

INSPECTION REPORT

COALWAY JUNIOR SCHOOL

COLEFORD

LEA area: Gloucestershire

Unique reference number: 115550

Headteacher: Mr Ron Dowding

Reporting inspector: Mr Fred Riches
23235

Dates of inspection: 18 and 19 June 2002

Inspection number: 194018

Short inspection carried out under section 10 of the School Inspections Act 1996

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Junior
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	7-11
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Coalway Road Coleford Gloucestershire
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Appropriate authority:	The Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr Paul Duggan
Date of previous inspection:	6 May 1997

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

This community junior school has 249 pupils on roll aged seven to eleven, including one Year 7 pupil, with a slightly higher number of boys than girls. It is fully subscribed. The number on roll has risen steadily since the last inspection and has now reached the governors' target for a two-form entry. All of the pupils live in Coalway and surrounding area, in a mix of owner-occupied housing and rented accommodation. Just over twelve per cent are entitled to free school meals, which is a little below average. Almost all families have their cultural roots in the British Isles, with two pupils coming from other ethnic backgrounds. No pupils are learning English as an additional language. Pupils' attainment on entry to the junior school is broadly average, although it varies considerably year on year. For example, it was below average for the current Year 6, while that of the current Year 3 was well above average. Just under 31 per cent of the pupils are on the school's register of special educational need, which is above average. Eight pupils have a statement of special educational need, including one Year 7 pupil. The school's provision includes an attached Centre with twelve places for pupils from the surrounding area with specific learning difficulties.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

This is a very good school with several excellent features. Pupils of all abilities and backgrounds enjoy their learning, show extremely positive attitudes towards school and achieve very successfully. This is a direct result of very good teaching, a rich curriculum, outstanding leadership and an excellent ethos. The staff form a dedicated team and are well supported by the governors and parents. The school provides very good value for money.

What the school does well

- Standards are high and pupils of all abilities achieve very successfully.
- Pupils' attitudes, behaviour and personal development are excellent.
- The headteacher gives outstanding leadership; the senior management team and curriculum leaders have a shared vision; excellent management systems help drive standards up.
- Teaching is very good, with teachers and assistants promoting very effective learning.
- The school provides a rich, relevant and stimulating curriculum.
- Excellent provision for pupils' welfare and guidance, and for their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development underpins the positive ethos of the school.

What could be improved

- Planning for the development of pupils' speaking and listening skills, to ensure a consistent approach;
- The effective use of marking to improve pupils' performance.

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

The school has made very good improvement since its last inspection in May 1997 and is in a very strong position to continue to build on its many strengths. Standards have risen considerably, especially in mathematics. Weaknesses in geography and religious education have also been overcome. Teachers' expectations and their planning of the curriculum, areas for improvement in 1997, have also become strengths. A weakness in monitoring has been fully addressed and all aspects of leadership and management by the headteacher and key staff are now excellent.

STANDARDS

The table shows the standards achieved by pupils at the end of Year 6 based on average point scores in National Curriculum tests. *Similar schools are those with between 8% and 20% of pupils eligible for free school meals.*

Performance in:	Compared with			
	all schools			similar schools
	1999	2000	2001	2001
English	D	C	C	B
Mathematics	D	C	A	A
Science	D	A	A	A*

Key	
Very high	A*
Well above average	A
above average	B
Average	C
below average	D
Well below average	E
very low	E*

The table shows standards rising in English, mathematics and science. In 2001, standards were well above average in mathematics and science and average in English. Pupils at Coalway did better than their peers in similar schools in English. They did still better in mathematics and were in the top five per cent of similar schools in science. The Department for Education and Skills Award recognised the considerable improvements in pupils' achievements in these three subjects. Results since the last inspection show a huge improvement in mathematics, with the proportion of pupils reaching the age-related standard doubling in the last five years. The improvement in English is in line with the national trend and the school has maintained high standards in science, with the exception of 1999, when a high proportion of pupils had special educational needs.

The school's involvement in the 'Gatsby Project', the introduction of three sets for each year group and the co-ordinator's dedication are the most significant contributors to the rapid rise in mathematics standards. The proportion of pupils reaching the standard level 4 is rising in English, mathematics and science while annual verbal reasoning test scores are falling. This shows clearly the school's increasing success in supporting pupils of below average ability. The proportion of pupils attaining the higher level 5 at age 11 is also rising in all three subjects, showing that the school is successfully challenging higher attainers. Other factors influencing the continuing improvement in standards have been the introduction of single-age-group classes throughout the junior school and, more recently, the improvement in pre-school provision on the campus.

Standards in the current Year 6 are similar to those achieved in 2001 in English, mathematics and science. The school is set to meet the target for 80 per cent of pupils to attain level 4 in English and to exceed the target for 75 per cent to attain level 4 in mathematics. Standards in science remain well above average. The current Year 6 contains a higher proportion of pupils with special educational needs linked to literacy skills than last year. These pupils, while clearly below the standard for their age group in reading and writing, are working very well towards their own targets. Pupils of all abilities are achieving very well in all year groups. The school's tracking of pupils' attainment in English and mathematics through annual tests shows marked progress year on year and this is matched by the progress shown in pupils' work over the current academic year. Pupils with special educational needs, including those with statements, in the main school and Centre, make very good progress towards their challenging individual targets.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Excellent. Pupils are enthusiastic, settle to work quickly and sustain concentration. They take pride in their work.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Excellent. In lessons, around the school, and in the playground during break and lunchtimes, pupils behave extremely well. They are polite to all staff and visitors.
Personal development and relationships	Excellent. Pupils relate exceptionally well to each other and to staff. An excellent school council exemplifies pupils' active participation in school and community events. They are keen to take on responsibilities and show considerable initiative.
Attendance	Currently satisfactory. Well below the national average last year. A few poor attenders and term-time holidays reduce the overall level.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils in:	Years 3 – 6
Quality of teaching	Very good

Inspectors make judgements about teaching in the range: excellent; very good; good; satisfactory; unsatisfactory; poor; very poor. 'Satisfactory' means that the teaching is adequate and strengths outweigh weaknesses.

The very good quality of teaching, as seen in lessons, through discussions with pupils and a look at samples of their work over the whole year, promotes very good learning throughout the school. Most of the teaching observed was in English and mathematics, with a small selection of other subjects. Teaching is of very good quality in both English and mathematics. Teachers implement the literacy and the numeracy strategies very successfully. Planning and preparation are consistently thorough in all classes. Pupils are attentive and work hard, responding extremely well to their teachers' high expectations. All pupils know the routines and enjoy their learning, as teachers ensure that tasks are suitably challenging and the content of lessons stimulating. Teachers deploy assistants particularly successfully to support pupils with special educational needs. The relationships that the support staff and teachers establish give these pupils self-esteem and promote confidence as they recognise themselves achieving through the praise they receive. Amidst the many strengths in teaching, two aspects are worthy of further development. While in several classes, pupils were encouraged to express their thoughts and ideas successfully, in some lessons teachers missed opportunities to help pupils develop their understanding through explaining their thoughts and responding to each other's ideas. The marking of pupils' recorded work showed many ticks for correct answers and praise for work well done, but amidst this positive encouragement there is not enough guidance to encourage pupils to focus on points for improvement. Overall, however, pupils of all abilities in all classes achieve very successfully because their teachers know them well and pupils know what is expected of them. They regularly listen to the aim of the lesson at the outset and review their learning at the close. In English and mathematics they work towards targets pasted in the front covers of their books. Class organisation and management are consistently of the highest quality and teachers use homework effectively to promote or consolidate pupils' learning. Gifted and talented pupils are recognised and do their best, as teachers ensure that tasks extend their thinking and develop their skills as far as possible. Pupils in the Centre for specific learning difficulties achieve very well in the small group sessions as a result of encouraging, carefully-targeted teaching and support.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Excellent. Broad, balanced, relevant and highly stimulating. Meets all statutory requirements. Additional activities, events, productions, sporting pursuits, field trips, visiting authors, artists and musicians enhance the already rich diet of the weekly timetable.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Excellent management for both school and Centre provision. Detailed planning and review systems benefit each pupil. Assistants offer very well focused support. Excellent use of resources.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Excellent. This strength stems from teamwork by the whole staff. The school prayer and well-chosen songs of worship in assemblies exemplify the school's reflective approach to spiritual development. Consideration of Islam and Judaism and of the arts and music of other cultures complements the school's strong emphasis on Forest traditions. School council activities, certificate and merit systems create a supportive context for moral and social development.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Excellent care and guidance. Child protection, first aid, health and safety procedures and measures to improve attendance all in place. Head, secretary, teachers, assistants and supervisors know and care for all pupils. Cleaning and caretaking services contribute fully to maintain well-cared-for accommodation.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Outstanding. The headteacher's leadership style enables the staff to work as a cohesive and dedicated team. He cares extremely well for all pupils and staff, supporting, challenging and building on strengths. The senior management team shares a united vision and sets a clear educational direction. Morale is high. Management systems are excellent. Head of Centre and curriculum leaders fulfil their delegated roles highly effectively and with enthusiasm. Excellent administration by the school secretary ensures smooth day-to-day management.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Governors give effective support. The chair shares the headteacher's excellent overview of the school. Several governors visit the school regularly. Meetings, procedures and committee structures are well organised. All statutory requirements are met.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Excellent. Monitoring procedures were a weakness in 1997. They are now exceptionally well organised and extremely effective. The school uses the results to review strengths and weaknesses. Effective planning for improvement involves staff and governors and sets well-considered priorities.
The strategic use of resources	Excellent. The school's use of funding to create extra staffing for mathematics sets, booster classes and non-contact time for teachers has proved highly effective in raising standards and morale. The development of the administrative suite and corridor space has greatly improved efficiency and cut disturbance to hall activities. The school fully applies the principles of best value, using national and local statistics to challenge, compare and compete. Full consultation ensures effective decisions and action.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<p>Over 90 per cent of those replying to the questionnaire feel:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • teaching is good and that their children are expected to work hard; • their children like school and that the school is helping them become mature; • their children are making good progress; • behaviour is good; • leadership and management are good; • comfortable approaching the school. 	<p>The only area where more than ten per cent of parents showed concern was:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the amount of work children do at home.

117 parents returned questionnaires; nine attended the meeting held for them before the inspection.

The inspection team agrees wholeheartedly with the positive views expressed by the large majority of parents both in questionnaire replies and at the meeting. Inspection findings show that the school's policy on homework is clear and that the amount and variety of activities set is appropriate for the ages of the pupils. Where individual parents have concern over particular aspects of homework or marking, headteacher and staff are approachable and respond in the best interests of the children. It is clear from attendance at parent-teacher consultations that the large majority of parents give their children very good support. The highly successful work of the School Association, much appreciated by staff and pupils, also shows the level of parental support.

PART B: COMMENTARY

WHAT THE SCHOOL DOES WELL

Standards are high and pupils of all abilities achieve very successfully

Improvement since the last inspection

1 The proportion of pupils reaching the national standard set for eleven-year-olds has risen in English, mathematics and science since the last inspection. The proportion of pupils achieving beyond the standard has also increased in all three subjects. In mathematics, the improvement has been dramatic: the proportion of pupils reaching the standard has doubled since 1997. In English, the improvement has been gradual, in line with the national trend. In science, the school's performance has remained well above the national average; as the national results have improved, Coalway's results have improved still faster (except in 1999, when a high proportion of Year 6 pupils had special educational needs). The most telling statistic in science in 2001 is the comparison with schools taking pupils from a similar socio-economic background: Coalway pupils' performance was in the top five per cent, with two thirds of the pupils attaining the higher level 5.

Most recent national test results

2 Compared with all schools in 2001, standards were well above average in mathematics and science and average in English. Compared with schools where a similar proportion of pupils are eligible for free school meals, pupils at Coalway achieved above average in English, well above average in mathematics and in the top five per cent in science. In recognition of the school's rapidly improving standards since 1998, the school received the Department for Education and Skills Achievement Award.

Reasons for the improvements

3 The reasons for the school's improvement in each of these three core subjects are as follows:

In all three subjects -

- the introduction of a pattern of single age-group classes for all four year groups, simplifying the planning and organisation processes for teachers, so that each teacher could focus on one year group's standards;
- the leadership of the subject co-ordinators, who monitor pupils' work and track their progress, analysing areas of strength and addressing any weaknesses found in mock tests, optional national tests and the twice-yearly Gatsby project tests;
- the overall very good quality of teaching;
- the quality of teaching in booster classes for Year 6 pupils.

In English -

- the procedures for promoting pupils' reading skills through regular, daily opportunities for 'guided reading', where teachers and assistants focus on sharing group reading books pitched at an appropriate level for the groups and thereby improve pupils' reading and comprehension skills;
- the well-organised use of home-school reading diaries, which are carefully monitored by teaching assistants;
- the promotion of pupils' interest in authors and books through class and corridor book displays, the welcoming of a number of famous children's authors to share their love of writing with the pupils;
- the thoughtful balance between the teaching of writing skills and the opportunity for pupils to write for a range of genuine purposes and in a variety of forms.

In mathematics -

- the school's agreement to participate as one of three 'control' schools in the 'Gatsby Project' in 1998; as a result the focus on developing a range of teaching strategies improved the effectiveness of mathematics teaching throughout the school;
- the resultant effective implementation of the national numeracy strategy;

- the decision to use the budget to provide an additional mathematics set in each of the four age groups; teachers working with the 'top' and 'middle' sets are able to focus their teaching more closely to match pupils' abilities and extend them more swiftly; by allocating an additional assistant to work alongside pupils in the third set and by keeping numbers low in this set, the school is able to give pupils with learning difficulties the additional individual attention they need to grasp concepts and develop skills in this subject where it is otherwise easy to lose confidence and flounder;
- the introduction of an after-school mathematics club for Year 6 pupils, with encouragement to join and enthusiasm from the club leaders.

In science -

- the use of the school grounds and the local environment as a stimulus for scientific exploration;
- regular focus on scientific investigation and enquiry;
- effective planning to ensure that the full curriculum is covered and there is opportunity to review learning;
- revision of the subject policy and scheme of work following the curriculum leader's detailed analysis of national test paper results;
- the introduction of a science club by the curriculum leader, which became a 'booster club' for Year 6 pupils in preparation for national tests;
- displays of pupils' work from all year groups to maintain the high profile of the subject throughout the school.

4 Further factors influencing the overall rise in standards, particularly in the current Year 3, are the improvement in pre-school provision on the campus and in the results achieved in the neighbouring infant school by the end of Key Stage 1 in 2001.

Standards in the current year

5 The current Year 6 contains a higher proportion of pupils with special education than the previous year. Nevertheless, standards seen are similar to those achieved in 2001 in English, mathematics and science. The school has set a target for 80 per cent of pupils to reach level 4 or higher in English and for 75 per cent to reach level 4 or higher in mathematics. It is on course to meet the target in English and to exceed it in mathematics. The targets, based on pupils' attainment in tests taken at the end of Year 4, are challenging. Standards in science remain very high. Pupils make very good use of their literacy and numeracy skills in science and in design and technology and use information and communication technology (ICT) very successfully to support their learning in English and mathematics. They develop their literacy skills very well in geography, history and religious education. Standards seen in pupils' books, on displays and in a small sample of lessons, are above average in several subjects in the broader curriculum. These include aspects of historical enquiry, design and technology, religious education and singing. Pupils also show a high level of ability to weigh up, understand and express themselves on issues in the context of personal, social, health and citizenship education (PSHCE).

Are pupils of all abilities and backgrounds achieving as well as they should?

6 Pupils of all abilities are achieving very well in all year groups. The school's annual testing shows pupils making very good progress in reading and writing, as well as in science and mathematics, but there is still room for improvement in pupils' speaking and listening. Pupils' exercise books and displays of work throughout the school show clear evidence of the very good achievement by pupils of all abilities and from the full range of social backgrounds throughout the current year. Boys and girls are achieving equally successfully. The school is careful to monitor the achievement of boys and girls, to ensure that there is no gender bias.

7 At first glance, it appears that pupils are doing better in mathematics and science than in English. This is not the case. The school's tracking of pupils' attainment in English and mathematics through annual tests shows marked progress year on year by almost all pupils in both English and mathematics. This picture is matched by the progress shown in pupils' work over the year since September 2001. Pupils with statements of special educational need in the main

school and in the Centre for pupils with specific learning difficulties make very good progress towards the challenging individual targets set.

Pupils' attitudes, behaviour and personal development are excellent

Attitudes

8 Pupils' attitudes to work and to school in general are excellent. In all lessons they settle immediately and listen carefully to their teachers. When asked to write, they organise themselves rapidly and sustain concentration very well. The quality of their recorded work in all subjects and in all classes shows pupils taking pride in presentation. When teachers involve pupils in discussion, they are eager to answer questions and think actively, voicing their views during PSHCE lessons for example.

9 Pupils are keen to participate in school and community events, such as singing at the opening of the Mushet Walkway in Coleford and playing in sports teams. A video recording of the most recent school production, by pupils in Year 3 and 4, shows every pupil in these two year groups thoroughly enjoying playing their part in a performance of 'Orpheus', involving singing, dance, drama and recitation. Within a term at the school, pupils in Year 3 feel extremely positive about their school as a result of their experience of successful participation in this teambuilding process.

10 Pupils are proud of their school. Those in Years 5 and 6 play a full part in setting up equipment for school events and regular weekly assemblies, for example. Pupils in Years 3 and 4 play an increasingly positive role in looking after the school grounds, ensuring that they are litter-free.

Behaviour

11 Pupils' behaviour in lessons, in the playground and on the field during break and lunchtimes, and when moving around the school, is excellent. Pupils show respect for their teachers and all staff. They are polite and helpful to visitors. They recognise the school's expectations and behave accordingly. In daily collective acts of worship they enter and leave in a calm and orderly manner. They talk happily with each other over lunch in the dining hall and organise themselves to play collaboratively in groups or teams on the school field at lunchtime. Pupils walk sensibly when moving around the school and treat the school and equipment with care.

Personal development

12 Pupils' personal development is also excellent. Three situations observed during the inspection exemplify this. Firstly, the school council met with inspectors and showed considerable maturity in the way they explained the procedures by which the council operates. The two pupils per class ensure that each class plays a democratic part in the council's work by bringing issues from their class to each meeting. Guided by the elected chair and secretary, they inform their class of the outcome of discussions and, as a result, all pupils play a part as responsible citizens in this school community. Secondly, a Year 6 class presented an assembly on the theme of 'David & Goliath'. Through dramatic recitation of rhyming couplets, composed by their teacher, they portrayed the roles of a bully and someone standing up for what is right. Letters written and read out by three pupils (from a friend of someone bullied to the bully) are worthy of a wider audience. They express very clearly pupils' understanding of the emotions involved in bullying and being bullied. Thirdly, in another assembly, the whole school showed the way they value their school and each other in the moving way they sang the 'Song of Pocahontas' before joining together in the school prayer.

13 These examples are a few among many that show how well pupils relate to each other and to staff. A further example of the way pupils respond to teaching that encourages them to think and collaborate together highly successfully is the school newspaper, the 'Coalway Comic'. Pupils have applied for jobs on the paper, been interviewed by the chair of governors and PSHCE curriculum leader and are now fulfilling their roles as reporters, illustrators and editors. They have even appointed their own accountant. Pupils' readiness to take on responsibilities and use their initiative grows as the staff continue to offer them excellent opportunities.

The headteacher gives outstanding leadership; the senior management team and curriculum leaders have a shared vision; excellent management systems help drive standards up.

The headteacher's leadership

14 The headteacher shows outstanding leadership. He has a clear vision for the development of the school and shares with the playgroup providers, infant school headteacher and governors of both schools a wider vision for the development of a centre for lifelong learning on the Coalway site. Within the junior school he has introduced a set of excellent management procedures that enable the school staff to function efficiently and effectively as a team. He shows care for all pupils and staff. His leadership style involves democratic consultation alongside a thorough knowledge of the school's strengths and areas needing development. Through his own dedication to the school he inspires a strong commitment from all staff. By delegating effectively, supporting staff and building on their strengths, he maintains a high morale. The staff with delegated management roles fulfil these extremely successfully. The staff as a whole work as a cohesive team. It is this atmosphere of teamwork that creates the school's excellent ethos. Pupils sense the ethos and respond to it, showing excellent attitudes to work, wanting to do their best and thriving on the teaching and the breadth of experiences the school provides.

The roles of the senior management team

15 The senior management team plays a vital role in reviewing progress in the current year's improvement plan and in thinking through strategic planning. The team has planned and implemented three major areas of improvement in the school's provision over the past two years. The review of the school timetable resulted in a five-lesson day, which has created better balance and breadth, while providing the necessary short breaks, for staff and pupils, between each of the morning lessons. The introduction of a self-evaluation programme set a manageable timetable for each element of the monitoring process, detailing clearly the roles and responsibilities of senior management, curriculum leaders and governors. The third of the recent senior management initiatives has been the development of a coherent assessment policy, setting milestones for each year group and ensuring that careful tracking of progress in English and mathematics is complemented by manageable assessment in all other subjects.

16 The deputy headteacher, as a Year 3 class teacher, is in an ideal position to fulfil both of his major management roles. As team leader of the lower school (Years 3 and 4) and special educational needs co-ordinator (SENCO), he liaises with infant teachers and with Year 3 staff to ensure early identification and continuity of action for pupils with special needs. His annual direction of a school production by pupils in Years 3 and 4, held at Christmas, is a carefully planned annual teambuilding exercise. It involves all staff and pupils in these two year groups and gives parents of Year 3 pupils an early picture of the staff's care and attention to detail and of the school's principle of involving everybody.

17 The team leader of the upper school (Years 5 and 6) is the third highly effective member of the senior management team. As part of their roles in implementing senior management initiatives, both team leaders hold regular separate staff team meetings, once more following an efficient pattern of channelling information, dialogue and decisions. The upper school also work together annually on a school production each summer, to mark the end of the Year 6 pupils' time in school by staging a major collaborative event. The upper school team leader also ensures smooth transition of pupils to secondary education by developing good links with the local secondary schools.

Leadership by staff with management responsibilities

18 Curriculum leaders fulfil their roles extremely successfully. They have a clear overview of standards throughout the school, keeping a watchful eye on pupils' progress by checking and analysing test results and by taking a regular look at work samples. As a result of their monitoring they take decisive steps to address any weaknesses found. The agreed procedures for auditing the school's provision for each subject follow a well-considered and highly effective pattern. The curriculum leader is released from teaching duties for a day and meets with a consultant, usually

from the local education authority, to look at the school's current situation. They agree priorities for improvement and on the same day, curriculum leader and consultant present a summary of their review at a full staff meeting. Following staff discussion, the subject co-ordinator re-works a paper, liaises on the draft with the consultant, agrees proposals with the staff and then offers the coming year's action plan for the governing body's approval. These management systems are highly efficient and their effectiveness is shown both in the enthusiastic and professional involvement of staff and in the improving standards of the pupils.

19 The Head of the Centre for pupils with specific learning difficulties also fulfils her role effectively and conscientiously, liaising with the headteacher, staff in other schools, the local educational psychologist and a range of support agency staff.

Administration and day-to-day management

20 With all management staff working as a team, the school needs highly efficient day-to-day administration. The school secretary carries out her variety of roles exceptionally well. She gives excellent support to the headteacher and all staff, as well as acting as clerk to the governing body and offering a ready welcome to all pupils, parents and visitors who come to the reception area.

The role of the governing body

21 The chair of governors shares fully with the headteacher the vision of the school's development and has a clear grasp of the strategic steps needed to secure these developments. Governors are fully involved in the school's improvement planning process and show very good support for the school. Several visit the school during sessions and they receive comprehensive reports from the headteacher and curriculum leaders to keep them fully informed. Committee structures and procedures are efficient and the governing body ensures that the school meets all statutory requirements.

A weakness transformed into a strength

22 Monitoring procedures were a weakness at the time of the last inspection in 1997. They are now excellent. The quality of analysis and presentation, particularly by the English, mathematics and science curriculum leaders, is very high. Both the processes for monitoring and the pattern of *analysis > presentation > action*, as described above, are worthy of wider audiences.

Looking for best value

23 The school applies the principles of best value with considerable insight in its spending decisions. One of the prime examples of this is in the excellent use of funding to staff an additional mathematics set in each year group. This, together with the provision for a mathematics club and booster classes, has been highly effective in raising the proportion of pupils reaching level 4 in mathematics at age eleven from 44 per cent in 1997 to 88 per cent in 2001. Another extremely positive governing body decision has been the provision of 'non-contact time' for teachers, recognising the need to make time available for meetings with consultants and for the monitoring and analysis of standards. A third example of the school's highly effective spending decisions has been the creation of the administrative area, headteacher's office and staff room provision, together with the creation of corridors to avoid previous disturbance to lessons in the hall. In coming to these decisions, the headteacher, staff and governors make excellent use of statistical comparisons, looking at Gatsby Project comparisons with other schools as well as national and local education authority figures. The school then sets itself challenges, in consultation with the local education authority, to reach agreed targets and to complete certain improvement tasks within each year. Staff look for competitive prices in all purchases of resources and stock, as well as in services, including staff training. The processes of consultation with staff and governors during subject reviews and the annual improvement planning cycle has led to effective decision-making and action. These processes are now more involving pupils and parents more fully, with the school council showing genuine pride in their achievements and parents participating and contributing enthusiastically to events such as the annual school fete, which raised a record sum in the current year.

Teaching is very good, with teachers and assistants promoting very effective learning

24 The quality of teaching is very good overall throughout the school. Eleven of the twenty lessons observed were of very high quality. Of the other nine lessons, six were good and three satisfactory. Although far fewer lessons were observed in this short inspection than in the full inspection in 1997, it is clear from the representative sample that the quality of teaching across the school has improved. Action taken to address the key issue of monitoring, including teachers' planning and classroom teaching has been very effective. There is a much higher proportion of very good teaching and all unsatisfactory teaching has been removed.

25 The large majority of lessons observed were in English and mathematics. Inspectors sampled a small selection of lessons in other subjects. Teaching in both English and mathematics, in the literacy and numeracy lessons and in other English lessons, is of very good quality overall. Under the thoughtful leadership and management of the headteacher and curriculum leaders, teachers have implemented the literacy and the numeracy strategies imaginatively and very successfully.

26 Teachers plan and prepare thoroughly in all classes. As a result, lessons are consistently well focused and groups and equipment are well organised. Teaching assistants are very well deployed in literacy and numeracy lessons, and in other English lessons, working alongside specific groups or individuals, following clear instructions from the teachers. In all classes, teachers' relationships with pupils are very good. Pupils respect their teachers and respond extremely well to the known routines and their teachers' high expectations. As a result of the good relationships and the routine sharing of the aims of the lesson at the outset, pupils enjoy their learning and work hard at the tasks set. Pupils show self-confidence in their learning, as they thrive on praise. Classroom organisation enables pupils to gain rapid access to resources so that little time is wasted. The previous inspection reported some slippage in the timetable. All teachers now use time extremely well. Lessons begin promptly and teachers ensure that all lessons proceed at a brisk pace, with pupils knowing how much time they have for the individual or group tasks set and using that time fully. In short, every lesson has a set structure consistently applied by every teacher. This shows the strength of the teamwork in planning and organisation.

27 A few examples from lessons observed will serve to pinpoint the qualities of the best teaching seen:

- in Year 3 mathematics and English lessons, both teachers ensured that pupils knew the time limits for their group activities and showed a sense of urgency in tackling their work by setting a brisk pace;
- in a Year 4 literacy lesson, the imaginative linking of the historical studies on Romans with a series of literacy hour lessons on advertisements stimulated pupils to use excellent alliteration and strong adjectives in their succinct, persuasive slogans enticing purchasers to buy *glorious gladius*, *marvellous mosaics* or *spectacular spears*; the teacher's sure subject knowledge and thorough preparation gave the lesson clear focus and the use of pupils' previously drafted work on overhead projector slides stimulated and maintained every pupils' interest;
- in Year 5 and Year 6 literacy lessons, teachers ensured that pupils were experiencing writing of high quality as they chose texts such as Jack London's '*Call of the Wild*' and Tennyson's '*Lady of Shallott*'; by analysing their text, Year 5 pupils focused on the use of connectives to combine two short sentences; Year 6 pupils responded to thoughtful, challenging questioning to change a narrative poem into narrative text.

28 The school has clearly improved the teaching of ICT since the last inspection, through the introduction of better hardware and more varied software and through teacher training. The oldest pupils have learned to use spreadsheets and to make PowerPoint presentations, for example. In the ICT lesson observed, Year 6 pupils worked at planning a device controlled by sound, temperature or light, for example a buzzer that sounds when a frost threatens to destroy a strawberry crop. Again, the teacher's imaginative choice of subject content, backed by the necessary subject knowledge and the pitching of the lesson at the pupils' current levels of

knowledge, skills and understanding, ensured enthusiastic participation and very successful learning.

29 Overall, pupils of all abilities learn very successfully because they know that their teachers want them to do their best and expect them to do so. In English and mathematics they work towards targets pasted in the front covers of their books. Teachers' marking makes little reference to targets for improvement, but it does build pupils' self-esteem and recognise their efforts through encouraging comment and praise. Gifted and talented pupils are recognised and do their best, as teachers ensure that tasks extend their thinking and develop their skills as far as possible. Pupils in the Centre for specific learning difficulties achieve very well in the small group sessions as a result of encouraging, carefully-targeted teaching and support. Teachers set homework regularly and use it both to promote and consolidate pupils' learning, particularly in English and mathematics.

The school provides a rich, relevant and stimulating curriculum

30 The quality and range of activities provided during the school day, regularly after school and at various occasions during the school year is excellent. The curriculum is broad and balanced. It meets all statutory requirements. It is relevant to the pupils and highly stimulating.

31 The last inspection found that termly planning lacked consistency and weekly planning was insufficiently detailed. It also found a lack of balance, with insufficient time given to ICT, design and technology, geography and religious education. The current inspection finds that the school has rigorously addressed these issues to the extent that planning and the balance of the curriculum are now strengths of the school. All subject co-ordinators make very good use of the guidelines provided by the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority and adapt these to the school's setting and its needs. Pupils' work shows a range of studies in geography based on the school grounds and the local area and thorough coverage of the local agreed syllabus in religious education. Displays show a positive focus on design and technology, exemplified by a highly successful participation in a local area festival, which involved pupils in designing a system to show how a windmill and a burglar alarm work. This followed work done in the after-school science club with the science curriculum leader. The school has also made rapid advances in its provision for ICT, with one teacher a platinum trainer and all staff developing ICT skills and using them well to develop pupils' skills in the classroom. The science curriculum leader has recently invested in an ICT package, for example, to develop pupils' data handling skills, following identification of this, through analysis of previous assessment papers, as an area needing attention. The winning of an interactive whiteboard has further enhanced the school's provision and it has plans to develop an ICT suite as part of the lifelong learning centre to be established on the site.

32 Two examples from lessons seen in the wider curriculum highlight the imaginative planning, which stimulates pupils' active involvement in learning. In one Year 6 lesson, the teacher provided a collection of information books about Egyptians and set pupils to work in groups to research various aspects of the discovery of the tomb of Tutankhamun. Each group worked collaboratively, focusing on a particular aspect, such as the dates, the contents of the tomb, and the names and roles of the expedition leaders, before sharing their findings in a plenary. In a Year 5 PSHCE lesson, the teacher had prepared a set of cards for groups of pupils to discuss how they would organise themselves into a purposeful community if shipwrecked on a desert island. The pupils thoroughly enjoyed deciding on early priorities and what could be left until later.

33 The school's extensive range of additional activities enrich the curriculum covered by the regular timetable during school hours. These include:

- a host of after-school clubs;
- the publication of the Coalway Comic, including the provision of a school '*agony aunt*' column;
- regular school council meetings;
- a range of sporting pursuits, including highly successful participation in netball and football tournaments and the Wildin Cup, a tournament involving local schools competing in a number

of team games, in which Coalway has won the cup for four successive years and reached the final again this year;

- two annual music and drama productions involving all pupils, one by Years 3 and 4 and one by Years 5 and 6;
- an annual field trip, this year to a Kingswood Centre, combining outdoor adventurous activities with ICT studies;
- an annual arts festival, building on a previous annual book festival; this involves visiting authors, artists and musicians working alongside pupils, who talk enthusiastically about these visits, which clearly make a lasting impression;
- area inter-school sports events and competitions;
- local country dance festivals;
- participation in community events, such as the opening of the new Coleford walkway and concert performances at a home for the local senior citizens;
- the school summer fayre, organised by the extremely supportive Coalway School association, which this year raised a record amount of over £4000.

34 The school provides a highly focused curriculum for pupils with special educational needs. The headteacher, deputy (as SENCO) and Head of Centre work together and with the local education authority to offer excellent management of all staff involved in preparing individual plans for pupils in the school and with temporary placements at the Centre for pupils with specific learning difficulties. A detailed process of planning and review involves all staff working with each individual pupils and engages parental support very successfully. The teaching assistants offer very good support both in classrooms and the Centre. This, together with the excellent use of resources, benefits all pupils and ensures that all make very good progress towards the individual targets set.

Excellent provision for pupils' welfare and guidance, and for their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development underpins the positive ethos of the school

35 The school provides excellent care and guidance to all pupils. All staff have the welfare of the pupils as a priority. The school's procedures for first aid and health and safety needed a little attention at the time of the last inspection. The school has thoroughly addressed this area and all procedures are now in place and fully practised by all staff. Child protection procedures are also fully in place and the staff give extremely sensitive care to pupils and their families in difficult situations, for example after bereavement. The headteacher gives a clear lead in the way he shows care for all staff and pupils. The headteacher, secretary, teachers, assistants and supervisors know the pupils well and show that they care by the way they relate to them throughout the day.

36 The school's planning and provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is a major strength of the school. The drive stems from the headteacher's leadership and the PSHCE co-ordinator's enthusiasm and commitment, together with the wholehearted support of the full staff team.

37 The strength of the school's arrangements for pupils' spiritual and cultural development were apparent in both acts of collective worship seen during the inspection. In the first, the music co-ordinator made a particularly strong contribution, providing back-up tracks for the whole school and the choir to sing to. She conducted a moving rendition of the song from 'Pocahontas', enabling every pupil in the school to share in expressing the emotion of the melody and lyrics by varying the dynamics in their singing. Later, the choir's performance of the 'Forest Anthem' reminded the school of their local cultural and spiritual roots in the Forest of Dean. The school prayer stands as a symbol of the school's ethos. The words show how the prayer lies at the heart of what the school seeks to teach:

*This is our school.
Let peace dwell here,
Let the place be full of contentment.
Let love abide here,*

*Love of one another,
Love of mankind and of life itself.
And let us remember that, as many hands make a house,
So many hearts make a school.*

38 The Year 6 pupils' presentation of the issue of bullying in relation to the '*David and Goliath*' story stemmed from their teacher's careful planning and linking of the Bible story, which she had re-written in humorous rhyming couplets, with the PSHCE consideration of bullying. Work in pupils' religious education books also shows the school's reflective approach to spiritual development. Consideration of Islam and Judaism and of the arts and music of other cultures complements the school's emphasis on its local heritage and Forest traditions.

39 The school's equally excellent provision for pupils' moral and social development is exemplified through the school council activities, the use of certificate and merit systems, and the provision for a range of annual events and weekly additional activities. The school clearly puts the provision for pupils' personal development at the top of its agenda. The pupils show by the enthusiastic way they respond to all that the school provides that they recognise the outstanding commitment of the headteacher and staff in offering and organising this range of opportunities. It is this aspect of the school's work that provides the context for the pupils to develop such positive attitudes towards their school community and their work. These extremely positive attitudes in turn contribute to the pupils' very good achievement.

WHAT COULD BE IMPROVED

Planning for the development of pupils' speaking and listening skills, to ensure a consistent approach

40 In several lessons, particularly in PSHCE and history in Years 5 and 6, pupils have very good opportunities to listen to each other and their teacher and to express their opinions, answer questions and become involved in debate. In the video film of the '*Orpheus*' production and during the excellent *David and Goliath* assembly presented by a Year 6 class, again there were examples of pupils speaking clearly, remembering words and putting dramatic expression into their reciting of lines or reading of letters. It is important to stress that there are considerable strengths in much of the work the school already does to develop pupils' speaking and listening skills.

41 The school's approach to this aspect of English is not yet sufficiently well planned, however. Teachers in a number of lessons missed opportunities to help pupils learn by explaining and listening to each other. Teachers' use of questioning techniques varies. In a few literacy and numeracy lessons, teachers asked questions which only required one-word or short-phrased answers. Similarly, in a few lessons, teachers tended to talk for the pupils, not offering them sufficient time or encouragement to phrase things in their own way. In several lessons, particularly in mathematics, the proportion of time spent talking by the teacher far outweighed the proportion of time spent listening to the pupils.

42 For example, a significant proportion of pupils in three mathematics lessons struggled to understand concepts while their teachers explained new ideas to them. In one lesson they spent a considerable time purposefully finding the difference between three-digit numbers by decomposition. Most were capable of doing this, but a few had only picked up part of the concept behind the process. The teacher involved individual pupils helpfully in demonstrating how to perform the process, but gave the commentary herself. Inspectors saw little evidence of pupils explaining the process of thinking or the mental strategies being used to complete the sums. For teachers to assess pupils' grasp of knowledge, skills and concepts, they need to spend some time listening to pupils explaining their understanding, to each other in pairs and small groups, and to the teacher and the class. Few of the pupils learning about negative numbers or the probability scale had the opportunity to explain their understanding by acting as the teacher, for example.

43 The school does not yet have a policy and scheme of work in place to ensure a consistent approach to developing pupils' speaking and listening skills systematically in each year group. While there are very good opportunities for pupils to express themselves through speaking and listening to each other in some lessons, these opportunities are currently too dependent on the imagination and skills of the individual teacher. As a result, opportunities are missed and not all pupils gain sufficient practice at expressing their thinking and understanding in the full range of subjects taught. During the development of agreed guidelines, staff will be able to identify where opportunities are currently missed. The revised long-term planning will then overcome the current inconsistencies of approach.

The effective use of marking to improve pupils' performance

44 Teachers use marking extremely effectively to encourage pupils, to praise them for what they have achieved and to congratulate them on their high standards of presentation. These marking comments and ticks complement the comments made by teachers during lessons. Pupils also gain a lot by marking each other's work on occasions, working out what is wrong where appropriate and talking this over in pairs. Another positive aspect of marking is in the way teachers and assistants keep check on pupils' reading and add comments in home-school diaries.

45 There are fewer signs of teachers using marking effectively to move pupils' understanding or performance forward. The introduction of targets for groups and individuals is an aid to greater focus for the pupils in English and mathematics. Some teachers are using these very well, but there is inconsistency in the way teachers note when or whether the targets are met and in the procedures and formats for the targets. Inspectors found few examples of teachers marking to an agreed focus, with pupils knowing the focus of the marking. Beyond the use of ticks or praise, teachers do not regularly set aside times to show in their comments how well pupils have achieved in relation to the objectives and what needs doing in order to improve.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

46 Coalway Junior School has many strengths and several features of its work are excellent. In order to raise standards still further and build on these strengths to improve the quality of education provided, the headteacher, staff and governors should:

- (1) draw up a scheme of work to develop pupils' speaking and listening skills, ensuring that in each class pupils have a range of opportunities to communicate their views, ideas, thoughts and understanding in all subjects.
(Reference paragraphs 40-43)
- (2) Build on the current strengths in assessing pupils' work and setting targets by relating marking comments, where required, more closely to *'what pupils need to do in order to improve their work'*.
(Reference paragraphs 44 and 45)

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed

20

Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils

20

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Number	0	11	6	3	0	0	0
Percentage	0	55	30	15	0	0	0

The table gives the number and percentage of lessons observed in each of the seven categories used to make judgements about teaching. [When the total number is substantially less than 100, add] Care should be taken when interpreting these percentages as each lesson represents more than one [two, three, etc] percentage point[s]. [Where the total is close to or greater than 100, use only the first sentence.]

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll	Y3– Y6
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	249
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	31
Special educational needs	Y3– Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	8
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	77
English as an additional language	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	0
Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	4
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	6

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	7.2
National comparative data	5.6

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.0
National comparative data	0.5

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

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 2 (Year 6)

	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2 for the latest reporting year	2001	32	31	63

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	26	27	30
	Girls	24	28	31
	Total	50	55	61
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	79 (75)	87 (77)	97 (96)
	National	75 (75)	71 (72)	87 (85)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	28	28	30
	Girls	25	29	31
	Total	53	57	61
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	84 (76)	90 (79)	97 (96)
	National	72 (70)	74 (72)	82 (79)

Percentages in brackets refer to the year before the latest reporting year.

Ethnic background of pupils

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	0
Black – African heritage	0
Black – other	2
Indian	0
Pakistani	0
Bangladeshi	0
Chinese	0
White	247
Any other minority ethnic group	0

This table refers to pupils of compulsory school age only.

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers and classes: Y3 – Y6

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	11.1
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	22.4
Average class size	31.1

Education support staff: Y3 – Y6

Total number of education support staff	16
Total aggregate hours worked per week	220

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Recruitment of teachers

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	1.4
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	1.9
Total number of vacant teaching posts (FTE)	0
Number of vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of a term or more (FTE)	0.2
Number of unfilled vacancies or vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of less than one term (FTE)	0

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Exclusions in the last school year

	Fixed period	Permanent
Black – Caribbean heritage	0	0
Black – African heritage	0	0
Black – other	0	0
Indian	0	0
Pakistani	0	0
Bangladeshi	0	0
Chinese	0	0
White	0	0
Other minority ethnic groups	0	0

This table gives the number of exclusions of pupils of compulsory school age, which may be different from the number of pupils excluded.

Financial information

Financial year	2002
	£
Total income	521487
Total expenditure	539527
Expenditure per pupil	2159
Balance brought forward from previous year	37558
Balance carried forward to next year	19518

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	249
Number of questionnaires returned	117

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	57	37	4	2	0
My child is making good progress in school.	56	39	0	2	3
Behaviour in the school is good.	48	48	2	1	2
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	35	50	11	1	3
The teaching is good.	61	36	3	1	0
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	43	47	7	3	1
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	65	30	1	3	1
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	64	33	3	0	0
The school works closely with parents.	42	47	6	2	3
The school is well led and managed.	58	33	3	1	4
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	56	38	3	2	2
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	51	35	9	0	4

Percentages are rounded up or down to the nearest whole number and may therefore not total exactly 100.