

INSPECTION REPORT

DOTHILL JUNIOR SCHOOL

Telford

LEA area: Telford and Wrekin

Unique reference number: 123414

Headteacher: R. Leckey

Lead inspector: Carol Worthington

Dates of inspection: 21st – 24th June 2004

Inspection number: 255984

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school: Community
School category: Primary
Age range of pupils: 7 – 11
Gender of pupils: Mixed
Number on roll: 368

School address: Severn Drive
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Appropriate authority: Governing body
Chairman of governors: C. Pickering

Date of previous inspection: 21st September 1998

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

Dothill Junior is a larger than average sized primary school, which serves the local area. There is an equal number of boys and girls; nearly all pupils are white British. Just over one per cent of pupils do not use English as their first language, which is low, but all are fluent English speakers. The percentage of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals (9.5) is about average. The percentage of pupils with special educational needs, including those with statements (12) is below the national average. These pupils have specific learning difficulties, emotional and behavioural problems or physical disability. The number with statements is about average. The school is involved with the Primary Leadership Programme. Attainment on entry to the school is above average. The level of pupil mobility is low.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

OVERALL EVALUATION

Dothill Junior is a good school. Leadership and management are good, with some very good features, most notably the maintenance of a very good ethos in which children show mature attitudes and develop into well-rounded young people. Teaching is good in all areas of the very good curriculum and pupils achieve well. With relatively poor funding, the school gives very good value for money.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- Standards are above average in most subjects and pupils achieve well in the wider curriculum
- Pupils' attitudes and behaviour are very good, developed through very good spiritual, social, moral and cultural education
- Teaching and learning are good but formal assessment is not used in all subjects
- The school takes very good care of pupils and involves parents very well in their children's education
- Governors give good service to the school
- Cross curricular use of information and communication technology (ICT) is limited
- Opportunities to enable pupils of higher ability and the gifted and talented to achieve their full potential are limited

The school has made good improvement since the previous inspection. All the key issues have been addressed. All major aspects of the school's provision have improved: standards of attainment, teaching and learning, pupils' attitudes and behaviour. The all-round improvement is due to the purposeful leadership and management.

STANDARDS ACHIEVED

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

Current standards are above average in all subjects except religious education and ICT where they are average. **Pupils achieve well** in all subjects because of the very good learning ethos created in the school and the good teaching they receive. Pupils with special educational needs also do well, but those of higher ability are not always sufficiently challenged.

In the National Curriculum tests for 11-year-olds in 2003, standards rose in mathematics to above average and in science to well above average; they remained average in English. The school did not do so well compared with similar schools because not enough higher ability pupils achieved the above average levels. This is still evident in the current Year 6, although there are more pupils with special educational needs this year than last.

Pupils' personal qualities, including their spiritual moral, social and cultural development are very good. Pupils' attitudes, behaviour and personal development are very good. Their attendance is good and punctuality very good.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION

The quality of education provided by the school is good. Teaching and learning are good. Of the 43 lessons seen, one quarter was very good or better and 86 per cent good or better. None was unsatisfactory. Teachers have good all-round expertise. They engage their pupils and encourage them to learn very well independently and collaboratively, but the tracking of their progress is not refined enough for improvement targets to be easily set.

Curriculum provision is very good. The school provides a relevant and challenging curriculum, enriched through very good extra-curricular provision, especially in sport, music, and in visits and trips. Accommodation and resources are satisfactory, but some are wearing out.

Pupils are very well cared for. They receive good academic and personal advice, support and guidance

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Leadership and management are good with some very good features. There is a very effective partnership between the headteacher and his deputy, which ensures consistency in the management of aspects that contribute significantly to the learning ethos. The curriculum is managed very well indeed by the deputy head, and the coordinators for English, mathematics and science are all very good. Other staff with responsibilities discharge them well; all lead by example and create effective teams. **Governance is good**; governors have a good knowledge of their school's strengths and weaknesses through their regular involvement in its work.

PARENTS' AND PUPILS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

Parents are very pleased with the quality of education and care that their children receive and have considerable confidence in the school. They are keen to help with their children's education and pupils are happy at school. Pupils take considerable responsibility for their own community through the school council. The good ethos that has developed enables pupils with special educational needs to be confident and wholly involved in all aspects of school life.

IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

The most important things the school should do to improve:

- Extend the use of ICT across the whole curriculum
- Provide more consistent assessment procedures in the non-core subjects
- Refine the tracking of pupils' progress to enable it to be more easily used to set targets for improvement for pupils of all abilities
- Provide further opportunities in and out of lessons to enable pupils of higher ability and those who are gifted and talented to achieve their full potential
- Seek external funding support from the local education authority and other sources to facilitate additional and much needed learning support assistants as well as specific ICT equipment and resources.

PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS

STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

Standards achieved in subjects

Pupils achieve well. Those currently in Year 6 who entered the school with above average attainment have maintained this standard of achievement in English, mathematics and science, and achieved equally well in most other curriculum subjects.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards are above average in all subjects except religious education and information and communication technology (ICT), which are average
- Achievement is good but a significant proportion of higher ability pupils do not fulfil their potential by gaining higher grades in English and mathematics in statutory tests
- Improvement since the last inspection has been good; the school's trend in the National Curriculum tests scores is above the national trend

Commentary

1. Pupils enter the school with above average attainment in literacy and numeracy, and the school builds well on this by providing a wide and rich curriculum through which literacy and numeracy are developed. Pupils' attainment by the end of Year 6 is above average in all areas of the curriculum except religious education and ICT where it is average. This represents good achievement because through building on their good start, pupils' attainment is raised throughout the curriculum, not just in English and mathematics.

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
English	27.5 (26.3)	26.8 (27.0)
mathematics	27.5 (25.6)	26.8 (26.7)
science	30.3 (27.4)	28.6 (28.3)

There were 103 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year

2. Pupils are put into ability sets for literacy and numeracy from Year 3 onwards. Within these sets, pupils of broadly similar ability receive appropriate teaching throughout their time at the school. The sets are large, however, and there is still a wide range of ability within them which the school addresses by focus groups within the sets. This works particularly well for pupils with special educational needs and those of lower ability where there are more teaching assistants, but not so well in average and higher ability sets, where pupils are not always appropriately challenged. Consequently, the school does well to raise the attainment of most pupils to the expected level 4 in English and mathematics by the end of Year 6, but it does not achieve enough success at the higher level 5.

3. The school's performance in National Curriculum tests for 11-year-olds has been improving over the last few years and has risen faster than the national rising trend. This trend is apparent in the 2003 tests which were a great improvement over previous years. This group was the first set of 11 year-olds to have come through the school with ability sets and focus groups in place from Year 3. In both English and mathematics, far fewer pupils than the national average failed to acquire level 4 and they all had learning difficulty. Pupils' performance in science has been rising particularly quickly. In 2003, for example, 96 per cent of pupils achieved level 4 or higher, and the proportion achieving level 5 was well above the national average.

4. Standards have improved considerably since the previous inspection, compared with all schools and with those of pupils of similar home background. In the latest tests (2003), these comparisons were above average for English and mathematics and well above for science. At the previous inspection, they were below average for English and mathematics and average for science. However, when the prior attainment of pupils at Key Stage 1 was taken into account, they did not do nearly as well as expected, being well below average for English and average for science. This again reflects the lack of the higher grades. The school exceeded its targets in English and mathematics for level 4 and above, but just met them for level 5.

5. The school does not prepare pupils for National Curriculum tests by concentrating on literacy and numeracy alone. The current standard of work throughout the school is above average in most areas of the curriculum. Literacy and numeracy develop well through all subjects, particularly literacy where the plethora of high quality, well presented work in history, geography, religious education, and science, and the strong evidence of a wide creative and artistic curriculum shows that pupils are achieving well and that standards are higher than those indicated by the National Curriculum tests in English and mathematics. A very great strength is the way in which the school develops pupils' aptitude for learning by presenting curriculum material in all subjects in ways which challenge pupils to use their own initiative and to have confidence in their own abilities to succeed.

Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities

Pupils' attitudes, behaviour and personal development are very good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils' attitudes towards school and their learning are very good
- Behaviour and relationships are very good
- Pupils make very good progress towards becoming mature and responsible young people

Commentary

6. Pupils enjoy school and participate enthusiastically in activities. They work conscientiously and respect their teachers and helpers. Good behaviour is very effectively promoted. Pupils' conduct in and out of lessons is almost always very good. Behaviour is occasionally less than good when teaching and activities are insufficiently stimulating. There were three instances of temporary exclusion during the year. Instances of anti-social behaviour are very rare.

Ethnic background of pupils

Exclusions in the last school year

Categories used in the Annual School Census	No of pupils on roll	Number of fixed period exclusions	Number of permanent exclusions
White – British	349	3	0
White – any other White background	1	0	0
Mixed – White and Black Caribbean	6	0	0
Mixed – White and Black African	1	0	0
Mixed – White and Asian	6	0	0
Asian or Asian British – Pakistani	3	0	0
Asian or Asian British – Bangladeshi	1	0	0
Black or Black British – Caribbean	1	0	0

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

7. Pupils co-operate with and support each other very amicably yet are suitably competitive when appropriate. They are confident to offer views and suggestions about the work and performance of others and to receive comments in good spirit. They use their initiative very well, academically and socially: One pupil decided to construct a gadget at home to enhance his English project, for example, and the school council decided to raise funds by selling snacks in order to have its own budget.

8. Pupils with special educational needs are fully included in all school activities and their attitudes to school are positive. They are well behaved in class and around school. The encouragement offered by teachers and support staff enables pupils to be active participants in all aspects of school life.

9. Attendance is good, and above the average for similar schools. In the last reporting year, it was 95.7 per cent. Pupils are punctual at the beginning of the school day.

Authorised absence %		Unauthorised absence %	
School data	4.0	School data	0.3
National data	5.4	National data	0.4

10. Pupils' spiritual development is good. They acquire their appreciation of life and the world around them well, exploring the effects of art and music on their feelings, for example. They write about the qualities they like in others. In assemblies, the festivals of Christian and other faiths are celebrated. In one assembly, pupils gave a presentation of their views about the differences between heaven and hell. Achievement is especially well celebrated. In some assemblies, however, opportunities for reflection are missed.

11. Moral development is very good. The principles of right and wrong are very well explained and understood by the pupils and are supported by the consistent application of the school's behaviour policy. Moral issues of the times are explored and external agencies, such as the police, contribute to the curriculum, for example, regarding the misuse of drugs.

12. Pupils receive many opportunities to develop their social skills, which are very good. Teamwork features frequently in lessons. Numerous tasks and roles are available for pupils to undertake, which they do willingly and effectively. They take considerable responsibility for their own community through the school council. Their support for charities demonstrates their concern for those less fortunate than themselves.

13. Cultural development is good. A large number of visits to places of interest such as museums and theatres enhance well pupils' cultural awareness. A Greek afternoon, Aboriginal and Roman artwork are good examples of how other cultures are celebrated. Pupils' awareness of the implications of living in a multi-cultural society is less well developed, but satisfactory.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

The quality of education is good. The school provides a very good curriculum enriched by very well planned extra-curricular activities. Teaching is good but assessment is not consistently made in non-core subjects. Pupils are very well cared for. They receive good academic and personal advice, support and guidance. Accommodation and resources are satisfactory.

Teaching and learning

Teaching and learning are good overall, with very good features. Assessment is good in the core subjects.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teachers encourage and motivate their pupils who respond by being interested in their studies and wanting to learn.
- Teachers make the best use of time and insist on high standards of behaviour.
- Teachers develop literacy and numeracy well by the use of focus groups within ability sets.
- Teachers do not do enough to ensure higher ability pupils and the gifted and talented are challenged consistently.
- Assessment is not extended consistently to all subjects.

Commentary

14. Teaching and learning are good with some very good features. No unsatisfactory lesson was seen during the inspection, and one quarter was very good or better. There was one excellent lesson in dance. The school has worked very successfully since the previous inspection to improve teaching and learning through rigorous monitoring and evaluation carried out by senior management and subject co-ordinators. Performance management has been used very well to identify weaknesses and provide training to address them.

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 43 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
1 (2 %)	10 (23 %)	26 (61%)	6 (14 %)	0	0	0

The table gives the number of lessons observed in each of the seven categories used to make judgements about lessons.

15. Good teaching is widespread. No subject was seen that had none, which indicates very wide and good all-round expertise. It also shows the quality of training in subjects, such as ICT, for example, where all teachers have had to adapt to new equipment and the retirement of the long-serving co-ordinator. Co-ordinators work very hard to become role models for other staff; they disseminate expertise and give model lessons which enable good practice to be shared. In music, where expertise amongst staff was not very high, the co-ordinator has introduced a curriculum scheme that enables all staff to teach the subject with confidence, knowing they are satisfying the requirements of the National Curriculum.

16. Teachers' planning is good and made to a standard format. In general, provision is made for the wide range of ability in classes and appropriate work is planned for pupils with special educational needs. Their individual education plans make teaching relevant, and targets are short and manageable. Planning for pupils of higher ability or those who are gifted and talented is not so consistent, however. The use of ability sets for literacy and numeracy results in pupils of higher capability having work pitched better to their level, but these sets are large and there is still a wide range of ability, and rarely have the benefit of teaching assistants.

17. In literacy and numeracy lessons, the use of focus groups within the ability sets is a strength and work done in these groups, which often contain pupils with special educational needs, raises attainment, enhances learning and enables pupils to achieve well, but work is not often geared to pupils of higher ability. Nevertheless, literacy and numeracy develop well in the school. Pupils' work is well written and presented in all subjects; subject-specific vocabulary is developed well. An important feature of most lessons is the time spent speaking and listening, in pairs, in smaller groups and in the whole class. Pupils know that their teachers are interested in their views and frequently ask questions relating to their work, provoking interesting discussion. Teachers encourage their pupils to respond and this results in the creation of a strong work ethic in all classes. Pupils are keen and interested, and have very good attitudes to learning, which helps them achieve well. The approach to behaviour management is very consistent and time is therefore used productively in lessons, not wasted by pupils' misconduct

18. Teachers identify cross-curricular links and generally use them well. The music of the Romans and the Tudors has been celebrated in history modules and this is currently a music and physical education link in a creative dance project based on Tchaikovsky's *Romeo and Juliet* overture, which is motivating boys and girls alike.

19. Resources have improved in most subjects since the previous inspection, and they are used well. Those for ICT, however, have once again been overtaken by advances in technology and have not been replaced because of a lack of funds; they are in need of updating so that ICT can be used as an educational tool in all classrooms and that skills can be effectively demonstrated to a whole class in the computer room. Teaching assistants are a resource used particularly well in literacy and numeracy where they lead pupils in focus groups in most classes; they are also well-trained in specialist subjects such as science, art and ICT and are a very valuable aid to achievement. There are not enough assistants, however, so they are not often used to boost the achievement of higher ability pupils during lessons, or to focus on the gifted and talented, even in the upper sets.

20. Assessment is satisfactory overall. It is good in English and mathematics and developing well in science. Pupils' work is marked regularly by their teachers and the school's agreed guidelines are applied consistently so that children know how well they have done and how they can improve their work. In English, mathematics and science, regular assessments are carried out. In science this includes termly assessment of scientific skills. Yearly testing in English and mathematics is done using standardised Qualifications and Curriculum Authority (QCA) tests which show the National Curriculum levels achieved by pupils at the end of the year. All this is successful in giving a satisfactory picture of a pupil's progress which is beginning to be kept on a spreadsheet so that it can be used to set targets for pupils and to guide curriculum planning.

21. At present, the system, which has been changed this year, is too complex to give a simple representation of the progress made by groups of pupils such as those who achieved high grades in writing in Key Stage 1, or for gender analysis. It is well used, however, to identify individuals who are not making sufficient progress and to put measures in place for improvement. In the foundation subjects, some form of assessment takes place in most, though it is not consistent. In ICT, pupils contribute well to their own assessment and in design and technology, pupils evaluate each product they make against an agreed set of criteria.

The curriculum

Curriculum provision for pupils is very good. The school provides a relevant and challenging curriculum, enriched through very good extra-curricular provision, particularly in sporting activities and music. Accommodation and resources are satisfactory.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Very good curriculum leadership and management ensures that all subjects are well taught, ensuring depth, good balance and relevance
- The enrichment produced through educational visits, visitors and the use of the community is very good
- Provision for personal, social and health education and citizenship is good
- Use of ICT to support learning across the curriculum is limited

Commentary

22. Curriculum planning has improved since the previous inspection and an appropriate range of learning activities is now provided for pupils. Creative and physical subjects, such as art and design, music, design and technology and physical education are given a high priority by the school, which considers them valuable aspects of the curriculum. The school's use of the joint primary strategies is good. Key staff keep up-to-date and make sure that pupils and teachers benefit from training. The

setting arrangements for literacy and numeracy enable pupils to speed up their progress towards National Curriculum goals.

23. Provision for pupils with special educational needs is good. The curriculum is inclusive and reflects such needs. Well-qualified support staff make a good contribution to the achievement of these pupils. Suitable individual education plans are developed and teachers plan work in all curriculum subjects that is effectively related to these so that pupils with special educational needs achieve well.

24. Many and varied opportunities to enrich pupils' experiences are an important part of the school's curriculum. Very good enrichment activities range from seasonal sports clubs to music, including recorders and the school choir. The school offers very good opportunities for pupils' participation in sport; competitive matches for several different teams are organised. The local technical college provides coaches for some sports, such as football, to augment the provision of the school's teachers. In addition, external agencies such as the school nurse and *Crucial Crew* enhance provision in areas such as personal, social and health education (PSHE). Trips within the locality and to the theatre and places of historical and scientific interest, stimulate interest further. At present school science provision is being particularly well enhanced by a study in partnership with a local university, and this is enthusing the Year 4 pupils to be scientists.

25. The co-ordinator for personal, social, health education and citizenship is supporting teachers in implementing the recently updated scheme of work. This incorporates much existing good practice, including sex and relationships education, drugs education and 'Circle Time'. Teachers are alert to opportunities to develop a sense of responsibility, and support pupils who have good ideas to make them work in practice. The very good school council is an example of this as is the school newsletter, contributed to by both pupils and staff and edited by one of the Year 6 pupils. Many of the extra-curricular activities and involvement with visitors to the school also encourage responsibility and understanding of the school as a community within the wider community outside.

26. The school prepares pupils well for transfer to secondary education. Pupils attend the nearby local secondary school for a two-day induction course. Good liaison between schools ensures that all pupils are well prepared and confident about the next stage in their education.

27. The school has sufficient teachers and deploys them well. There are several job-shares in addition to that of the headship and these work well because of the consistency of management. There are not enough teaching assistants. Usually they are well employed in literacy and numeracy, teaching focus groups, but this is almost always confined to lower ability groups and not the top sets.

28. Accommodation is adequate for the purposes of teaching the curriculum. The playing fields, the playground with its well-developed facilities, the library and computer suite are good features. Other rooms are sufficient in number and size. Displays, including examples of pupils' work, provide interesting and colourful enhancement. Some parts of the building are in need of replacement or improvement. The computer room was inaccessible for a time because of rain water penetrating the ceiling.

29. Resources are satisfactory overall, and good in some subjects. Some older materials and equipment are overdue for replacement. The number and quality of computers is good but the computers are not used enough in some subjects. The school is implementing plans to improve provision for ICT at present in order to maximise the contribution of ICT to pupils' learning in other subjects.

Care, guidance and support

Pupils are very well cared for. They receive good academic and personal advice, support and guidance

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pastoral care is very good
- Pupils' attitudes and views are very carefully noted and acted upon
- Induction arrangements are good

Commentary

30. Pupils feel valued, safe and supported because of the way they are treated. They trust their teachers and helpers and are confident to turn to them for assistance. The very caring and respectful relationships between teachers and pupils form the basis of the school's ethos of care. The school places a high priority on the support for pupils with special educational needs. The good ethos that has developed enables these pupils to be confident and wholly involved in all aspects of school life.

31. The arrangements for transfer, from the infant school and later to the secondary school, are sensitive and facilitate a smooth and well informed start for pupils and parents in both situations. Dothill Junior is very keen to understand how pupils feel about the school and their experiences. An independent consultancy conducts an annual survey of pupils' views and the findings are used to seek solutions, support pupils and to meet their individual needs. The school council is given considerable encouragement and is very positively supported in their endeavours.

32. The procedures for health and safety in school and for child protection and children in care are properly implemented. Specialist education and health agencies provide relevant services to the school. Supervision at breaks and lunch times is good. The provision of teaching assistants in some lessons is not always adequate to meet the needs of some pupils.

33. Targeting for improvement is in place for literacy and is helpful to the pupils. Self and mutual evaluation of their work is a very well developed feature that enables pupils to be aware of their strengths and weaknesses. Their awareness of how to improve is developing well, mainly through constructive marking and advice from their teachers. Pupils with special education needs, are generally well supported. Whilst some lesson planning includes extended work for higher ability pupils, special development projects are not in place to give them the opportunity to reach their full potential.

Partnership with parents, other schools and the community

The partnership between school and parents is very good. Use of the community contributes very well to learning. Links with other schools and colleges are good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Parents have a high regard for the school
- Parental involvement in pupils' learning is very good
- Subject related visits very much enhance pupils' learning experiences

Commentary

34. Parents are very pleased with the quality of education and care that their children receive and have considerable confidence in the school. They are right to believe that their children progress and develop well. Parents and school work very well together in order to secure the best interests of the pupils.

35. The information provided for parents is very good overall. Newsletters are of a particularly high standard and parents receive, each term, details of what is to be taught. Annual school reports do not clearly describe how pupils achieve compared to national average expectations for their ages, other than at the end of Year 6. Parental attendance is high at the termly progress review meetings

and parents of pupils who have special education needs are well involved in the review process. Teachers are easily accessible daily and parents find the school to be very approachable. The school consults parents frequently, takes action where appropriate and reports back to them via newsletters.

36. Parents of children with special educational needs are informed and encouraged to work alongside the school to best ensure their child's progress. Parents are informed regularly to any changes in individual education plans, and are asked to comment and contribute.

37. Parental support for the school is high. Large numbers assist in school, regularly or occasionally; twenty parents, for example, are included on the rota to supervise the library. Support for out-of-school visits and performances is substantial. An association of friends organises events and raises considerable funds for the school. A training or information workshop is arranged for parents each term and is valued by them. Parents and grandparents are involved in the curriculum from time to time.

38. Links with partner infant and secondary schools serve pupil-transfer arrangements well although curricular bridging work with the secondary school is not well developed. The school accommodates trainee teachers and students on work experience. Visitors from colleges enhance pupils' work in science and physical education.

39. Theatre visits to watch classical performances, river studies and exploration of different towns are examples of how well the school uses the wider community to enrich pupils' learning and cultural development. External agencies are involved, for example, in cycling proficiency. School, parents and pupils were involved in planning and publishing safe routes to school. The school choir has participated in civic celebrations. Charitable organisations are supported well.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Leadership and management are good with some very good features. The headteacher and his deputy work well together and staff with responsibilities discharge them well. All lead by example and create effective teams. Governance is good; governors have a good knowledge of their school's strengths and weaknesses through their regular involvement in its work.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Leadership is strong in its commitment to inclusion, in personal development, and in its creation of a very positive learning ethos
- Management of the curriculum is very good
- Performance management and the professional development of staff are very good and have resulted in much-improved teaching
- All school staff and governors are involved in school development which is effective in bringing about improvement
- Strategic planning, though good overall, lacks vision for all-round development of the school and does not focus enough on the achievement of higher ability pupils
- The use of assessment data to set targets for the achievement of groups of pupils is not well developed

Commentary

40. The head teacher and his deputy work together well in an arrangement whereby both are part-time; he works for four days and she three. On the day the headteacher is not in school, the deputy becomes the acting headteacher. This arrangement is endorsed by the governors and works very well for the individuals concerned. The school runs very smoothly and is effective because of the consistency of management of aspects which contribute significantly to the learning ethos. In

particular, these are the management of behaviour and creating positive attitudes to learning through a very good programme for pupils' moral and social development.

41. Another factor which makes a very strong contribution to pupils' learning is the very broad curriculum offered by the school, which is managed very well. The deputy head works with subject co-ordinators and the curriculum is monitored and evaluated very well. Cross-curricular links, such as those between music and dance or science and technology, are very well planned and evaluated

42. The leadership of the special educational needs coordinator is good and provision is managed well. She offers support throughout the school and monitors the provision closely. She liaises well with parents and outside agencies, and this ensures that pupils achieve well. The links with the infant school and the main high school are well-established and aid smooth transition for pupils with special educational needs.

43. The current school development plan grew from a whole-school professional development day, looking at ethos and the process of development planning. This resulted in a three-year cycle for core and foundation subjects to undergo curriculum review. In the current year, this has been very successful in raising standards and provision in mathematics and religious education in particular.

44. Whilst the school development plan is a very good working document for curriculum and teaching improvement, it lacks strategic oversight. There is little vision for the longer term development of the school in all aspects, and especially with regard to improving higher ability pupils' achievement in the core subjects. The school does not raise the attainment of its higher ability and gifted and talented pupils enough. It uses performance data to track the progress of individuals, but the current methods do not easily lend themselves to the rapid identification of the progress of groups of pupils, such as the gifted and talented in each year. It is just beginning to use the Fischer Trust data to show how it adds value to pupils' education, particularly in English and mathematics.

45. Staff performance management is very thorough and is very effective in bringing about improvement in teaching and learning. Nearly nine out of ten lessons observed were good or better. The senior managers arrange very effective in-service training based on the needs of individuals and the requirements of the school development plan, showing a strong commitment to staff development. This includes the induction of newly qualified teachers and the acceptance of students for teaching practice.

46. Governance is good. The governing body gives committed service to the school and supports it in all its activities. Governors have taken part in school evaluation and professional development days, and monitor the work of the school effectively through reports from senior managers and subject co-ordinators. Governors have a good knowledge of the strengths and weaknesses of the school, are committed to inclusion and ensure the school fulfils its statutory duties. They issue satisfactory challenge to the management but do not have a long-term plan for the school's future development.

Financial information for the year April 2003 to March 2004

Income and expenditure (£)	
Total income	691119
Total expenditure	721861
Expenditure per pupil	1904

Balances (£)	
Balance from previous year	-9459
Balance carried forward to the next	-40201

47. The school's financial management is effective. The school is poorly funded and has, until very recently, had a very expensive but experienced long-serving staff. This has changed this year and the financial situation has eased because of the early retirement of one such member, though his expertise in ICT is especially missed. Nevertheless, the school is currently running a deficit

budget with the agreement of the local education authority. This has ensured the school's commitment to three forms of entry. The broad curriculum has been maintained, but some music activities have not been able to take place this year because of financial constraints, and ICT resources are in urgent need of updating and increasing. Teaching groups are generally very large – up to 39 pupils in some cases – and with a limited number of teaching assistants, it is difficult for teachers to help the pupils of higher capability reach their potential. The school works hard to obtain the best value by consulting staff, parents and pupils, and by seeking competitive rates for goods and services, but does not use performance data well enough to compare itself with other schools.

PART C: THE QUALITY OF EDUCATION IN SUBJECTS

SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGE 2

ENGLISH

The provision in English is **good**

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards are above average, particularly in speaking and listening.
- Teaching is good overall, with some very good features, particularly in the use of focus groups
- Leadership is very good and has been influential in improving the quality of teaching.

Commentary

48. The results of the National Curriculum tests in English in 2003 show that standards in English are average. The trend over the last three years has been one of steady improvement with girls achieving slightly better than boys, but by no more than the national trend. Observations of the pupils presently in Year 6 suggest that this steady improvement is being maintained. Standards in speaking and listening are higher than in writing and reading and are approaching well above average.

49. Pupils generally achieve well, including those with special educational needs. Such pupils have precise and achievable targets in their individual education plans and also benefit from close help from teachers, when they are taught in small groups, and from help from teaching assistants. Pupils are taught English in classes chosen by ability; teaching assistants, although relatively few in number, are thus more precisely deployed to assist the progress of pupils with special educational needs. Standards generally have improved since the last inspection and this is largely the result of very good leadership of the subject, which has been influential in improving the quality of the teaching.

50. The standards of speaking and listening are above average and, in the case of significant numbers of pupils, well above average. Discussion forms a part of nearly every lesson and pupils are given many opportunities to discuss their work in small groups or class situations. Discussion may be led by the class teacher and this often takes the form of evaluation of pupils' work. In a Year 6 class, a pupil read out his work and others criticised constructively. The teacher then led the evaluation. This process not only develops pupils' speaking and listening skills but also extends and consolidates ideas for writing, ensuring that all pupils are precisely clear as to the nature of the assignment. Pupils also work together well when independent of the teacher. A group of six Year 6 pupils, for example, were seen discussing enthusiastically, but good-naturedly, nuances of character from a book they had read as a class; Year 4 pupils discussed the use of hyperbole in advertisements.

51. Standards in writing are above average. Although the proportion of pupils reaching the expected level 4 is above average, too few are achieving level 5 than would be expected from their attainment on entry. Assessment procedures for writing are very good. Pupils undertake a piece each term which they first assess themselves, under direction from the teacher, and it is then directly assessed by the teacher. This process produces targets for each pupil.

52. Teachers make good use of literacy hour lessons to promote work in other subjects. Pupils are also encouraged in their writing by studying the style of established authors. The school follows a commercial scheme for handwriting and almost all pupils develop a functional style. The general standard of the presentation of work is good and is one indication of the good attitudes of pupils towards the subject. Punctuation is generally good with even lower ability pupils in Year 3 showing a degree of correct sentence structure; by Year 6, most pupils are writing confidently in paragraphs. It is noticeable, however, that although pupils use inverted commas correctly, relatively few manage a

complete punctuation of speech. Spelling is at least satisfactory and pupils benefit from regular assignments. However, whereas the use of dictionaries is often encouraged in group work directed by the class teacher, their use is not so obvious by pupils working independently.

53. Standards in reading are above average. The school puts great emphasis on reading and a half-hour session each day is used to help it directly through a variety of approaches, including group reading where pupils read the same book under the direction of the class teacher, and paired reading where pupils of different age groups read to each other. Pupils with special educational needs are withdrawn during these sessions for individual help. By the time they are in Year 6, many pupils use the school's library system to locate books and find specific information in those books. They skim material to locate specific areas and to infer information as well as merely understanding literal facts. Reading skills are helped by good support from parents, evidence of which is provided by the entries in the pupils' reading diaries. The library is attractive and houses non-fiction, the fiction being confined to classrooms. Children have access to an appropriate amount of suitable reading material in both places.

54. The quality of teaching is good overall and some very good teaching was seen. Teachers plan thoroughly in year groups so that all pupils cover the same types of work and also cover a full range of work. They expect different sorts of writing, including biographies, persuasive, argument, and play-scripts. A feature of the majority of English lessons is the work done in small groups with the teacher giving close support and advice. The teacher works with a different group of children on each day of the week so that every child benefits from the teacher's direct help. The participation of teaching assistants is well planned for the group work stage of lessons but not always at other times. Preparation is usually good, although there are examples of resources not being efficiently distributed and this causes a drop in the pace of lessons and occasionally a drop in the attention of pupils. Teachers generally question well, challenging pupils' learning and assessing their understanding. The tight planning of some lessons does prevent teachers from following up questions posed by pupils.

55. Pupils' work is usually well marked; teachers offer encouragement and often make suggestions on how pupils might extend or develop their work. Despite the fact that pupils dutifully record the learning objective before each piece of writing, there are relatively few examples of teachers referring to the objectives or to the individual targets of pupils in their comments. Teachers do make particularly good use of the sessions at the end of lessons to consolidate and assess the learning of their pupils in the previous part of the session. Teachers are beginning to make good use of interactive whiteboards to illustrate points to pupils, but pupils do not use computers enough to draft and amend work.

56. Leadership is very good by an experienced, well-qualified and enthusiastic co-ordinator who has set up good assessment procedures and provided a great deal of in-service training. She has monitored teaching, which has improved as a result. Since the previous inspection, improvement has been good. Standards of speaking and listening are higher and better progress is made by pupils with special educational needs.

Language and literacy across the curriculum

57. Good opportunities are provided for pupils to apply and develop speaking, listening, reading and writing in other subjects apart from English. History, geography and religious education are used effectively to develop and consolidate speaking and writing in a range of different forms. Year 6 pupils write play-scripts, for example, using Greek myths as their inspiration and then perform these in front of other year groups. They write reports involving independent research on Shrewsbury as part of their work in geography. Year 4 pupils produce independent storyboard accounts of the life of St. Francis of Assisi. The use of technical vocabulary is developed in science and design and technology, as well as writing for the purpose of reporting science investigations and evaluation of products in design and technology.

MATHEMATICS

Provision for mathematics is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching and learning are good across the school and pupils are achieving well.
- Good use is made of monitoring and assessment to set targets and track pupils' attainment and achievement
- Pupils have positive attitudes to learning
- The leadership and management of mathematics is very good
- The use of ICT to support learning is limited

Commentary

58. Standards in mathematics by the end of Year 6 are good. There was a substantial increase in both average and higher levels in the 2003 tests and the current year group are on track to achieve similar results. This upward trend is due in part to the recent intensive whole school focus on mathematics. The school now has effective strategies for improvement by close monitoring of learning and training of all teachers in implementing the National Numeracy Strategy. The impact is beginning to show increased rates of learning. This is a steadily improving picture and teaching and learning throughout the school are invariably good. In the past there have been variations in teaching different methods of calculations. This has led to the pupils being uncertain how to work things out. These issues have now been resolved and there is a greater consistency in the way mathematics is taught throughout the school and, as a result, achievement is now good.

59. The quality of teaching is consistently good and pupils have very good attitudes to learning. There are good strategies to target specific groups of pupils, good assessment procedures and use of homework. All teachers plan their work carefully and resources are well organised prior to lessons commencing. This contributes to the brisk pace of lessons and ensures that pupils have the materials they need to produce effective work. Teachers throughout the school demonstrate a good knowledge and understanding of mathematics. Teaching assistants are well-briefed and deployed effectively. This ensures that pupils with special educational needs take a full part in the lessons and make very good progress. Lesson objectives are communicated clearly to pupils and re-stated in the plenary summing-up sessions. This helps pupils to evaluate their own learning and consolidate their understanding. Teachers use good questioning techniques to target and challenge pupils' thinking and to deepen their understanding of mathematical processes. Pupils' mathematical vocabulary is extended through good questioning and the modelling of new words. On the few occasions lessons are not so good because the valuable plenary session is missed. On occasions, teachers do not provide sufficient opportunities for pupils to give extended oral answers in lessons. Pupils develop a secure knowledge and understanding of mathematical skills to calculate and apply their knowledge to real-life problems, but some have difficulty interpreting problems, an area which the school is working to improve.

60. The coordination and management of the subject are very good and influence the good standards being achieved. The subject leader has a clear vision and determination to raise standards and has made a very good start in monitoring achievement. He is supported well by the deputy head when monitoring teaching and learning. As a result, he has gained a clear picture of strengths and weakness, identifying, for example, problem solving as a focus for improvement.

Mathematics across the curriculum

61. Pupils make satisfactory use of mathematics in their work in other subjects. In geography they use and apply their knowledge of co-ordinates when reading maps, and in science they often make good use of graphs to record their findings and measurements. The development of mathematical vocabulary in all classes makes a positive contribution to the literacy development in the school. Some ICT lessons involve work in mathematics and give pupils good opportunities to

practise their skills in both subjects and, where used, interactive whiteboards enhance lessons. The use of ICT in mathematics, however, has been recognised as an area for development.

SCIENCE

Provision for Science is **good**

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Leadership is very good
- Planning across year groups and across the key stage ensures an increase of skills and knowledge.
- Pupils are encouraged to use appropriate scientific language during lessons
- The emphasis on investigation work encourages pupils to answer probing questions and consider their work carefully
- Visits and links with various agencies enhance provision

Commentary

62. Standards achieved in the National Curriculum tests in 2003 were very much improved compared to previous years, and were well above the national average but in line with that of similar schools. Current standards are above average and pupils are achieving well. Improvement since the previous inspection has been good.

63. The quality of teaching is good. In some lessons seen it was very good. In one such lesson in Year 3, pupils were required to think about the variables that enabled them to jump the furthest. The teacher skilfully took the pupils through the process of planning an investigation, predicting results and coming to a conclusion. Pupils are encouraged to use the correct scientific language, which is demonstrated well by the teachers and classroom assistants. The uniform use of investigation plans throughout the school helps pupils know exactly what is required as evidence of an investigation. They are keen to learn about science and especially enjoy the emphasis on practical work. They make good progress because there is a variety of experience offered, and show confidence because teachers value their ideas. They make good use of literacy and numeracy, and where used, ICT enhances learning, such as seen in a lesson on heart rate and exercise in Year 5 where the teacher modelled a graph on the white board which pupils followed and adapted to their own set of results.

64. Assessment procedures, including termly assessments of scientific enquiry skills are being developed but are at an early stage and have not been in place long enough to monitor effectiveness. In good lessons, teachers used questions effectively to check pupils' understanding of what they are learning. Work is marked regularly and comments have a positive impact on learning. Pupils themselves are invited to comment on results and marks achieved.

65. Leadership of science is very good. The co-ordinator is well qualified, knowledgeable and very well motivated. He has a clear idea of what is needed to improve standards further and is very committed to this aim. He has re-written all the science plans so that skills and knowledge are built up over the key stage; he gives advice and guidance to all teachers. He has established good links with the university and the school has embarked on an excellent project on the effect of nematode worms on potato growth, which has inspired the Year 4 pupils and teachers. Visits to places of interest have enhanced the curriculum, for example a visit to Chester Zoo enriched work on 'mini-beasts'.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

Provision for information and communication technology is **satisfactory**,

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils' standards and achievements are average, but improving
- Direct skills teaching is inadequate due to the lack of demonstration facilities in the ICT room
- Pupils work very well in groups and are always ready to help each other
- New technology does not support learning effectively enough across the curriculum

Commentary

66. The standard attained by the end of Year 6 is in line with the national expectation. Achievement is satisfactory overall.

67. Pupils develop a range of appropriate ICT skills as they move through the school. Younger pupils, for example, have selected computer graphics and added them to text competently. Year 4 pupils have used cut, copy and paste tools when designing African inspired designs in art. Pupils in Year 5 show satisfactory understanding of control technology as they develop simple programming skills using both floor robots and simple computer programmes. Older pupils use ICT for graphical modelling, to present and conduct basic analysis of data, and they develop their knowledge of spreadsheets. Pupils develop their confidence in navigating the Internet, and in Year 6 pupils create multimedia presentations and have gained some experience in designing web pages. The Year 6 pupils' multimedia sequences demonstrate that they have a good understanding of how to use the facilities of the programme.

68. Teaching and learning is satisfactory overall. The ICT room has enabled the school to provide pupils with regular opportunities to use computers. Although the school has a number of interactive whiteboards in classrooms, the lack of this facility in the computer room inhibits the success of direct teaching of skills to large groups. Teachers have good expectations both for behaviour and productivity, as seen in a Year 5 lessons with floor robots. In this lesson, despite the disruption caused by a leaking roof, pupils worked with their usual enthusiasm and enjoyment. They listen carefully and invariably collaborate effectively. They are expected to store and organise their own work to an increasing degree.

69. The subject is led satisfactorily, and its improvement since the last inspection has been satisfactory overall. Although assessment is still in the early stages of development, a good system of pupil self-evaluation is successful in giving them insight into their own knowledge and understanding, and they recognise this as being a useful developmental tool. The school's ICT development plan provides an appropriate focus for improvement. Staff training has helped to raise teachers' awareness of the potential of ICT and knowledge of how to teach it successfully.

Information and communication technology across the curriculum

70. The use of ICT in different subjects is satisfactory because the school makes the best use of its limited resources. The interactive whiteboards are beginning to be used well to support learning within lessons. In English, there is some evidence of editing and refining writing using word-processing skills, but this is limited. In science, data are used to present evidence in the form of graphs, and in other subjects work is often enhanced with graphics and images imported from the Internet or data bank. Year 6 pupils, for instance, have produced their own web pages on both Ancient Egyptians and Greeks. Generally, however, teachers' planning across the curriculum lacks opportunities to utilise ICT widely because there are not enough resources.

HUMANITIES

Geography

Provision in geography is **good**

Main strengths and weaknesses:

- Standards are above those expected for children this age
- Teaching and learning are good so pupils achieve well
- Good use is made of educational visits to enhance the curriculum
- There is no co-ordinator

Commentary

71. Standards in geography are above those expected for children this age. All pupils generally achieve well, and those with special educational needs benefit from activities specially prepared for them and having individual help from teaching assistants. This represents an improvement since the last inspection which has been brought about by better teaching and resources.

72. There is a good emphasis on map work. Year 3 pupils, for example, study aerial photographs, which they use to help them draw good quality, detailed maps of their local area, incorporating symbols used on Ordnance Survey maps. A feature of the programme for geography is the good use made of field trips to encourage first hand observation and to bring relevance to pupils' work. Year 6 pupils visit both Shrewsbury and Barmouth to make a detailed comparison of the two. Year 5 pupils visit Carding Mill Valley as part of their river study topic and Year 3 pupils go to the summit of the Wrekin, the highest point in the area. Pupils asked, could give the height quite accurately. Pupils respond well to these trips and their attitudes to geography generally are positive.

73. Work in geography is well used to support learning in other areas of the curriculum, particularly literacy and numeracy. Year 6 pupils, for example, write leaflets basing their ideas on leaflets about Shrewsbury, and Year 4 pupils interpret graphical data comparing weather and climate in England and India.

74. The quality of teaching is good overall. Teachers have good subject knowledge, particularly of the local area, and plan well with different activities for pupils of all abilities. Part of this good planning is the production of worksheets which guide pupils' learning. Lower ability pupils in Year 5, for example, were provided with a grid to help them plot data. Teachers make good use of the sessions at the end of lessons to consolidate pupils' learning and are beginning to make very good use of interactive whiteboards to summarise the work covered in the lesson and provide pupils with neat printed copies. The use of resources is generally good, although sometimes pupils can be bombarded with too much information. Assessment arrangements for geography have yet to be fully developed but the marking of pupils' work is generally good with teachers frequently challenging pupils to think about and extend their learning.

75. There is currently no co-ordinator for geography but the subject is being temporarily overseen satisfactorily by senior management.

History

76. Because of timetabling arrangements, it was not possible to see any lessons in history but other evidence suggests that by the time they are in Year 6, pupils' standards in history are above those expected of children this age. This is an improvement from the time of the last inspection.

77. By the time they are 11, pupils have a good knowledge and produce a good amount of well presented work, each topic covered in a separate, bound booklet. They have a good sense of

chronology, able to place people and events in different eras, and clear ideas about sources for historical enquiry and how these sources might be used. The quality and amount of work produced indicates the positive attitudes of pupils to their work, fostered by the lively approach the school takes to work in history. Each year group supports its work with a relevant visit. Some of these, such as the Year 5 trip to Chester, involve role-play, in this case as Roman soldiers. Pupils make good use of the internet for research and some higher ability pupils in Year 6 incorporate this research into their own web pages complete with hyperlinks. Work in history provides very good support for learning in other areas, particularly literacy. Some Year 6 pupils write a short historical novel set in Ancient Greece. They make an extensive study of the religion of the same period. Pupils in Year 5 use papier maché to make Roman style pots and those in Year 4 practise Tudor dances. Parents are involved, in one instance helping Year 4 pupils to make Tudor knot biscuits.

78. Formal assessment procedure for history have yet to be fully developed but assessments at the end of each topic give pupils a clear idea of how well they have done and how they might develop their learning.

Religious education

Provision in religious education is **good**

Main strengths and weaknesses

- There has been a significant improvement in the provision of religious education
- Outside speakers support the curriculum very well.
- Subject leadership is good.

Commentary

79. Standards in religious education in Year 6 are in line with the expectations of the Agreed Syllabus. The achievement of these pupils is satisfactory. There is evidence to suggest that standards are higher amongst pupils in Years 4 and 5. The school has recently introduced the new Shropshire Agreed syllabus which will take effect in September 2004. Religious education lessons tend to alternate with personal, social and health education in Year 6 and so the coverage of the subject is not so intense. Nevertheless, pupils do have a satisfactory knowledge of Christianity. They know what a disciple is, explain some of the parables of Jesus and speak about the miracles. Their knowledge of other faiths is limited. On the other hand, some of the work in Year 4 and 5 classes reaches a genuinely spiritual level when pupils consider the nature and evidence for the existence of God and Year 4 pupils think about metaphors in the Bible, such as 'God is my rock' or 'The Lord is my shepherd'. They are also able to place events in a historical context knowing, for example, that Guru Nanak was a contemporary of Henry VIII.

80. Outside speakers are a strong influence in the provision for religious education, in particular the Youth Minister, who is also a governor of the school. He is a regular and influential contributor to acts of collective worship and to class lessons. The school makes good use of the local church but at present organises no visits to places of worship associated with other faiths.

81. Teaching and learning are good overall; there were some examples of very good teaching. Lesson planning is generally thorough, but does not always extend to the role of learning support assistants who, although generally well used in group work sections of lessons, are rather passive at other times. Preparation is generally good as seen in a Year 3 class where the teacher provided a vase of fresh flowers as a focus for pupils as they spoke about care of the environment. Teachers' questioning of the pupils is good and sometimes leads directly to the levels of learning of their pupils. A teacher giving a lesson about Guru Nanak, for example, found it necessary to refresh her pupils' knowledge about Hinduism and Islam in India. Sometimes questioning is not followed up.

82. Leadership is good. The two co-ordinators who share the job are well qualified and enthusiastic. They have a good understanding of the new Agreed Syllabus and have taken good

steps to implement its use. Resources are generally satisfactory and include a useful range of artefacts to support learning in Judaism and Sikhism. There are not yet sufficient books for the new syllabus. Assessment arrangements are still at a tentative stage and this is an area for development.

83. Improvement during the last year has been good due to the focus placed on religious education in the school development plan. On the professional development day, the new co-ordinators judged provision to be poor, and set in motion plans to improve it through resources and training, including giving the subject enough time allocation.

CREATIVE, AESTHETIC, PRACTICAL AND PHYSICAL SUBJECTS

Art and design

Provision for art and design is **very good**

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils experience an advanced level of opportunities in all areas of the art curriculum
- The school uses the expertise of visiting artists and craftsmen to great effect
- Pupils achieve very well and enjoy their work tremendously
- Leadership is very good

Commentary

84. Four lessons were observed during the inspection. Standards were seen to be good or very good, confirmed by displays of work around the school and in sketchbooks. Pupils achieve very well throughout the school and from discussions with them it was obvious they enjoy their work very much; they spoke knowledgeably and enthusiastically about their achievements and take great pride in all their artwork and that of their peers.

85. Teaching is always good. All support staff are well briefed and able to give appropriate help to pupils, who are highly motivated. In a lesson observed in Year 6, pupils were making good use of viewfinders to aid with watercolour pastel work, and in another, pupils were designing a playground based on Aboriginal symbols, with knowledge of why earth colours were used in this particular culture.

86. The very enthusiastic co-ordinator inspires staff and pupils. She has studied to enhance her own knowledge and to bring fresh expertise to the school. She has gathered a portfolio of work to demonstrate technique, texture and style, and developed a whole school framework to provide a balance of experiences as the pupils move up through the school. With her own expertise and QCA guidelines, she has developed an excellent scheme of work to support teachers' planning. She monitors the subject and teaches in other classes. There are no formal assessment procedures evidently in place, but pupils know how well they have to do and they can improve.

87. High quality displays everywhere around the school show that the provision and experiences for the pupils are very good. Further enhancement of art is afforded by visiting artists and visits to Walsall Art Gallery. High standards have been maintained since the previous inspection.

Design and technology

88. No lessons were seen during the inspection, since this subject alternates with art on the curriculum. However, from talking to pupils and seeing their work displayed and in books, it is evident that standards are above those expected for children this age. There is good emphasis on developing the design process, and pupils design, make and evaluate their products. The curriculum is based on a scheme introduced since the previous inspection, which fulfils the

requirements of the National Curriculum. There is a good focus on the learning of skills, such as how to join materials when making money containers in Year 4. Pupils examine commercial products, such as purses, and discover how they are joined before deciding on a method they will use themselves. More advanced textile-joining techniques are apparent in the Year 5 slipper project where pupils produce some well-finished articles which meet their design criteria.

89. Measuring activities help numeracy develop well in Year 6 as pupils design and make pyramids; some higher ability pupils use a computer to aid their design work. Literacy develops well through the attention paid to producing well-presented project folders explaining pupils' evaluations, decisions concerning strengths and weaknesses, and choice of the best materials for the job, with consideration of suitability, such as how to make a photo frame stand upright. Cross-curricular work is strong: there are good links with science, for example, where 'moon-buggies' are made when studying the earth in space. A pyramid alarm system stems from history in the study of Ancient Egypt. Pupils' work is assessed formally by tests and regular marking, and also by pupils' self-assessment which helps to develop personal skills.

Music

Provision in music is **good**

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The subject is well-led by a knowledgeable co-ordinator who has introduced a good scheme of work to guide and support non-specialist staff
- The school has a large choir and orchestra, and all pupils are beginning to learn an instrument
- Standards are above those expected for children this age
- Not enough use is made of ICT
- There is no assessment of pupils' progress

Commentary

90. The standard of music is above that found in many primary schools. During the inspection, it was not possible to see Year 6 music, but in Year 5, above average standards were seen in a whole-class session with recorders, where pupils showed good skills in fingering in only their third lesson, playing 'hot cross buns' from standard notation by the end of the lesson. Above average standards were also seen in Year 3 and Year 4 during lessons in which pupils performed clapping rhythms and raps in three-part rounds.

91. Teaching and learning are good. Although most teachers do not have a musical background, they are enabled to teach the subject well because of the clear directions in the curriculum scheme which covers all aspects of the National Curriculum. The co-ordinator leads the subject well; she monitors the taught curriculum and disseminates her subject expertise so that teachers are confident and pupils learn well. She is a good role model for the rest of the staff; her very good lesson on teaching the recorder to a class of 30 was an example of very good practice in which all pupils achieved very well. Very good attention was paid to basic technique in fingering and blowing. Very good use was made of the expertise of several pupils who have individual instrumental lessons when explaining standard musical notation and the significance of the stave and treble clef.

92. In all lessons observed, teachers showed good expertise in developing pupils' musical skills through clapping patterns of rhythm. Work seen in books showed that they also develop an appreciation of music, particularly in creating mood and emotions, for example when discussing in Year 3 how best to represent Romeo and Juliet using appropriate instruments in preparation for a dance performance. Although teachers and pupils evaluate learning, there is no formal assessment at present, except for those who have music lessons in woodwind, brass and strings and take practical examinations. Teachers develop literacy through the learning of music vocabulary and through listening. Pupils learn confidence through performance, and practise numeracy through

counting beats for different note values. At present, there is very little use of ICT since the school does not have music software.

93. The curriculum is enriched with many activities beyond lessons. The school has a large choir which performs in public on several occasions. Its members showed good ability to sing in three-parts when rehearsing for an imminent concert. There is also a small orchestra and two recorder groups; music workshops have often enhanced provision in other subjects, such as history with Roman and Tudor music, and science in the study of sound, but lack of funds has caused them to be dropped this year.

Physical education

94. Only two lessons were able to be seen during the inspection. One was good and the other excellent. Pupils and staff are well motivated, and good behaviour in lessons aids teaching and learning. This enables teachers to demonstrate and model skills that the pupils practise and evaluate with a critical but positive eye, individually, in pairs and in small games situations.

They warm up and cool down appropriately, and know the importance of the effect of exercise on their bodies. Pupils with special educational needs are totally included in all aspects of the subject. Contributions from outside agencies enhance provision, and the enriching extra-curricular activities are well attended.

Example of outstanding practice

A Year 3 dance lesson continuing the study of Romeo and Juliet

The class had been studying Romeo and Juliet in various areas of the curriculum. The teacher warmed up the class with snappy exercises and moves that would be used later on. Pupils were taken on a rich journey of dance and emotion by the teacher who inspired them to express themselves freely through the dance. Boys and girls were all completely engrossed in the music and atmosphere that permeated the hall. At the end of the session, every pupil had worked to their fullest capacity and skill level. They had ridden a tide of emotions that you would not normally expect of children as young as this. Talking to them later, it was obvious that they could not wait to repeat the experience and perform their finished dance to the rest of the school.

PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

Inspection judgement

Grade

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	2

Overall standards achieved	3
Pupils' achievement	3

Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities	2
Attendance	3
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	3
The quality of teaching	3
How well pupils learn	3
The quality of assessment	4
How well the curriculum meets pupils needs	2
Enrichment of the curriculum, including out-of-school activities	2
Accommodation and resources	4
Pupils' care, welfare, health and safety	2
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	3
The governance of the school	3
The leadership of the headteacher	3
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).