 (14.9)	16.3 (16.5)

There were 33 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year.

6. The above table shows that the school's results in 2003 were well below average compared to all schools nationally in 2003. Trends over time show that 2003 is a fairly typical year. This is because most children do not achieve all the early learning goals as they enter Year 1 and they are still striving to catch up in Years 1 and 2. Most years, Year 2 pupils do better than similar schools nationally in at least one subject, but this was not the case in 2003. Attainment in the current Year 2 class is unlikely to be higher than the usual standard, because almost half the class are on the register of special educational needs.

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
English	25.8 (25.6)	26.8 (27.0)
Mathematics	26.2 (26.1)	26.8 (26.7)
Science	27.4 (27.6)	28.6 (28.3)

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

7. The above table shows that pupils in Year 6 in 2003 were below average in English and mathematics and well below average in science when compared to national figures. These results nevertheless represent good achievement in English and mathematics and sound achievement in science, when taking into account the poor results pupils attained when they were seven year olds compared to when they were age eleven. The 2003 results are fairly typical of those attained over a number of years. The present Year 6 results are likely to be similar overall, but with a few more pupils attaining the higher levels, despite nearly half the class being on the register of special educational needs.
8. At the time of the previous inspection, the majority of children attained the expected levels as they left the reception class and this clearly had an impact on the fact that standards were generally average throughout the school. As few children are now likely to gain the expected national targets this has had a 'knock on' effect as they progress through the school.

Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities

The pupils' attitudes to learning and their standards of behaviour are **good**. The school's provision for their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is **good**. Levels of attendance and the pupils' punctuality are **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The school places a very high priority on pupils' social and moral development.
- Pupils' spiritual development is good.
- The school council has a real role in improving school life.

- Effective work is being done to try to improve attendance and punctuality.
- There are missed opportunities to raise pupils' awareness of the rich cultural diversity of the area that they live in.

Commentary

9. The very good quality of the provision for pupils' moral and social development oils the day-to-day life of the school and allows learning to take place in tranquillity. Pupils' attitudes are predominantly good. By the time that they reach Year 6, pupils are very supportive of what the school does and are very willing to play their part in helping school life run smoothly. The school council is quite sure that it can make an impact on school life.
10. Pupils enjoy school and are very eager to learn. The younger pupils say that they particularly enjoy learning in art and design and older pupils enjoy days when they can record what they know in many different ways. Pupils work together co-operatively and collaboratively. Such positive attitudes allow pupils to achieve. If pupils do not occasionally want to comply with their teachers then the removal of privilege points and the ability to go to football club acts as an effective deterrent.
11. There is a 'can do' attitude in this school and the very good relationships between all pupils and staff allow boys and girls to believe that they will succeed. Pupils like the fact that the school celebrates all successes from the verbal accolade of 'superstar' in the classroom, to the award of medals in special needs sessions, certificates in assembly, and external awards by the local educational authority. Pupils have a clear sense of what is right and wrong, which has been developed through a very good programme for personal and social development. Teachers have very high expectations of pupils' behaviour and so behaviour is good and there are few exclusions despite the fact that the school has some challenging pupils. Pupils are clear that they know what to do should any bullying take place, and are sure that it will be sorted out fairly. Innovations, such as 'activity days' when boys and girls of all ages work and play together, are appreciated.
12. The quality of provision for pupils' spiritual development has improved since the previous inspection. The good provision for religious education has played a significant part in this improvement, as do the numerous opportunities teachers provide for pupils to empathise with people in different situations. This has allowed a climate of honesty and openness to support learning in the classroom. Good quality assemblies reinforce these messages.
13. There is satisfactory provision for pupils' cultural development. Pupils find out appropriate facts about their own culture through educational visits and visitors, and their keen interest in football. They get interested in European culture through learning French. The school celebrates interesting events such as Chinese New Year well, but does too little to help pupils to find out about the cultural diversity of Liverpool. While the school provides the pupils with good role models for those who have succeeded, despite having special educational needs, it is less good at telling pupils about people from non-white cultures who have succeeded in life.

Attendance in the latest complete reporting year (%)

Authorised absence	
School data	6.5
National data	5.4

Unauthorised absence	
School data	0.3
National data	0.4

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

Ethnic background of pupils

Categories used in the Annual School Census
White – British
White – Others
Mixed – White & Black Caribbean
Mixed – White & Asian
Chinese

Exclusions in the last school year

No of pupils on roll	Number of fixed period exclusions	Number of permanent exclusions
162	2	0
1	0	0
1	0	0
2	0	0
2	0	0

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

14. Attendance is satisfactory. Levels remain well below national average levels, but a well-planned effort last year did achieve an increase of a full percentage point. An issue still exists with the attendance of some pupils with special educational needs who waste their opportunities to benefit from extra provision. Punctuality, whilst satisfactory, is still a problem with a number of pupils and this disrupts the school programme somewhat first thing in the mornings. However, good work is focused on efforts to tackle both problems and shows good co-ordination between the headteacher, the school office, the learning mentor, and the school attendance officer. Imaginative awards for attendance and well thought out sanctions are being used effectively in support of raising standards.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

The quality of education is good.

- Teaching and learning are good.
- The curriculum is good.
- Provision for pupils' support, guidance, and welfare is very good.
- Links with parents are good and links with the community are very good

Teaching and learning

Teaching and learning are **good**. Assessment is **good**, particularly in English and mathematics.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teachers' explanations of topics and their questioning of pupils are good.
- Teaching for children in nursery and reception class is good.
- The expertise of the visiting music teacher raises pupils' achievement in Years 3 to 6.
- The electronic whiteboards have had a big impact on both teachers' practice and pupils' learning.
- The good quality displays provide pupils with support for their learning.
- The very good lively teaching in Year 2 helps children to achieve at a good pace.
- Pupils are successfully encouraged to take responsibility for their own learning.
- The special educational needs co-ordinator provides excellent support for pupils with special educational needs.
- Teachers give pupils too little opportunity to record their work in their own words.

Commentary

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 38 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very poor
1(3%)	7 (18%)	23 (61%)	7(18%)	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.

15. The quality of teaching and the usefulness of assessment have both improved since the previous inspection.
16. Teaching for children in both the nursery and the reception class is consistently good. There are very good relationships between all adults and their charges and so children try hard to please them. Most children are willing to try the new and interesting activities that are provided for them each day. Nursery nurses and classroom assistants are used very well to support learning and make activities fun to do and so children respond well. Adults do not provide children with sufficient day-to-day opportunities to write.
17. Teaching is good in Years 5 and 6. Lessons are well planned with activities matched to pupils' needs and so the number of good lessons has improved since the previous inspection. The endings of lessons are used well, reminding pupils of the purpose of the session. Display is used well to support pupils' understanding of vocabulary and concepts. This is particularly evident in mathematics and science.
18. Teaching is best in Year 2 where the class teacher has a lively manner, which motivates her class, many of whom have special educational needs. Pupils get lots of encouragement to participate in lessons. The use of game show techniques enables those who are shy or unsure to get the right answer from a member of the class, but they take the responsibility to repeat the correct answer back to the teacher.
19. The energetic session with the visiting music teacher gives pupils a rapid workout with a variety of familiar and unfamiliar songs. This keeps pupils on their toes and they respond very well to the challenge and try their hardest.
20. The electronic whiteboards are extending pupils' knowledge and successfully widening their horizons. This was evident in an art and design lesson where the teacher visited the British Museum website to show pupils examples of work in 'hot' and 'cold' colours, and also when Year 6 pupils were encouraged to visit the website of a poet in order to find out more about his life and works.
21. Homework is used well to reinforce pupils' learning at home; for instance, young pupils are asked to find out about materials and famous people. Both parents and pupils are well aware of the status the school gives to the completion of homework and the importance of returning it to school on time.
22. Pupils with special educational needs are taught well by class teachers because activities are closely matched to their needs. This ensures pupils succeed in whole class lessons, and as a result, they achieve well in relation to their capabilities. Teaching assistants, who support individual pupils, or groups of pupils, make a good contribution to the quality of teaching and learning. Some pupils are withdrawn from lessons to work in small groups so that their skills and confidence are boosted. Some of this teaching is of very high quality.

Example of outstanding practice

A lesson for Year 3/4 pupils with special educational needs taught by the special educational needs co-ordinator.

The practice of using a variety of rhythmic songs to constantly remind pupils of the tasks they are doing and to keep them focused is very effective. The 'Rolling, Rolling Rawhide' theme kept pupils concentrating while electing number cards, stating whether the number was odd or even and giving the reasons for their choice.

The very brisk pace of the activities meant that it really was a 'rapid recall' session for pupils with special educational needs who find this aspect of the national strategy very difficult. A competitive game helped both pupils' social development as well as their mathematical development. They worked in teams racing against the clock to collect a card, and then work out the correct number bond (to 20 or 30) for the card selected.

The co-ordinator used a multi-sensory approach outstandingly well to develop pupils' mathematical skills. She had very high expectations of pupils, constantly challenging and assessing them as she moved through the activities at pace. Even if pupils' attention occasionally wandered the rich display gave them something to learn. Pupils responded well to this challenging teaching and made excellent progress in this session.

23. Teachers are beginning to use the government strategies appropriately to teach grammar and punctuation. They have taken guidance and resources from the local education authority to allow this to happen. Teachers are becoming more aware of how pupils should be punctuating their work at different ages. Spelling and handwriting are routinely taught, but generally pupils' skills lag behind what is typical for their age.
24. In otherwise satisfactory lessons, particularly in the afternoons, there is a loss of pace and enthusiasm and pupils are slow to respond. In Year 1, worksheets are used as a focus for pupils' learning where alternative and more interesting methods might improve achievement.
25. Assessment is good. There are consistent whole-school practices in place, which are fully monitored by the headteacher. Assessment is strongest in English and mathematics, as these have been the school's priorities for improvement. There are suitable procedures for checking pupils' knowledge and assessing whether it is at the appropriate curriculum level in all subjects. Assessment is used well to set targets for all classes, groups, and individual pupils. Pupils are being successfully involved in evaluating how well they are doing and are beginning to take responsibility for their own learning. For instance, in a very successful English lesson, half the pupils evaluated how well the performers had carried out their task.

The curriculum

The school's curriculum is **good**. It is enriched well by extra-curricular activities. Accommodation and resources are **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The school offers a varied and enriched curriculum.
- The curriculum is planned so that all pupils are able to benefit from what the school has to offer.
- Provision for special educational needs is very good.
- Pupils are prepared very well for transfer to secondary school.
- There is a good number of well-qualified teaching and support staff.

Commentary

26. The school's curriculum meets all the legal requirements, which is an improvement since the previous inspection. In addition it teaches French to all pupils from Year 1 to Year 6, which is unusual for primary schools. The curriculum is also made more varied and interesting for pupils by 'activity days', when teachers offer a range of activities to groups of pupils of differing ages. A good innovation is the 'non-secretarial' weeks, when pupils do not write, but express their responses in other ways. This enables pupils who find writing difficult to participate more fully in learning. Older pupils particularly enjoy these sessions. However, on occasions the curriculum does not offer pupils sufficient opportunities to attempt to write rather than fill in worksheets. The school also makes specific provision for pupils whom it has identified as gifted and talented with special lessons for them. The good curriculum provides for the full range of ability of its pupils and allows them to achieve well.
27. The effective management of the school has ensured that there is a good range of extra-curricular clubs, including drama, cookery and art, as well as sporting and musical activities and visits to the museum and art gallery in Liverpool, which enrich the curriculum for pupils. Older pupils also have the opportunity to take part in the mayor's award, where they engage in a number of challenging activities.
28. There is very good provision for pupils who have special educational needs. The school places high priority on ensuring all pupils access the full curriculum and are fully included in all activities. The social inclusion working party carefully monitors the progress of pupils who have been admitted to the school. This ensures that appropriate levels of support are provided for pupils and parents, and this sometimes involves specialists from external agencies.
29. The arrangements to ensure the smooth transfer of pupils to secondary school are particularly good. Local schools use a common document for the transfer of information and there is close liaison between staff about pupils, including those with special needs. Transition units of work, which link what pupils do in the primary school with their work at secondary level, are carried out in English, mathematics, and science. This means pupils are well prepared for life in their next school.
30. Accommodation and resources are satisfactory overall, but they are good for children in the Foundation Stage. The resources for ICT are good throughout the school; this is an improvement on the previous inspection, when they were poor. There are more teachers than is usual for primary schools, which means that pupils get lots of one-to-one support in their learning. Teachers and pupils are supported well by a good number of teaching assistants and by the learning mentor.
31. Improvement since the previous inspection has been good. Religious education now meets the requirements of the locally agreed syllabus, and provision for ICT is good. The teaching of French is an important addition.

Care, guidance and support

Very good care, support, and guidance of pupils are a strength of this school.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Very good relationships between pupils and all staff.
- Very good work done to create a safe, secure and supportive environment.
- Very good involvement of pupils in the running of the school.

Commentary

32. The very good care and support seen in this school are based upon the very good relationships that exist within the school and are an improvement since the last inspection. The staff are a true team, with teaching, support and non-teaching staff all working as a close, single unit. All these adults then enjoy very close and caring relationships with all the pupils. A visitor is continually reminded of this inclusive ethos, for example, by the teaching assistants waiting by the door each morning to take their charges from a parent; by the learning mentor and the site manager playing football after school with boys and girls; or by the way an injured or sick child is taken care of by the nearest adults, as in a family. The influence of such relationships is evident in the very evident growth of pupils' confidence which is seen through the school.
33. The school works very efficiently and effectively to ensure the safety and security of all pupils. Child protection procedures are well set up and all staff's understanding of them regularly refreshed by thorough training. Good relations have been built with relevant agencies. Health and safety matters are especially well managed, because key personnel such as the deputy headteacher and the site manager are also governors. Matters such as risk assessment, first aid and fire prevention are all well supervised and well recorded.
34. The very good relationships foster the equally good guidance and personal development of all pupils based on the good knowledge of each child and their background. Mosscroft is a school where children flourish and develop as well as learn. This development is further helped by the way the school involves pupils in the running of their school and creates one community. This is well exemplified by the very effective school council where pupils from Years 3 to 6 make very mature and thoughtful suggestions. All pupils mix well and help each other and reflect the very inclusive atmosphere.
35. This caring ethos starts before entry into the school with the very good procedures developed for easing entry into the nursery and reception classes – and it is very evident in the work done to help induction to secondary school. Particularly impressive here is the work of the special needs co-ordinator and learning mentor to identify pupils who may potentially find the move difficult and give them special support and preparation. Pupils who have special educational needs are well cared for and supported by all staff and external agencies. General teaching assistants, and the school's special educational needs co-ordinator, are well qualified to provide appropriate support and guidance through attendance at a wide range, and good number, of training opportunities.
36. A good example of the inclusive, caring ethos of the school being adopted by the pupils themselves was seen when the school council met without adults supervising them. The full range of pupils contributes to the school council and good support is given by classmates to those who find it harder to express their ideas or take turns in speaking.

Partnership with parents, other schools and the community

The school works hard and effectively to strengthen the **good partnerships** with parents, the **good relationships** with the local community and **very good links** with other local educational establishments.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Very good links with other local schools and colleges.
- Very good involvement with parents and the local community through adult education and integration of local services.
- Very good relationships between staff and parents.
- Very positive attitudes of parents towards the school and the work done for their children.
- The responsiveness of the school to the needs and wishes of the parents.

- Good face-to-face communication to parents on their children's progress and needs, but formal written reports to parents could be more diagnostic of pupils' strengths, weaknesses and targets.

Commentary

37. The school plays a very active role in the various local networks of schools and also links in with many other relevant bodies, such as the social inclusion working party, all to the clear benefit of the working of the school and broadening pupils' knowledge. Good and informed links exist with an initial teacher training college. Student nursery nurses also work in school. Both links help the school to support pupils' learning effectively.
38. The school is closely involved with local music festivals and dance festivals. Teachers take pupils to local parks, museums and galleries, and invite theatre and dance groups. Other local people talk about their roles in the community.
39. The community focus is evident in much of what the school is doing and this aids the learning of pupils and their parents. The close relationship with the local community is a clear result of the governing body's decision to base their long-term strategy on becoming a true centre of this community. They have introduced significant adult education initiatives, such as parenting skills, ICT, English, and first aid. Such initiatives, particularly adult education, help engage and involve many parents who might otherwise have less close links with the school.
40. However, a major factor in bringing parents closer to a true partnership with school is the unusually close relationship between parents and teaching staff. As one parent put it at the pre-inspection parents' meeting, "The teachers treat you as a friend!" A good number of parents help in school with reading, accompany educational visits, and help in class, whilst many of the teaching assistant posts are filled by parents (and grandparents). One of the school's successes is enabling such staff to go on to further training.
41. Parents have very positive views of the school. At the meeting there was particular praise for the achievement of their children and the welcoming approach to both parents and children. Special approval was aimed at the school's work with children with special educational needs, which is clearly a strength, and the support of the learning mentor. Such close relationships naturally lead to a responsive approach to parents' views and needs. It also enables informal verbal communication to parents and feedback to them on how their children are thriving and progressing. A range of satisfactory newsletters and letters backs this up, but formal reports to parents could benefit from a more diagnostic description of pupils' strengths, weaknesses, and targets.
42. The school has good procedures to identify pupils who may need additional help in order to access the full curriculum. When a concern is first raised, either by a parent or a class teacher, the pupil is monitored closely. Class teachers, and the special educational needs co-ordinator, support parents well by discussing ways they can work in partnership to support a pupil's needs. Pupils' progress is monitored closely and letters are sent to parents, and others supporting the child, to invite them to attend review meetings. The school makes every effort to ensure that all those invited attend.
43. The positive partnership seen at the previous inspection has been maintained.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Overall, the leadership and management of the school are **good**. The headteacher's leadership is **very good** and management is also **very good**. The governance of the school is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The headteacher provides very good leadership, with a clear sense of purpose, which she communicates very well.
- The provision for special educational needs is managed very well.
- The school evaluates its own performance very well and takes effective action.
- The school is managed very well and has a very good record in retaining staff.
- The governors have a good understanding of the school and its strengths.
- The school manages its finances and applies principles of best value very well.

Commentary

Governance

44. The school's governing body meets all its legal obligations and carries out its duties well. It has a good understanding of the strengths of the school and provides it with good support. Governors also have a clear view of the future development of the school and its place in the community. They are actively involved in the formulation of the school's development plan. Although some members have only recently joined the governing body, they have all received appropriate training to carry out their roles effectively.

Leadership and management

45. The headteacher provides very good leadership. She has the confidence of staff, parents and children and a clear vision for the school, summed up in the school's aims 'Presence, Participation and Achievement'. She receives good support from the deputy headteacher, who deals with many of the day-to-day disciplinary and pastoral issues that arise. The subject co-ordinators for English, mathematics and ICT provide a good lead in raising standards in these important areas of the curriculum. As a result of the strong leadership and positive ethos of the school, staff turnover is low, as is staff absence. Therefore teachers know pupils and their families well, and in turn enjoy their trust and support. This in turn impacts on pupils' favourable attitudes to school and their learning and their good achievement.
46. The provision for pupils with special educational needs is very well managed by the school's special educational needs co-ordinator. The co-ordinator works very closely with the school's learning mentor, ensuring that pupils' and parents' specific needs are very well supported. The governor with responsibility for special educational needs liaises closely with the co-ordinator to ensure she is up to date on issues relating to provision. The co-ordinator's personal expertise makes a significant contribution to the school's success in meeting the needs of pupils who have special educational needs. The provision for special educational needs is a strength of the school. The learning mentor, part of the Excellence in Cities initiative, is well deployed to improve the learning of carefully selected pupils.
47. The school uses the information it receives from the assessment it carries out very well to monitor its own work and set appropriate targets for individuals and groups of pupils. This is evident in the way that the school has identified a weakness in the teaching of grammar and punctuation and is setting about improving matters. It is early days for this to have a clear impact on pupils' learning. The headteacher, deputy headteacher and subject co-ordinators all monitor teaching and learning in the classroom, and each subject area has an action plan within the school development plan. So everyone is clear about school priorities and why and when they must be achieved. The development plan is drawn up after consultation with staff and governors, part of which takes place over a weekend in a local hotel. The plan is reviewed and updated regularly and provides a good focus for the school's development.
48. The financial management of the school is very good. The available funds are used very well. Although there was a larger than usual surplus at the end of the last financial year, this had been

retained because of an awareness of the impact of a falling roll. This surplus has now been reduced to a much smaller proportion of the budget. Governors have a good awareness of the importance of maintaining the good level of staffing and the value that this gives.

49. This is overall good improvement since the previous inspection.

Financial information

Financial information for the year April 2002 to March 2003

Income and expenditure (£)	
Total income	728,747
Total expenditure	718,990
Expenditure per pupil	2781

Balances (£)	
Balance from previous year	59,541
Balance carried forward to the next	69,298

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

AREAS OF LEARNING IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

The nursery and reception children moved into their new accommodation in the main school building at the beginning of the autumn term. At present the nursery is full in the morning with 23 children, while in the afternoon there are fewer children, predominantly girls. The reception class has many more boys than girls. The very good learning environment gives each year group an open classroom space and a shared area for creative activities. The room has been developed effectively into a vibrant learning environment full of good quality resources, which encourage children to learn. This has allowed provision for outdoor play to be improved. The Foundation Stage is well led and managed and staff work as a team to plan the curriculum effectively so that children achieve well. The day is a good mix of activities that staff lead and those that children choose for themselves. Teaching seen during the inspection was consistently good, but the very nature of the mathematical topic of 'shape' limited the teachers' scope for imaginative activities, such as those seen in previous topics. Assessment procedures are very good and staff are quick to spot and record when children achieve a new skill. There has been good improvement since the previous inspection in teaching and assessment.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- There is a very good warm caring ethos.
- Planning is good and promotes children's learning well.

Commentary

50. This area of learning forms the basis for children's achievement throughout the nursery and reception curriculum. It is well thought through and teaching and learning are good. The very effective system of moving both the teacher and the children from nursery to the reception class means that no time is lost in starting new learning, and useful communication with parents is maintained. An adult carefully supports the children who are just starting nursery until they feel happy to play alongside the other children. Behaviour is good because children understand what is expected of them. An adult gently reminds any child, who briefly forgets, that this is not the way things are done, and encourages them to share equally. The reception children have not fully mastered putting up their hands when giving an answer, but have very good recall of how to do so when they want to participate in activities. Achievement is good because provision is carefully thought out. Although few children will fully achieve the early learning goal a minority will do so.

COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Adults are good at seizing the moment to extend children's vocabulary and interests.
- Children's early interest in reading is promoted well.
- More could be done to attract children to writing activities in school.

Commentary

51. When children enter nursery they are well below average in this area. Due to good teaching they achieve well, but few will attain the early learning goal. Nursery children's interest is engaged well by carefully chosen stories and rhymes and their teacher's very good understanding of what young children will enjoy. As they gain in confidence they begin to join in with key words and phrases and higher attaining children begin to copy their teacher's expression exactly. By the reception class, all children are joining in stories with important words and phrases, speaking clearly and expressively. They are beginning to understand about the sounds letters make and to practise drawing the shape in the air. Teachers do not routinely plan sufficient interesting writing activities that will motivate children to practise their skills independently. This means that by the time children leave the reception class they do not have sufficient early skills, or regard writing as an enjoyable daily activity. A useful home-school partnership initiative is the sending home of an attractive 'writing bag' giving the children an incentive to write at home with an adult.

MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision in mathematical development is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Adults are creative at providing pupils with opportunities to reinforce their mathematical concepts across all areas of the curriculum.

Commentary

52. This area of learning had a high profile during the inspection and was a focus for all other activities. It was well planned and taught effectively. Every adult in the nursery taught pupils about shape and encouraged early counting skills, and so children achieved well and some made visible progress in their understanding. Staff give pupils good opportunities to sing and count using numbers 1 to 5 in the nursery and reinforce their understanding in a 'child friendly' manner when counting how many slices of pepperoni are needed for a pizza. In the reception class, children's understanding of basic shapes and their mathematical names was reinforced in a lively manner when they played musical instruments that were circular, triangular and rectangular. Adults in both classes are quick to vary their questioning so that children of all abilities can demonstrate what they know. Although not all children will achieve the early learning goal in this aspect, a significant minority will do so.

KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE WORLD

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Technology is used well to support children's learning.
- Basic construction skills are taught well.
- Teachers set homework which appeals to children and helps them to learn

Commentary

53. Teaching is good and children achieve well, but few will attain the early learning goal in this aspect. Children in the nursery gained a good appreciation of the force of the wind as they watched kites and improvised windsocks blowing in the air and tried to 'catch' the wind in a large bin bag. In the reception class children take turns to take a camera home, so that they can photograph an object with a recognisable mathematical shape in their own home. This is an effective link between children's learning at home and in school. Children have been taught how to use the computer independently and so older children in the reception class print off their work

with aplomb. In the nursery, children learn how to cut and stick paper and card, but by the reception class they know how to work out solutions to problems, as when a higher attaining girl realised that the masking tape which she and a boy had used to strengthen a wobbly tower construction would not be of any use to attach the next cylinder and went off to get the sellotape. Both teachers make good use of visitors such as fireman and the army to provide children with positive male role models.

PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision in physical development is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- There is imaginative use of the outside play area.
- Adults provide good role models for children's physical development.

Commentary

54. The quality of teaching and learning is good. The early years team plan well and provide a good range of toys and activities for children to support their learning. As there are no permanent outside markings in the play area, adults are free to mark out what seems appropriate for that day's provision and this is a successful technique. It keeps children on their toes. The youngest children in nursery manage tricycles and bicycles successfully, and older children drive vehicles carefully taking notice of the road markings provided. Nursery children enjoy their sessions in the hall; they listen carefully and follow the actions and instructions of adults as they move around. This is an area where a large minority will achieve the part of the learning goal in handling big toys and tools with confidence, but they are less skilful in manipulating small objects.

CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT

Provision in creative development is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- There are good resources to interest children.

Commentary

55. Teaching is well planned and the two classrooms are full of collages, prints and paintings which children have produced with the help of adults. Although both nursery and reception children follow the same topics, teachers work carefully so that reception children have to try harder to gain success. Good opportunities are planned for children in the nursery to select the paint they want to use, name its colour (usually correctly) and squirt it into a container. They watch with great fascination as they turn a handle and an attractive pattern is produced. Chanting a rhyme as they do so helps to reinforce the magic.

SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 1 AND 2

ENGLISH and FRENCH

English

Provision in English is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Lessons are well planned with a clear purpose for each session.
- Teaching is good overall, but lessons are very well taught in Year 2.
- The school has correctly identified the need for pupils to improve their sentence structure and punctuation,
- Pupils have unsatisfactory spelling and handwriting skills.
- Teachers' marking of pupils' work is effective and tells them how to improve their learning.
- Teachers are good at identifying those pupils who need extra support.

Commentary

56. Pupils in Year 2 are likely to be well below the national average in speaking, listening, reading, and writing. This is not so much because of what pupils cannot do, because they are very well taught, but is due to the fact that almost half the pupils in the class have special educational needs and not enough attain the expected level. This reflects the trend most years.
57. Most pupils start in Year 1 without achieving the early learning goal in communication, language, and literacy and spend most of their time in Years 1 and 2 trying to catch up. Pupils are slowly acquiring understanding of how to put letter sounds together to help them with their writing, but apart from the higher attaining girls they are not sufficiently confident to do so independently. Pupils are not aided by quirks in the local dialect, which make their speech and writing ungrammatical. They are just beginning to write in a cursive style in well-taught handwriting lessons, but have not generally transferred their skill to day-to-day writing. Pupils generally achieve very well in lessons in Year 2, where teaching is very well planned. They are given good opportunities to write and to improve their speaking and listening skills. For instance, pupils not only learnt how to produce different voices for various characters and how dialogue is used to create the best effect, but also to evaluate how good they and their friends were at doing this. However, achievement is slower in Year 1 where teaching is seldom better than satisfactory, and too many worksheets are used, rather than more imaginative ways of developing pupils' understanding.
58. Pupils in Year 6 are likely to be below the average expected for their age in speaking, listening, reading and writing because of the large number of pupils with special educational needs. Consistently good teaching in Years 5 and 6, which is pitched at a challenging level, plus pupils' growing maturity means that progress accelerates in these years. Pupils are still careless with their spelling, grammar, and punctuation, but handwriting skills are slowly improving. Higher attaining pupils are reading at the expected levels and this reflects their teacher's enthusiasm for literature. Marking is very good in year 6; a mixture of targets and praise, it clearly tells pupils how to improve their learning and recognises when they have done so. In Years 3 and 4, pupils with special educational needs and lower attaining pupils are still struggling with basic skills, but higher attaining pupils are beginning to spell basic words correctly and are generally improving at the expected rate.
59. The electronic whiteboards are used well in all classes to demonstrate to pupils what they need to know and to motivate them to join in lessons. Spelling and handwriting are routinely practised, but the habit of using small 'wipe on/wipe off' whiteboards, whilst effective in persuading pupils to provide an instant answer, encourages pupils to be careless with their presentation skills.

60. Assessment is used well to identify pupils who need a boost in their learning. Teaching is appropriate when pupils are taken out for extra support in early literacy, as when a classroom assistant used a puppet effectively to show pupils how to ask questions. By the end of the short session all could do so. Pupils with special educational needs and lower attaining pupils are well supported in class by adults. Gifted and talented pupils in Year 6 are given good opportunities to write poetry and to work together to refine their vocabulary and ideas.
61. Leadership and management are good and the co-ordinator has a good overview of performance through monitoring lessons. Improving standards in literacy is the school's current priority. Careful analysis of what pupils can and cannot do in national and school tests has revealed that weaknesses in sentence structure and punctuation are the main causes of pupils losing marks. Working in partnership with the local authority, teachers' knowledge and understanding of grammar and punctuation have been brought up to date. The school now expects staff to have a clear focus on grammar and punctuation in their planning and to set rigorous targets for pupils. This initiative has not been in place long enough to have brought standards up to the national average in grammar and punctuation. Improvement from the last inspection is satisfactory. Standards are not as high, but pupils' achievement is good overall.

Language and literacy across the curriculum

62. Teachers give pupils many good opportunities for taking part in discussion in small groups, in pairs, and as a whole class and this strategy is building up their self-confidence and their vocabulary. For instance, the Year 4 class discussed the issues of crossing the sea to a new land and Year 5 pupils sorted out the similarities and differences between the present time and the Victorian era. There are good opportunities for pupils to use the skills they have acquired in English lessons, as when they write reports and make notes in subjects such as history.

French

Provision for French is **satisfactory**.

Commentary

63. All pupils have a secure opportunity to learn basic vocabulary and numbers through role-play, games and songs. Pupils enjoy the extra opportunities to answer the register and respond to their teachers' questions in French. The numerous displays around the school enable pupils to read easy words in French. Satisfactory teaching is provided throughout the school both by the designated teacher and by class teachers who have brushed up their own skills by taking part in lessons.

MATHEMATICS

Provision for mathematics is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The quality of teaching is good overall, and as a result pupils achieve well.
- Pupils do not have enough opportunities to tackle problem-solving questions, especially those involving words, and this is affecting levels of achievement.
- The electronic 'smartboards' are used very effectively to support pupils' learning, especially in Years 5 and 6.
- Pupils do not have enough opportunities to practise and to develop written methods of calculation because they complete too many worksheets where an answer only is needed, or they do most of their work on whiteboards where strategies are erased as the lesson proceeds, leaving the pupil with nothing to refer to when the next lesson starts.

- Leadership and management of the subject are good.

Commentary

64. Pupils are still well below the national average at Year 2, but by the time pupils leave at the end of Year 6, standards have improved because of good teaching and the school's commitment to provide appropriate activities for all. Nevertheless, pupils' attainment is below the national average. This is because a significant number of pupils have learning difficulties. Pupils achieve well, but start from a lower point than other pupils, and consequently do not reach the expected standards for their age groups. The school provides well for all pupils both within class lessons, and in the small withdrawal groups. When pupils' attainment is compared with similar types of schools, it has consistently performed above them for the last four years. There are no significant differences in the attainment of boys and girls, except in two year groups of older pupils, where girls do not achieve as well as boys. The school is providing extra support for these pupils in small groups. Teachers plan well for pupils of all abilities by providing activities at different levels. As this work is well matched to pupils' needs, it enables them to achieve well. Higher attaining pupils are suitably challenged by more demanding work.
65. The school is making very good use of the recently installed electronic whiteboards which enable staff to prepare all the demonstrations and activities for a complete lesson. For example, in a good lesson with Year 5, the teacher had prepared a brisk start to the lesson, developing pupils' mental strategies of calculation. She had started the lesson by displaying the purpose for the lesson on the smartboard, before launching into a number of time-limited questions, all based around activities she had programmed earlier. The teacher exploited the smartboard's ability to go backwards, or forwards several steps and to increase the level of difficulty. Pupils responded well to this excellent teaching aid, trying to 'beat the clock' as they gave their answers.
66. In the majority of lessons pupils are taught well, but in some they are given too little opportunity to record methods of calculation because either too long is spent on discussion, or nearly all calculations are written on a personal whiteboard. These whiteboards are used effectively to speed up activities during the main teaching time, but when they are consistently used instead of exercise books, pupils do not have enough opportunity to practise written methods of calculation. An analysis of pupils' work indicated there had not been enough opportunities to practise written calculation strategies, or those of problem-solving where pupils have to decide on the mathematical processes before they can complete the written calculations. In Year 2, for example, pupils had few opportunities to develop independent recording skills or to solve simple written problems.
67. The subject is well led and managed by an enthusiastic co-ordinator who has a good overview of the subject. She has worked closely with members of staff, especially the headteacher, in analysing test papers to identify pupils' strengths and weaknesses. She has also monitored and evaluated the quality of teaching in order to establish areas that staff are confident in, and others where support is needed, through training or additional resources. This effective management has improved the rate of pupils' progress and so their achievement is good. The school has maintained all the positive features seen at the time of the previous inspection.

Mathematics across the curriculum

68. The skills of numeracy are used satisfactorily in other areas of the curriculum. For example, pupils' work in science involved interpreting a table showing how long it would take for five ml of demerara sugar to dissolve in 200ml of water. In a lesson using spreadsheets, pupils have also linked work in mathematics and ICT when costing items needed for a party.

SCIENCE

Provision for science is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils' achievement is good.
- Standards are well below average in Year 2 and below average in Year 6.
- Teaching is good.
- Pupils have positive attitudes and enjoy the subject.
- Pupils need more opportunities to develop their own methods of recording their work.

Commentary

69. Standards achieved in national tests at the end of Year 6 have been below or well below average in every year since 2000. In 2003 they were well below average, but when compared with schools with a similar background and with pupils' attainment at the end of Year 2, they were average. The standards being achieved by the current Year 6 are below average. However, considering the low level of knowledge and understanding with which most pupils enter the school, this represents good progress and achievement. Standards in national assessments in Year 2 in 2003 were well below average, and standards remain well below average in the current Year 2. The achievement of these pupils is also good, as this year group includes a particularly high proportion of pupils with special educational needs.
70. Pupils learn well because of the good teaching they receive. Teachers have a good understanding of the subject and plan activities which make it interesting for pupils. After a lesson in Year 6, for instance, pupils were able to watch salt crystals grow during the course of the week, having suspended string in a saturated solution and immersed limestone pebbles in salt and vinegar. Pupils enjoy investigations, but their written work shows that they do not often have the opportunity to devise their own methods of recording, which would develop their enquiry skills further. Pupils are able to make links with other subjects, such as history, when they find out about the contribution to medicine of Edward Jenner and Florence Nightingale, and they write quite extensively on these topics. They also develop their mathematical skills as they use graphs, for instance to measure the rate at which sugar dissolves in water.
71. Year 2 pupils find recording their work is difficult, which slows their progress, but they have identified what plants need to grow. They also understand that human beings need food and water to stay alive. In the lesson observed during the inspection, the teacher and classroom assistants met the needs of these pupils by helping them maintain a good level of discussion, by using prompt cards and by matching the tasks well to the differing levels of achievement. Teachers throughout the school make good use of ICT in their teaching, for instance using the electronic whiteboard well, but opportunities for pupils to use computer equipment in science lessons are limited.
72. The leadership and management of the subject are satisfactory. Science has not been a focus in the school's development plan, although the co-ordinator has done some monitoring of teaching. Although the standards achieved by pupils are not as high, because of the changing nature of the school's intake, the quality of provision has been maintained since the last inspection.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

Provision in ICT is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils achieve well in using computer skills throughout the school.
- Standards in ICT are improving.
- The resources are good and improve pupils' learning, especially the electronic whiteboards.
- Leadership and management of the subject are good.
- The day-to-day use of computers in the classroom needs improving.

Commentary

73. Standards in ICT are in line with national expectations at the end of Year 2 and Year 6. The development of ICT has been a priority for the school since the previous inspection when it was identified as a key issue for improvement. Since that time there has been good improvement, overall, because standards have improved; the quality of teaching is good and pupils now have opportunities to experience a wider range of activities. There are now more working computers, and these have been installed with software that enables all the programmes of study to be taught, including the controlling and monitoring of devices and events. For example, pupils in Year 6 program the computer to turn lights on and off in a model house, and in science, sensors are used to monitor levels of light. As a result of these improvements in ICT, pupils, including those with special educational needs, are achieving well.
74. The school attaches great importance to the development of staff and pupils' ICT skills, and this is having a positive effect on the quality of teaching and learning in a number of curriculum areas. All teachers have been provided with a laptop to support lesson planning, and for linking to the recently acquired electronic smartboards. They are used particularly well in Years 5 and 6. For example, in a good religious education lesson with Year 5, about 'Precious Things', the teacher had prepared a series of slides to stimulate pupils' thinking. In her multimedia presentation she had imported digital photographs of her family, and this naturally led to a discussion about the importance of families. In a short whole-class session with Year 6 the teacher used the smartboard to guide pupils through the key teaching points in work on spreadsheets. His expertise in using this equipment enabled him to model the effects of changing a formula on the total cost of a shopping list. This good quality teaching, overall, is having a positive effect on pupils' attainment in ICT because they have good opportunities to practise skills that are 'modelled' well by teachers (using smartboards) when they practise these same skills on personal computers.
75. Pupils have very good opportunities to develop skills in ICT through an effective link with the City Learning College. At the time of the inspection Year 1 pupils visited its television studio to find out how a television programme is made. This gave them a unique opportunity to experience speaking to a camera, when acting out their version of the Chinese New Year; following the director's instructions (their teacher), and developing an understanding of how computers are used to create graphics for scenery. Pupils developed their skills in searching the Internet for information about the Chinese New Year. This project is developing pupils' ICT skills in the broadest sense, and contributing to the improving standards of attainment.
76. Leadership and management of ICT are good. The co-ordinator has ensured that the school has addressed the issues raised at the previous inspection, and been actively involved in the acquisition of additional resources that have led to a significant improvement in pupils' achievement because the school is now able to fulfil all the statutory requirements of the ICT curriculum.

Information and communication technology across the curriculum

77. ICT is used well across the curriculum through the use of smartboards, but satisfactorily otherwise. This is because classroom computers are not used as frequently as the smartboard, and some of the links between subjects are not planned for. However, ICT was used in Year 6 literacy when pupils 'dragged' clauses and connectives around to construct interesting and imaginative sentences.

HUMANITIES

78. In humanities, no lessons were seen in **geography**, therefore no overall judgement can be made about provision. A brief conversation with Year 6 pupils suggests that their knowledge of rivers and mountains is about average.

Religious education

Provision for religious education is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils achieve well and meet the expectations of the locally agreed syllabus.
- Teaching and learning are good.
- The school does not give pupils sufficient opportunities to visit places of worship of other faiths.
- Assessment is not linked to the attainment targets of the agreed syllabus.
- The subject is led well by the co-ordinator.

Commentary

79. Pupils learn about all the major world faiths. The oldest pupils, in Year 6, know stories from both the Old and New Testaments. They have compared the biblical and scientific views of creation and also considered the difference between what is a fact and what is an assertion when looking at the life of Jesus, although not all pupils are clear about the distinction. Pupils in Year 5 show a broad knowledge of the main tenets of Islam, and have used art and design to enhance their understanding, for instance by designing a prayer mat. Pupils also consider the implications for their own lives of some of the issues raised. For instance in Year 3, when looking at the Ten Commandments, they consider the importance of rules in living, and in Year 1 they look at people who are significant to them.

80. Only two lessons were observed during the inspection, but there was sufficient evidence from these and pupils' written work to judge that the quality of teaching in the school is good. In a very good lesson in Year 2, the teacher developed pupils' understanding of places special to them in preparation for a visit to the local church. She engaged them by talking about what was special to her, creating an atmosphere which enabled all pupils to explore and express their own feelings. She used questions well to develop their initial, often one-word, answers. This lesson contributed well to their spiritual development. The teacher also used discussion effectively in a Year 5 lesson, when pupils considered what is precious to them. This provided good opportunities for pupils to develop their speaking and listening skills and also contributed to their spiritual development, as they understood what was significant to others, including the teacher. The teacher made effective use of ICT, to show photographs of her own family and also of the class teacher's wedding. In this lesson a prayer enhanced the spiritual element, and written work showed that in other classes pupils have written and used their own prayers.

81. The co-ordinator has led the subject well, devising a scheme for teachers to follow which ensures that they meet the requirements of the locally agreed syllabus. She has also monitored its implementation and provided guidance on assessment, although this is not yet linked explicitly to the targets in the agreed syllabus. One of the aims for the current year is to develop

opportunities for pupils to visit places of worship, to enhance their understanding of different faiths. At present they visit only a Christian church. There has been good improvement since the previous inspection, when it was judged that the school was not meeting the requirements of the locally agreed syllabus. It now does so, and the subject also contributes well to pupils' spiritual development.

History

Provision in history is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Lessons are well planned and are often based on discussion, so that pupils can demonstrate what they understand.
- Most pupils enjoy the subject and so they achieve well.
- There are good links with other subjects to reinforce pupils' learning.
- Teachers miss opportunities to discuss gender and cultural stereotypes.

Commentary

82. Teaching remains good, as at the time of the previous inspection. It is often lively and imaginative and so pupils enjoy their learning, such as when Year 4 pupils, who were pretending to be Anglo-Saxons, took part in a short improvised drama session and expressed their fears and anxieties about crossing the sea to start a new life in England. While Year 5 pupils were thoroughly engaged in their study of the life and times of the Victorians, the teacher did not explain why boys and girls had very different opportunities in that era.
83. Pupils in Year 1 are beginning to grasp the features that all homes have in common. Year 2 pupils have a good understanding of famous people. An effective homework activity, done in conjunction with their families, allowed pupils to make posters, to write and to download information from the Internet. However, almost all the 'stars' that they identified were of white ethnic origin. By Year 6, pupils have an average understanding of the events that occurred in, and the causes of, World War II.
84. There are good links with other subjects to maximise pupils' achievement. Pupils in Year 2 demonstrate their understanding of the effects of the Great Fire of London by producing bright colourful pictures of the fire seen from the river. Year 4 pupils use Ordnance Survey maps well to find places with Anglo-Saxon place names around Liverpool. Good use is made of classroom displays and artefacts, so that pupils gain first hand knowledge and understanding, as in a Year 5 display of Victorian objects.
85. The subject is managed appropriately, because the co-ordinator is given sufficient time to carry out the role. Most positive aspects of the subject remain from the previous inspection and all pupils now achieve well.

CREATIVE, AESTHETIC, PRACTICAL AND PHYSICAL SUBJECTS

86. No lessons were seen in music, and only one lesson each in art and design and design and technology, and two physical education lessons (one of gymnastics and one of games) were observed during the inspection. It is not therefore possible to make substantive judgements on provision in these subjects.
87. In **art and design** it was possible to see a large amount of pupils' work on display, and from that to judge that standards are above those expected for pupils' ages. Pupils use a good range of media to produce work in two and three dimensions. They use colour well, for instance in their work on landscape in Year 6 or their work in Year 4 on the Willow Pattern story. Work in Year 5

showed good observational drawing, both of architectural features on a visit to Croxteth Hall and of everyday containers. Pupils have also worked in three dimensions, for instance producing faces using salt dough in Year 6. They have studied the work of famous artists such as Leonardo da Vinci, Bruegel, Picasso and Lowry, and used them as models for their work. Good use is made of artwork to support other areas of the curriculum, including history, science, and religious education.

88. It was possible to see large amounts of **design and technology** work on display. This evidence indicated that standards of attainment are broadly in line with expectations at the end of Year 2 and Year 6. Work reflects the school's long-term plan for the subject by including opportunities for pupils to work with a variety of materials, and to develop skills progressively. Pupils in Year 1 have recently produced good quality 'moving' pictures, using paper and card to create the effect, whilst those in Year 2 have constructed wheeled vehicles from a variety of materials, including cereal boxes and plastic containers. There has been a significant amount of work undertaken in Year 3, linked to the topic of the Ancient Egyptians. Pupils have designed and made 'Feluccas' where they have flattened straws, tied them together with string, and painted them before attaching paper sails. This work is of good quality because it has successfully combined a number of design and technology skills in a cross-curricular approach. By the end of Year 6 pupils respond well to a challenge of designing a structure to hold a tennis ball 10cm off the desk top. They have partly evaluated the results by focusing on what went wrong, but did not consider what worked well. In most of the displays there is little evidence that pupils have carried out an evaluation to help them to improve their work, by identifying what worked well, and what could be improved next time.
89. In **music** a weekly practice is led by an extremely capable musician brought in to support the teaching of music. Pupils respond enthusiastically to the teacher's guidance as they go through a warming up activity following the teacher's lead with a high degree of accuracy, and amusement. The teacher carefully explains that 'Swing Low Sweet Chariot' is a 'spiritual,' and gives some background to its origins. Pupils sing this popular melody enthusiastically, and most remain in tune, even when they are singing unaccompanied. Throughout the practice the teacher gives very good guidance to pupils about how to improve the quality of their singing. This leads to standards which are better than average. A good number of older pupils belong to the school choir where they have greater opportunities to sing a variety of songs, some in two parts. Overall, the quality of singing by the choir, and the whole of the juniors, is above expectation for this age group. A short observation of a session with the younger pupils indicates that the quality of their singing is at least in line with what would be expected of pupils for their age.
90. In **physical education** pupils follow the full range of activities required by the National Curriculum. In the lesson observed in Year 2, pupils developed their gymnastic skills well as they learned to do forward rolls, helped by the teacher's good use of demonstration and evaluation. In another lesson pupils showed good basic skills in country dancing. In the Year 5 games lesson the teacher used her very good knowledge of the subject and analysis of skills to teach pupils how to pass and receive a netball in pairs, but there was not sufficient time in this lesson for pupils to consolidate these skills by practising in a group. Pupils go swimming in Years 3 and 4 and by the end of this period about three-quarters are competent swimmers. There are good opportunities for pupils to take part in inter-school competition in football, and expert coaching is offered in judo and basketball. There is some useful opportunity for older pupils to take part in outdoor and adventurous activities through the mayor's award.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP

Provision for pupils' personal, social, and health education is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- High value is placed on the school's personal, social, and health education.
- A high quality drama club helps pupils to focus on using their emotions.

Commentary

91. The school has a very good programme for personal, social and health education. Each class has a session of 'circle time', where there are planned activities to develop pupils' 'emotional literacy'. The school is successfully promoting this aspect because pupils often come into school under stress. This system allows them to admit when they are angry, annoyed, or frightened and the school helps them to deal with such feelings, so that learning can take place more effectively. The drama club's lively and enjoyable games helped all who took part to speak in a dramatic manner.
92. There is also a programme of sex and relationships education, as well as teaching about the misuse of drugs. The school is part of a Healthy Schools initiative and actively promotes healthy eating.
93. Citizenship is very successfully promoted through the school council, which has confidently requested to attend governors' meetings. Members take their role very seriously and provide noticeboards, declarations of intent and a suggestion box in prominent places around the school. Two members of the council have the opportunity to take part in the Knowsley children's parliament.

PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

<i>Inspection judgement</i>	<i>Grade</i>
The overall effectiveness of the school	3
How inclusive the school is	2
How the school's effectiveness has changed since its last inspection	3
Value for money provided by the school	3
Overall standards achieved	4
Pupils' achievement	3
Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities	3
Attendance	4
Attitudes	3
Behaviour, including the extent of exclusions	3
Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	3
The quality of education provided by the school	3
The quality of teaching	3
How well pupils learn	3
The quality of assessment	3
How well the curriculum meets pupils' needs	3
Enrichment of the curriculum, including out-of-school activities	3
Accommodation and resources	4
Pupils' care, welfare, health and safety	2
Support, advice and guidance for pupils	2
How well the school seeks and acts on pupils' views	2
The effectiveness of the school's links with parents	3
The quality of the school's links with the community	3
The school's links with other schools and colleges	2
The leadership and management of the school	3
The governance of the school	3
The leadership of the headteacher	2
The leadership of other key staff	3
The effectiveness of management	2

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