

# **INSPECTION REPORT**

## **JOHN FLETCHER CHURCH OF ENGLAND/METHODIST JUNIOR SCHOOL**

Madeley, Telford

LEA area: Telford and Wrekin

Unique reference number: 123526

Headteacher: Mr Peter Mandelstam

Reporting inspector: Mrs J. M. Dickins

6752

Dates of inspection: 15<sup>th</sup> – 17<sup>th</sup> January 2002

Inspection number: 195169

Full 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: Voluntary Controlled  
Age range of pupils: 7 to 11  
Gender of pupils: Mixed

School address: Upper Road  
Madeley  
Telford  
Shropshire

Postcode: TF7 5DL

Telephone number: 01952 585708

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Appropriate authority: The Governing Body

Name of chair of governors: Mr Norman Coats

Date of previous inspection: 9<sup>th</sup> June 1997

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members			Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
6572	J. Dickins	Registered inspector	Mathematics Religious education Equality of opportunity	Information about the school The school's results and pupils' achievements How well are pupils taught? How well is the school led and managed? What should the school do to improve further?
9009	V. Bradley	Lay inspector		Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development How well does the school care for its pupils? How well does the school work in partnership with parents?
2799	B. Cloke	Team inspector	Science Geography History Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	
19709	J. Fisher	Team inspector	English Music Physical education Provision for pupils with special educational needs	
2818	G. Warner	Team inspector	Art and design Design and technology Information and communication technology	How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils?

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## **PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT**

### **INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL**

John Fletcher Junior School is located in the urban area of Madeley just south of Telford town centre. There are 116 boys and 95 girls in the school most of whom transfer from the attached Madeley infant school. Attainment on entry to school varies between year groups. In 1998 when the present Year 6 entered the school attainment was barely average but standards demonstrated by the present Year 3 pupils are above average. A small percentage of pupils leave or join the school during the school year. Eighteen per cent of pupils are eligible for free school meals, which is close to the national average. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs is about average but there are six pupils who have a statement of special educational need. This is high. The school has identified a number of talented and gifted pupils. Almost all pupils are from white European backgrounds but a small minority are of Black or Asian heritage. There are a very few pupils who speak English as an additional language. Their first language is Panjabi. The school's mission is 'learning and achieving together'.

### **HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS**

John Fletcher Junior School has put the difficulties of the recent past behind it and is now a rapidly improving school. Overall, improvement since the previous inspection is satisfactory but the rate of improvement is now good. The ethos is positive and is promoting a culture in which everyone believes he or she can do well. Academic standards are not yet as high as they should be at eleven years, but are moving in the right direction at a good pace because of the very effective leadership provided by the headteacher and his able deputy. Staff, many of whom have joined the school in the last four years, are united in the determination to work towards raising standards. Teaching is good overall and enables most pupils to learn well, especially in developing their literacy and numeracy skills. The current cost of educating pupils is about average and, although standards are still too low, the school is judged to provide satisfactory value for money. It is on the right track to give even better value in the near future.

#### **What the school does well**

- Excellent leadership from the headteacher has convinced governors, staff and parents that the school has a very bright future.
- Very effective management strategies and systems have been put in place to make sure the vision of high standards becomes a reality.
- Good teaching is enabling most pupils to achieve well.
- Standards in art and design are above average.
- Pupils with special educational needs, and those who are learning English as an additional language make good progress in school because of the effective way their individual needs are met.
- Good attention is paid to pupils' personal, spiritual, moral, social and cultural development and this is helping them to become responsible future citizens.
- Arrangements to consult with parents and pupils about school improvement are very good.

#### **What could be improved**

- Standards are still too low particularly in mathematics.
- More demanding activities are required for higher attaining pupils particularly in history, geography and religious education.
- The school needs to reorder the priorities in the very good school improvement plan to complete the work more rapidly.

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

## HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

In 1997 the school was judged to be effective but this level of success was not sustained and by 2000 the school was facing serious difficulties. The decline was arrested as a result of the appointment of the present headteacher and the school is now improving rapidly. The key issues in 1997 related to: completing schemes of work, linking assessment and planning, monitoring the curriculum and pupils' work and developing the roles of curriculum co-ordinators. Teaching and resources for information and communication technology (ICT) required improvement. During the past 18 months staff and governors led by the headteacher have successfully tackled all these issues. A new curriculum plan is in place and schemes of work have been improved particularly those for literacy and numeracy. The new ICT suite has been completed. Teaching and learning has been monitored systematically and this revealed the need for additional work to improve pupils' attitudes and behaviour. This is being dealt with successfully. The raising of academic standards continues to be the top priority for improvement and everyone in school is clear about how this is to be achieved. The school is judged to have excellent capacity to sustain a rapid rate of improvement.

## STANDARDS

The table shows the standards achieved by pupils at the end of Year 6 based on average point scores in National Curriculum tests.

Performance in:	compared with			
	all schools			similar schools
	1999	2000	2001	2001
English	E	D	C	D
mathematics	D	D	D	E
science	D	D	D	E

**Key**

well above average    A

above average        B

average                C

below average        D

well below average    E

*Similar schools are those schools with up to 20% of the pupils entitled to free school meals.* The above table shows that the school's results in 2001 in English were average when compared to all schools and below average when compared to similar schools. Results in mathematics and science were below average when compared to schools nationally and well below average when compared to those of similar schools. Overall, the school does better than most schools in making sure very high percentages of pupils achieve the expected level 4 in national tests but too few pupils achieve level 5. The school's rate of improvement in raising standards in English and science is keeping pace with the national rate but in mathematics it is slower. Girls do better in national tests than boys. However there is no difference in their good enthusiasm for school.

Inspectors judge that current standards by the end of Year 6 are average in English and science and below average in mathematics. When these pupils joined the school in 1998 standards were barely average and although standards are still too low in mathematics over time most pupils do as well as expected. Less able pupils make good progress. Standards in most other subjects are in line with expectations. The exception is art and design where pupils achieve higher standards than seen in most schools.

Strengths and weaknesses in test results have been identified and the school's provision for literacy and numeracy has been improved significantly. Most pupils now achieve well and



make good gains in their learning. They are beginning to fill the gaps in their knowledge and understanding which was due to inadequate provision in the past. The school has set demanding academic targets for National Curriculum tests in 2003, but needs to continue to monitor individual progress very carefully if these are to be achieved.

## PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Good. Pupils' attitudes to learning are good throughout the school. Pupils are keen and willing learners.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Good behaviour in lessons and around the school. Pupils know what is expected of them. There were five fixed-term exclusions 12 months ago that were fully justified. The few pupils at the school now with challenging behaviour are well managed by teachers.
Personal development and relationships	Very good. Pupils respond well to the opportunities given to show initiative and responsibility. The members of the School Council contribute well to school improvement. Pupils work well together and show respect for the views of others.
Attendance	Satisfactory. Attendance levels for the last academic year were in line with the average nationally. The school sets out clearly its expectations that holidays should not be taken in term time.

## TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils in:	Years 3 – 6
Quality of teaching	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.*

Overall, teaching and learning are good. No unsatisfactory teaching was seen during the inspection. The best teaching was most frequently seen in Years 5 and 6 but good teaching was seen in all year groups. Much of the teaching in English, mathematics and science was good and this is one very important reason why standards are improving.

Teaching and learning of literacy and numeracy is now effective, there is good attention to reinforcing basic skills which provides a secure basis on which to build higher standards by the age of 11 years. Teaching and learning are less effective when teachers lack the necessary subject knowledge to plan and deliver lessons that are sufficiently demanding for the more able pupils.

The teaching and learning of pupils with special educational needs and those learning English as an additional language are good. Class teachers and teaching assistants work in partnership and this has a particularly beneficial effect on learning in the lower sets. The school has identified a number of talented and gifted pupils and has begun to make additional provision for them. Pupils work hard, concentrate well and are willing and often enthusiastic learners. The scrutiny of pupils' books showed that teaching and learning are equally effective in weeks outside the inspection.

## OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Good overall. A broad and suitably balanced curriculum that is being systematically monitored to check quality and impact on raising standards. The range of extra curricular activities is good.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Good overall. There is an appropriate curriculum for them. Teaching assistants are well organised and effectively deployed. Parents are fully informed and consulted at every stage.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	No specific provision is required because these pupils speak and use English well. Pupils are fully included in all aspects of school life and make the same progress as their peers.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Good overall with particularly strong emphasis given to pupils' social development. The school gives pupils a good set of principles to live by. Respect and tolerance are central facets of provision. Pupils are being well prepared for life in a multi-cultural society.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Very good. All staff provide caring and thoughtful support to pupils. Test results are scrutinised rigorously and targets set for each pupil.
How well does the school work in partnership with parents	Very good. The school enjoys the enthusiastic support of the vast majority of parents who have been fully consulted and effectively involved in a range of important decisions.

## HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Excellent. The headteacher provides excellent leadership to the school and is a very skilful manager. The deputy headteacher is also a key player in school improvement. She is a very capable teacher who works equally effectively across the school.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Good. Governors know what the school does well and what needs improvement. The Governance committee is ready to set the agenda for further school improvement.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Excellent. The school has identified the right priorities for improvement and the school development plan sets this out clearly.
The strategic use of resources	Very good. The headteacher and the governors are very effective in obtaining the best value wherever possible.

## PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Their children like school.</li><li>• Teaching is good.</li><li>• Pupils are helped to become mature and responsible.</li><li>• The school is well led and managed.</li><li>• Parents find the school approachable.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Provision of homework.</li><li>• Range of activities outside lessons.</li></ul>

The inspection findings fully support parents' positive views. The school has engaged in a large consultation exercise with parents about homework. It is very clear from the results that the present arrangements represent the best compromise the school is able to make in order to meet the conflicting views of parents. Inspectors judge the school makes good provision for extra-curricular activities.

## **PART B: COMMENTARY**

### **HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?**

#### **The school's results and pupils' achievements**

What the school does well

- Standards are improving in English and science at close to the national rate.
- Standards are above expectations in art and design.
- Very high percentages of pupils achieve level 4 in English and science national tests.
- Pupils with special educational needs and those learning English as an additional language achieve well in relation to their previous work.

What could be improved

- Standards overall particularly in mathematics.
- Not enough pupils achieve level 5 in national tests.

1. In 1997 standards in English, mathematics and science were above average although standards overall were judged to be in need of some improvement. In the intervening years the school has gone through a period of great change and the consequent instability had a negative effect on standards. In the 2001 tests standards in English were broadly average but below the national average in mathematics and science. When results are compared to those achieved by pupils at similar schools standards are below average in English and well below average in mathematics and science. The school exceeded its 2001 target for English by 11 per cent and fell short of the target for mathematics by four per cent. Results in 2002 are likely to continue to be below the national average, as although inspectors found more higher achievers than last year a large percentage will not reach level 4. Apart from mathematics where improvement remains erratic the school's rate of performance in raising academic standards is similar to most schools nationally.

2. The school is particularly successful in ensuring that higher percentages of pupils achieve level 4 in English and science than do so nationally. It is not as successful in mathematics. The main problems with standards are: not enough pupils achieve level 5 in all three subjects and standards overall in mathematics are too low.

3. Inspectors judge that standards by the age of 11 years are now rising rapidly particularly in English and science and are now judged overall to be close to the national expectations. Standards in mathematics remain below average by the age of 11 years. The school has put in place challenging targets and sensible strategies to improve standards in English, mathematics and science but it is likely to be 2003 before significant improvements are achieved.

4. There are two major factors that have a bearing on the performance of pupils. These are attainment on entry and the history of the school between 1997 and 2000. When the present headteacher came into post in September 2000 there was little reliable information in the school as to pupils' past achievements. He has done much to plug this serious gap by obtaining entry data from the local education authority. This data indicates that in 1997 and 1998 attainment on entry was barely average with few higher achievers. As a result achieving high standards was dependent on the school adding value. This the school was not able to do. Although two major national strategies, for literacy and numeracy were introduced during this period implementation was not achieved successfully. Consequently in 2000 the headteacher was faced with the urgent need to re-introduce both these major initiatives and with support from the local education authority provide new training and support for staff. Many of these were new to the school. This has been done successfully and the good

teaching and learning which now feature so strongly in the school are the result. The inadequacies of past provision have made it difficult for some older pupils' to achieve to potential. The school is providing an effective education now and standards are on the increase.

5. Inspection evidence shows that strengths in teaching basic skills now ensure that most pupils make sound progress in literacy and numeracy during their time at school. The rate of progress is improving so that pupils increasingly make good progress. Less able pupils already make good progress. Since 2000 throughout the school there has been a positive impact on the achievements of pupils from the successful implementation of both the National Literacy and National Numeracy Strategies. The most impact is to be seen in Year 3 where standards are above average and in Year 5 where vigorous strategies and rigorous target setting is raising standards. The school is also working hard to raise standards in Years 4 and 6 but as there are far more pupils with special educational needs in these classes this is a major challenge. There are a high percentage of pupils in the present Year 6 who are unlikely on present performance to achieve level 4. These pupils have not been enabled to learn effectively over a long period of time and have not been able to catch up with basic literacy and numeracy skills missed out on when they were younger

6. The school, led by the headteacher has undertaken very detailed analysis of results in national tests, this shows that pupils' performance in tests was hindered to some extent by limited literacy skills which meant they did not understand questions correctly. Consequently in mathematics, for example, they did not know which method was required to find the correct answer. These issues are being addressed through staff development, the use of setting, specialist teaching, very good target setting and rigorous monitoring of teaching and learning. There are clear indications that the rate of improvement is accelerating. The school has identified able and gifted pupils and has begun to make special provision for them. This is set to expand and the positive effect on pupils' performance is evident to see in Year 5. The school now makes effective use of a rigorous system of testing to find out what pupils know, understand and can do. The results have been used to set very challenging targets for individual pupils.

7. Pupils' number skills are becoming sharper and most work with speed and accuracy during the numeracy hour. The strong emphasis given to direct teaching and learning of number facts and relationships is paying dividends. There are considerable differences between the standards achieved by pupils in different sets. Strengths in upper sets tend to be speed and accuracy while their limited understanding of place value hampers the work of pupils in lower sets. In all sets a significant number of pupils have difficulty in problem solving. Often they can read the individual words but fail to identify the key words and deduce what sort of sum is required. The school has identified this as an area for improvement. There is some good use of numeracy in other subjects, for example, in science in recording information in graphs and charts or in design and technology where exact measurements were required.

8. Pupils largely develop good reading habits and the increased involvement of parents is proving beneficial to pupils' achievements. The school has put much time and effort into supporting less able readers but has not yet given the same regular attention to monitoring how well the very capable readers are developing higher-level skills. This is an important issue because some pupils who read to inspectors were happy to read and ignore words they did not understand and few demonstrated good library skills. Pupils' written work in English books is clearly improving because of the good attention the school has given to extending this. Pupils are writing imaginatively and creatively at length and are clearly getting enjoyment from so doing. But work of the same quality was less frequently seen in history, geography or religious education. There were some good examples such as in history when

pupils wrote about a bombing raid but this is an area for improvement. Spelling and handwriting are areas for continued development, as too many pupils cannot spell key vocabulary. Pupils are attentive listeners and follow instructions well. Many pupils speak confidently and enthusiastically and speaking skills are well promoted through activities such as debate and class discussion.

9. Pupils are now making good progress in science although standards in the 2001 tests were below average. The deployment of teaching assistants to work with lower groups in science has had a very beneficial effect as it means all pupils can learn well. Inspectors judged that standards in science are now in line with expectations and in Year 5 are above average. The curriculum is well structured and good attention is being paid to promoting the investigative and experimental aspects of the subject. Teachers are providing interesting practical activities for pupils to *learn by doing* and this motivates good involvement and sustained concentration that is helping raise standards.

10. Pupils' progress in all aspects of ICT has been hampered in the past by inadequate equipment but the recent completion of the new ICT suite is having a beneficial effect on standards. Standards at all ages are satisfactory in ICT and rising. The school has rightly focused on the teaching and learning of ICT skills and this together with increasing staff knowledge and confidence is raising standards. Standards in religious education are in line with expectations but lack of subject knowledge means teachers do not provide sufficiently demanding tasks for more able pupils. Standards in all other subjects are at least satisfactory by the age of 11 years. In art and design they are better than in most schools because of good skills teaching, well used sketch books and good opportunities to reflect and apply what pupils know using different media.

11. The good additional support provided for pupils with special educational needs and when required for those learning English as an additional language enables them to do well. Currently all pupils learning English as an additional language are secure and confident speakers of English and do not require individual provision. They succeed equally with the rest of their class. The review of individual education plans show that in the last four terms pupils with special educational needs and behavioural needs have made rapid progress in reaching their individual targets and in their personal development.

12. Boys out-number girls by almost two to one in the upper junior classes and there are more boys than girls in the lower sets. However, there is no significant variation in their good enthusiasm for school. From the evidence collected by the headteacher it is evident that the standards achieved by the present Year 6 pupils on entry to the school was only just in line with expectations and the present outcomes reflect steady progress over time for them. Parents confirm that much of this progress took place in the last four terms. Examination of pupils' work shows a large percentage of pupils achieving at low levels particularly in mathematics. Most pupils in Year 6 have caught up well on their studies, even though their achievements in tests are lower than others of the same age.

13. Pupils with particular gifts or talents have been identified and the school is beginning to provide additional support and increased opportunities to do well. For example, in science a Year 5 group of able pupils are set challenging work to do and this is leading to high standards. In some subjects such as history, geography and religious education more challenging, investigative, problem solving tasks are required so that higher attainers can demonstrate the full range of their abilities. Setting in English and mathematics is used effectively to challenge most pupils although this is an area where even more could be done to identify each pupil or group of pupils shortcomings through tighter marking. For example, standards in the Year 4 lower mathematics set are very low. Pupils' work is monitored carefully and there have been some discussions with pupils about how to improve but this is

an area for some more frequent monitoring and some tailoring of individual mentoring or counselling would be useful.

14. The targets set for the end of the key stage are very challenging but the school is determined to succeed. Results should be better in 2003 and by 2005 when the present Year 3 are at the top of the school it is projected that standards will compare well with schools nationally. Managers have the drive and determination to continue to make the raising of academic standards their *number one* priority and are ready to take the necessary action to achieve this.

### **Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development**

What the school does well

- The behaviour of most pupils is good.
- Pupils are polite and friendly to visitors.
- Pupils show good interest in their work and respond very well to exciting tasks.
- Attitudes to learning are good and pupils want to achieve well.

What could be improved

- The concentration of a few pupils.
- The behaviour of a very few pupils.

15. In 1997 standards in attitudes, behaviour and personal development were judged to be good. Attendance was satisfactory. These standards have been maintained. Pupils' attitudes to learning are good throughout the school. Behaviour in lessons is rarely less than good. Behaviour around the school is good, characterised by the very good quality of relationships. Pupils know what is expected of them, and respond well to the praise and encouragement given to them. The school has a positive, friendly ethos, which provides a very good basis for learning. Attendance is satisfactory. Almost all parents who responded to the questionnaire feel that behaviour is good and the school helps their child become mature and responsible.

16. Almost all pupils are keen and willing learners. They sustain concentration and work with good application. In a Year 6 lower set in English pupils worked with commitment to develop their arguments against whaling. In a Year 5 science lesson pupils volunteered and readily answered questions. They worked co-operatively and behaved well. They listened attentively to the teacher and carried out tasks quickly that enhanced their learning as a result. They enjoyed good relationships with the teacher and one another and this supported the enjoyment of the activities. In a Year 6 lesson in mathematics pupils in the top set worked hard to understand and solve mathematical problems. In a Year 4 English lesson pupils were so keen to contribute and ask questions not enough time was left for them to complete their work. An art and design lesson in Year 4 enabled pupils to show sustained concentration and good levels of collaboration. In a Year 5 religious education lesson pupils showed good respect, keen interest and awareness of the teachings of Judaism. Pupils have been well trained and in most classes during group work carry out their tasks without fuss, which enables the teacher to give his/her attention to supporting other pupils in their studies. Where pupils are less attentive this is because the tasks they are given to do fail to capture their interest and sometimes teachers talk too much.

17. The school, led by the headteacher, has set clear guidelines as to acceptable behaviour. These emphasise respect for each other, themselves and the environment, and pupils' responsibility for their own actions, together with the effect of these actions on others and the environment. The theme for Collective Worship during the week of the inspection was "Tolerance". Pupils know the difference between right and wrong, and enjoy pleasing

their teachers. Pupils have responded very positively to the clearly defined expectations of their behaviour. They helped to construct the Code of Conduct and the rules for each classroom, and take pride in having made their contributions. These codes of conduct emphasise effectively what pupils should do, rather than what they should not. Pupils appreciate the positive nature of the structured code, and that they should "Do what the do's say". Pupils show very good levels of tolerance to others. They form constructive friendships, and relationships between pupils of different cultural backgrounds are good. There is good evidence of racial harmony.

18. Increased levels of supervision during morning and lunchtime breaks have been very effective in ensuring that pupils feel safe and secure in school, and are confident that if problems occur, they will be swiftly and effectively dealt with. No evidence of bullying was seen during the inspection. There were five-fixed period exclusions last school year, involving four boys but there have been none during the past twelve months. The school regards exclusion as very much a last resort and strives to minimise the exclusions as far as possible. When set against some of the challenging behaviour that the school is helping pupils to manage well, its record on exclusions is reasonable and demonstrates its strong commitment to being inclusive.

19. Pupils' personal development is very good. Pupils respond well to the opportunities given to show initiative and responsibility, for example, in art and design lessons observed, pupils persevered well, made appropriate choices, and took responsibility for, and care of, equipment. They also deliver registers, help with classroom routines, and clear plates at lunchtime. Pupils help to operate the overhead projector in assemblies, and handle equipment safely. They work well together in pairs and in groups. They show respect for the views of others, and listen well when pupils are describing work that they have done. When given opportunities for independent learning, for example in an ICT lesson observed, pupils respond very positively.

20. Parents confirm that pupils are helped and encouraged to become mature and responsible. Pupils are now able to enter the school premises before the start of the school day. They have responded to this recognition of their ability to behave in a responsible way very positively. Likewise re-entry into the school after morning playtime and the lunchtime break is carried out in a calm and orderly way, pupils having been given the opportunity to organise themselves.

21. Those pupils elected by their peers to be class representatives to the school council are rightly proud of their contribution to school life. The school council holds regular meetings where pupils' views are sought, listened to, valued and, where appropriate, acted upon. Recently a variety of items of play equipment have been purchased and made available to pupils at lunchtime. The school council representatives include in their rota of regular duties supervision of the use of this equipment and its safe storage at the end of the lunchtime period. Members of the school council have reported back to parents, staff and governors at the termly review meetings. The chair and secretary of the school council have produced a newsletter for parents, giving a good range of useful and interesting information. Two Year 6 pupils are currently preparing a booklet for all pupils regarding what constitutes bullying, and what should be done if bullying does occur.

22. Attendance levels for the last academic year were in line with the average nationally. Authorised absence was slightly below the national average and unauthorised absence slightly above that nationally. The school sets out clearly its expectations that holidays should not be taken in term time, and that absence will only be authorised for good and valid reasons. The school clearly defines its expectations for pupils to arrive in school punctually.



There are good procedures in place to check on late arrivals and remind parents of the importance of pupils arriving at school on time.

23. This is a genuinely welcoming school community where all are valued irrespective of race, gender or any other special educational need. Pupils show good respect for one another, which is a fundamental part of the school's aims.

## **HOW WELL ARE PUPILS OR STUDENTS TAUGHT?**

What the school does well

- Teaching is good and promotes good learning.
- Very good teaching is providing a model of the way ahead.
- In the best lessons learning activities are very good and motivate pupils well.
- Pupils with behavioural difficulties are well managed.

What could be improved

- Confidence and subject knowledge particularly in science, music and religious education.
- Some learning activities could be more imaginative and allow pupils to demonstrate the full range of their abilities particularly in history, geography and religious education.
- Marking to help pupils know how to improve their work.

24. Overall, teaching and learning are good and this is much the same as at the time of the previous inspection. In the 52 lessons observed during this inspection, all teaching was at least satisfactory. Fifteen per cent of teaching was very good and 52 per cent good. Very good teaching was most frequently seen in Years 5 and 6 but good teaching was seen in all year groups. Much of the teaching in English, mathematics and science was good and this is one very important reason why standards are improving.

25. The school has sustained the level of teaching despite a high turnover of staff. Eight out of ten teachers have joined the school in the last four years. The induction arrangements largely carried out by the deputy headteacher have been successful and morale is high. Teachers feel well supported in school and are united in their determination to raise standards. A positive feature that has supported improvement alongside the effective programme of staff development is the school's rigorous monitoring of teaching and learning. This has raised expectations about what is to be taught and learnt. Teachers manage pupils' behaviour well, remaining calm and firm when faced with the few incidents of unacceptable behaviour. This sustains good conditions for learning. The next step is for teachers to have the opportunity to share the very best of their practice in planning, assessment and teaching, so that pupils continue to receive the very best deal possible. Parents hold positive views about the quality of teaching.

26. The good teaching overall is enabling willing and enthusiastic learners. Pupils work hard, concentrate well and become mature and sensible learners. Pupils enjoy their lessons and demonstrate that they can work independently and responsibly when required. The good learning habits that are now being built systematically ensure that most learn well. Because lessons are profitable, younger pupils are building skills, knowledge and understanding at good rates and older ones are beginning to catch up on their studies. This is having a positive effect on standards. Pupils have begun to play an effective role in assessing their own performance and this is an area for further development. A good example of how effective this can be was seen in a Year 5 English lesson.

27. Expectations, throughout the school are good overall and teachers have generally good subject knowledge and understanding across the curriculum. Although there are some weaknesses in subject knowledge for science, religious education and music which have a

negative impact on standards. The management of pupils is good because teachers do not allow the few pupils with challenging behaviour to dominate the lesson. Very good relationships successfully underpin the positive ethos apparent in all classes and these are having a tangible impact on both teaching and learning. Teachers' lesson planning is satisfactory but there is potential for some to be better focused on ensuring that all pupils make the maximum amount of progress over their time at school, especially higher-attaining pupils. This is particularly relevant to history, geography and religious education. Very good lessons were observed in Years 5 and 6 and in a range of subjects including English, science and music. The key features of these lessons included:

- very well chosen topics with clear expectations of what will be learned, such as in a Year 6 English lesson where the teacher introduced the topic using a pupils' own writing which provided a secure basis from which to attack a much more difficult text.
- providing pupils with time and space for deeper thought and reflection, as in a Year 5 music lesson where pupils composed and refined their compositions in the light of sensitive feedback from the teacher.
- providing practical activities that enabled pupils to find out for themselves as in a Year 5 science lesson when pupils explored the properties of conductors and insulators.
- well-matched tasks for lower-attaining pupils in a Year 6 English lesson when they used a range of techniques to present their views on whaling.

These very good features of teaching result in very well motivated pupils who achieve to the best of their ability.

28. Teaching is good in English, mathematics, science, art and design and design and technology throughout the school. Basic skills of literacy are given good attention, particularly in literacy lessons, although more could be done to promote written work in some subjects such as history, geography and religious education. Numeracy skills are consistently well taught, and teachers make effective use of mental warm-up times to improve numeracy skills. Pupils do well particularly in Years 3 and 5 in mathematics as a result. Teaching and learning in ICT is good and skills are being developed effectively. The practical aspects of a range of subjects are being well promoted and as a result pupils are confident to 'have a go' at solving problems. This was observed to be the case in a Year 4 lesson when pupils designed and planned the construction of sculptures for the courtyard.

29. Generally a good balance is achieved in the various methods used to engage pupils in effective learning. Some teachers depend too much on an instructional teaching style. This was observed to be successful in passing on knowledge to pupils, but limited the potential for some higher attainers to develop their understanding and refine research and enquiry skills by finding things out for themselves. Pupils' progress slows down at such times (especially for high-attaining pupils) and results in a levelling out in standards. Literacy sessions typically begin with the sharing of text, and most teachers engage pupils' good working habits very early on by asking probing questions that stimulate thoughtful answers. It is usually the case that group activities are purposeful and productive times in which the majority of pupils get on well with their independent tasks. The effectiveness with which high-attaining pupils are targeted for extended work is variable. Within planning there is currently too little reference to promoting writing across the curriculum and this is an area for improvement. There is good promotion of technical vocabulary in most subjects and this is a positive feature. Speaking and listening, numeracy and ICT skills are effectively integrated into other lessons. For instance in design and technology and science, pupils use their mathematical skills well to estimate, to measure accurately and to produce graphs.

30. Teachers undertake effective day-to-day assessment through good questioning techniques and well-targeted support. Teachers mark work conscientiously but the use of evaluative comments to help pupils improve is variable. Most comments are not precise enough to tell pupils what they need to do to achieve the next level. Teachers always plan to

use sessions at the end of lessons to review learning with the pupils. But too often this session tended to be squeezed when time management was not sharp enough and too little time was left to review and consolidate learning. This is a missed opportunity to help drive up standards.

31. The teaching of pupils with special educational needs and those learning English as an additional language is good and results in these pupils making good progress in achieving their personal targets. Specialist teachers from the local education authority are supporting a number of pupils with learning difficulties and the school well. Teaching assistants make a very valuable contribution to the development of pupils particularly those who find difficulty with learning. Pupils with special educational needs and those learning English as an additional language see themselves as good achievers because of the *can do* culture that the headteacher has successfully promoted. This self-belief supports pupils' confidence to have a go at things that are challenging. This approach is supporting their good progress in learning.

32. Although a significant number of parents disagreed with the school's arrangements for homework it is being used successfully to drive up standards. The vast majority of pupils and their parents support homework and work of good quality is returned on time. Pupils are well motivated and keen to complete the work well so that they can collect homework tokens. Inspectors judged the arrangements for homework were working well.

## **HOW GOOD ARE THE CURRICULAR AND OTHER OPPORTUNITIES OFFERED TO PUPILS OR STUDENTS?**

What the school does well

- The needs of special educational needs and pupils learning English as additional language are well met through the curriculum.
- The strategies for literacy and numeracy are effective in raising standards
- Personal, social and health education is particularly well taken care of by the school.
- The provision for the spiritual, moral, social and cultural education is good overall with particular strength in the provision for social development.
- The school's emphasis upon respect for all ensures that everyone's viewpoint is considered.

What could be improved

- The school has recognised that higher attaining pupils are now ready to be set further challenges in their work.
- The school is well placed to hasten its programme of development across the curriculum in order to raise standards more rapidly.

33. The curriculum of the school is effective overall, meets statutory requirements and includes a number of strengths. This is a major improvement since the previous inspection when three of the four key issues centred on the curriculum. Progress in addressing these key issues during the last school year, since the appointment of the current headteacher, has been rapid. Some of the improvements are still being embedded into the school's practice. The headteacher recognises the need to ensure this happens so that standards are raised across all subjects. Suitable guidelines for all subjects are now in place. The computer suite has been completed to develop skills in ICT appropriately.

34. The school provides a curriculum that includes all of the necessary subjects that are being systematically developed. Guidelines support teachers in meeting the requirements of Curriculum 2000 and the locally agreed syllabus for religious education. Teachers are being enabled to use these guidelines effectively in planning. Appropriate amounts of time are being

fairly given to subjects. The needs of all pupils, including those learning English as an additional language and those with special educational needs, are being given effective consideration and attention. The school makes appropriate provision for pupils withdrawn from collective worship.

35. Basic skills and knowledge in literacy and numeracy are developed properly. The headteacher found on his appointment that the school's strategies for literacy and numeracy were not being applied consistently. Therefore a great deal of attention was given to ensuring that this was corrected. Consequently, as a result of the rigorous monitoring by the headteacher and senior managers, this has been carried out and the strategies are now working effectively. This has not yet impacted upon standards but the school is well placed to ensure that standards will be raised. A major reason for this is the way that basic skills are being promoted effectively in much of its cross-curricular work. Writing is beginning to be promoted appropriately in subjects other than English. ICT skills are being used as an effective tool to develop knowledge and understanding in many other subjects.

36. Outside of subjects, other aspects of pupils' developments are generally provided for within the curriculum. Their personal, social and health education is particularly well taken care of by the school. The necessary policies for sex education and drug misuse are being carefully covered in the work that is sensitively included in pupils' cross-curricular work. The school's emphasis upon respect for all ensures that everyone's viewpoint is considered. The school council that was established in 2000 is an effective vehicle for this and is highly valued by pupils. Pupils show maturity in their attitudes. This effectively reciprocates the conduct of all adults who work in the school. This promotes the ethos of this Christian school appropriately. Extra-curricular activities such as art and chess clubs add another important dimension to the good range of opportunities that the school gives to its pupils.

37. The school has very good working relationships with the infant school that shares its site and the secondary schools to which most pupils' transfer. This is shown by the way that facilities are readily shared. The school has wider links with its community that includes the Blists Hill Museum. Visits that tie into the subjects being studied such as day visits to Shrewsbury enhance the curriculum. Residential visits are part of the school's programme that are currently being reconsidered by teachers, parents and pupils with the intention that they are extended. Visitors from the local community such as the local priest at assembly time further support the pupils' knowledge and understanding of the world appropriately.

38. The provision for the spiritual, moral, social and cultural education is good overall with particular strength in the provision for social development. Provision for spiritual development is good. Inspectors observed a number of occasions when pupils reacted with sensitivity to one another as a result of the good example set for them by adults who work with them. For example the way that pupils supported one another effectively in an ICT lesson so that everyone was achieving a suitable end result to their explorations of a new program. Another example was when a pupil with special needs was commended enthusiastically for the pot made in an art and design lesson. Assemblies play a significant part in this area of development. Pupils are given time to reflect on a number of issues. In the inspection week the theme of the assemblies was tolerance. Pupils were able to replace this with other words that were similar ones as a result of the meaningful dialogue that took place between the headteacher and themselves. The open nature of assemblies means that pupils have good opportunities to contribute their ideas before they reflect on the impact of actions.

39. Provision for moral development is good. This is shown in the good behaviour and very good relationships that underpin the improvements that have been made in the school. The school promotes its behaviour code consistently. There is a shared expectation between staff and pupils about what is an acceptable form of behaviour. The SMART reward card

system encourages pupils to behave sensibly towards one another. Pupils are pleased to have rewards as the focus rather than negative responses to them even when they are finding it difficult to behave appropriately. The calmness with which any difficulties are dealt with encourages an equally calm response. Pupils' confidence and self-esteem are being raised beneficially.

40. The reward system makes a large contribution to pupils' social development. The provision for this is very good. It is integral to the life of the school, which operates as a happy family. The high quality of relationships between adults and pupils underpin social development successfully. Consequently pupils generally work very happily with one another in pairs and small groups as well as class units. They listen to one another, share views and accept final decisions that have been very thoughtfully discussed. The school council plays a central part in developing pupils' social skills effectively.

41. Provision for cultural development is good. Many opportunities are created for pupils to discover the wealth of art and literature in their own culture and that of others. Pupils listen intently to music when they enter and leave assemblies. In the inspection week a wide selection of music was used for this purpose. An example of love of music being generated was when a pupil played the piano accompaniment for the singing at one assembly. Pupils study art from artists such as Paul Klee and Andy Warhol, which helps them to appreciate the diversity in artwork. They learn about the richness and diversity of other cultures when for example, they study Islam in their religious education lessons. Pupils are being well prepared for life in a culturally diverse society.

42. The school welcomes all pupils irrespective of ability, gender, ethnicity, material or social circumstance. It makes good provision for pupils with special educational needs and when necessary for those learning English as an additional language. Older pupils who in the past have suffered from the school's unsatisfactory curricular provision are now being given an effective curriculum that is enabling them to succeed. The school liaises very well with a range of educational, medical and social support agencies to provide an effective education for all pupils. Early assessment of needs and well-focused individual education plans ensure that these pupils are given the support they require. Additional booster classes for English and mathematics and homework clubs, for example, have been set up to support pupils' progress. Pupils with special educational needs get a good deal from the school. They have well-structured individual education plans. They are set specific targets. These are monitored and reviewed regularly. Appropriate action is being taken so that the requirements of the plans are being effectively met.

43. The practice of setting pupils for work in English and mathematics is beneficial. The wide variety of pupils' needs is being met effectively through this system. Nevertheless higher attaining pupils are now ready to be set further challenges in their work. The school is recognising this as a result of the rigour that has been applied in the monitoring that has been completed by the headteacher, deputy headteacher and subject co-ordinators. The school is well placed to hasten its programme of development across the curriculum in order to raise standards further.

## **HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?**

What the school does well

- Staff provide caring and thoughtful support to pupils; they are accessible and responsive to pupils' needs.
- The very good relationships throughout the school are a significant strength of the school, and have a very positive impact on pupils' learning.

- Information collected through the assessment of pupils' work is very carefully and systematically used to monitor pupils' progress and to set targets for further improvement.

What could be improved

- The school has recognised that higher attaining pupils are now ready to be set further challenges in their work.

44. The very good attention to health, welfare and safety, and the caring atmosphere created that were reported on by the 1997 inspection have all been sustained. The systems for assessment and the analysis of results have much improved.

45. Relationships within the school are very good. The headteacher, deputy headteacher, teachers and teaching assistants and administration staff provide caring and thoughtful support to pupils; they are accessible and responsive to pupils' needs. The very good relationships throughout the school are a significant strength of the school, and have a very positive impact on pupils' learning. Information collected through the assessment of pupils' work is very carefully and systematically used to monitor pupils' progress and to set targets for further improvement.

46. The school has successfully created a climate for good behaviour by having high expectations, clearly explained and defined, and understood by all. Most pupils respond very well to the praise and encouragement given, although praise is not always used consistently by all teachers. A minority of pupils present challenging behaviour, and in lessons observed, the inappropriate behaviour was well managed. Where unacceptable behaviour has occurred, the headteacher intervenes in a constructive way to enable pupils to explore their own behaviour and devise strategies to cope with potentially difficult situations. Pupils appreciate the SMART card system of rewards, and try hard to progress towards the bronze, silver and gold awards. They understand that SMART awards are given for behaviour and effort, as well as good work, and reward particular effort. Pupils have recently had opportunities to review the SMART award system, and have appreciated that all pupils are able to achieve these awards. The weekly "M" people award celebrates the efforts of classes or year groups in fulfilling the "polite and kind" section of the behaviour code.

47. A well-structured programme of personal, social and health education is helpful in encouraging pupils to develop their self-esteem, and to understand and explore the effects and consequences of their behaviour, and taking responsibility, at an early age. The health, well being and safety of pupils are given an appropriately high priority. Checks of safety equipment are regularly carried out, together with risk assessments. Child protection procedures are well established, and meet statutory requirements. Teachers and all support staff are regularly reminded of the importance of being vigilant about child protection issues.

48. The ways in which staff monitor the academic and personal development of pupils, and then offer appropriate support and guidance, is good overall. The strengths lie in the fact that class teachers know their pupils well, and support staff are particularly adept at meeting the needs of their designated pupils with well-focused individual education plans supporting on-going review. The academic progress of pupils is monitored systematically and very effectively on a regular basis. Effective use is made of the assessments undertaken when pupils first enter the school to support planning. Some pre-testing undertaken before new units of work are introduced is improving the level of challenge in lessons. Recently introduced assessment weeks ensure that progress of individual pupils is reviewed on a regular basis. The school now makes good use of test results to project the likely future achievement at eleven years. The school has improved its systems for assessing pupils' attainments and progress since the last inspection, and now has a common approach with

the ability to track pupils' progress and take action to raise achievements in English, mathematics and science. However, assessment practice in other subjects and between teachers is inconsistent. When assessing pupils' work, teachers are more confident to draw on National Curriculum levels to help gauge the standards being reached, but it is clear that pupils are not always sure how well they are doing, or what they need to do to improve. Parents and pupils are regularly informed as to the National Curriculum level at which pupils are working. Pupils in Years 5 and 6 have been given personal targets to help them prepare for their National Curriculum tests, but this practice is new and requires careful reinforcement to ensure pupils remain confident and alert as to what they need to achieve. There is still a weakness in the way in which teachers use assessment information gained from marking pupils' work to plan the next steps in learning. This is particularly apparent in the occasional lack of challenging work for the higher attaining pupils.

49. The requirements for recording and reporting pupils' attendance are fully met. Registers are marked in accordance with statutory requirements and parents know the procedures to inform the school of the reason for pupils' absence. If no information is received, there are good procedures in place for contact by school staff to establish why a pupil is absent. Arrangements to monitor the attendance of pupils are good, and there is satisfactory liaison with the education welfare officer. The school makes good efforts to remind parents of the need for punctuality and regular attendance, actively discouraging holidays taken in termtime.

50. The school pays very good attention to making sure all pupils are fully included in the school. For example, pupils new to the school are given good support to enable them to settle in well and learn school routines. Pupils with particular learning or language needs are well supported. The school gives good attention to identifying specific needs early and establishing well-focused individual education plans that are regularly reviewed. Teaching assistants and specialist staff are effective in their roles and assist these pupils in making good progress in their studies.

## **HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?**

What the school does well

- Parents' views of the school are very good.
- There are very good opportunities for parents to contribute to school improvement through the school planning and review meetings.
- Annual reports are very good; they include targets for improvement, suggestions as to how parents can help and the views of pupils.

What could be improved

- The school has identified that more parents could be involved in supporting work in classrooms.

51. In 1997 parents were generally supportive of the school and expressed their satisfaction with the information they received about the progress their children made. These positive views do not appear to have been sustained for very long. Parents at the meeting prior to this inspection made it clear that they had had very real concerns about the effectiveness of the previous headteacher, academic standards, behaviour achieved by their children and the school's links with parents. Parents responding to the questionnaire issued just before this inspection now feel that the school expects their child to work hard and achieve his or her best, and 'find the school approachable' with good home/school links. The inspection team agrees with these views.

52. The school very actively encourages parents to be involved in the education of their children, and to participate in the construction and implementation of the school's plans and policies. The headteacher is readily available to talk to parents and is particularly noticeable on the playground before and after school. Parents confirm that they are welcome in school, and that support and guidance is freely offered and available. An analysis of the large number of parents' questionnaires returned provided a very positive view of the school. Parents receive regular information sheets from the school, which are numbered and colour coded which enables parents to ensure they have the latest information. The prospectus is written in a positive, friendly style, is well organised and contains much useful information.

53. Parents are able to have informal discussions with the headteacher and teachers at the start and end of the school day. More formal opportunities for parents to consult teachers and the headteacher are available three times a year or as and when requested. Parents of pupils with special educational needs are fully involved in the review process and in setting targets for their children to strive towards. There is now an established programme of homework, and termly letters give parents good information as to the areas of work their child will be studying.

54. Termly school planning and review meetings, to which parents, staff and governors are invited, have provided an excellent forum for discussion, and important decisions have been taken following consultation through this forum and through opportunities for parents to make representations both in person and in writing. Areas for consultation have included the extension of the school day, school uniform and homework. The recently formulated homework policy represents a good compromise between the conflicting views of parents.



55. The school prospectus gives parents a wide range of useful information. Termly consultation evenings provide good opportunities for parents to meet teachers to review their child's progress, and discuss possible future targets for progress. The school has initiated Information Evenings for parents to explain the curriculum. The meeting to explain numeracy was well attended, and the school now plans a similar evening to explore the literacy strategy, and to celebrate the achievements of pupils, for example in music and writing.

56. The annual reports to parents of pupils' work are very good. The format of annual reports was revised following consultation with parents, and reports now give comprehensive information concerning areas of the curriculum covered, what the child knows and can do, and how they might be able to improve. The report gives good indications to parents how they can help their child, and parents are informed at the end of each school year of their child's level of attainment in English, mathematics and science. Pupils are given a good opportunity to evaluate their own areas of achievement during the year, and to set realistic targets for themselves.

57. A small number of parents help in the classrooms on a regular basis, and the school hopes to extend the number of parents involved in this way. A larger number of parents provide valuable support when educational visits take place. An enthusiastic group of parents has started, through the Friends' Association, to organise social and fund-raising events to support the school and its work.

58. The school has, in the recent past, worked hard to improve its relationship with, and to work in partnership with, parents and carers. It has been very successful in so doing, and now enjoys the enthusiastic support of the vast majority of parents. Parents' views of the school are very good.

## **HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?**

What the school does well

- The inspirational leadership of the headteacher is excellent he has shared his vision very effectively with all connected with the school.
- The management systems and strategies are bringing about rapid improvement.
- The school has used information very well to identify the right set of priorities for improvement.
- The capacity to continue to improve rapidly is excellent.

What could be improved

- Standards need further improvement especially in mathematics.
- The school should hasten its programme of school improvement in order to raise standards more rapidly.

59. John Fletcher Junior School is now very effectively led and well managed. Following a period of decline between 1998 and 2000 the school is now improving rapidly. Since his appointment in September 2000 the headteacher has shared very effectively his vision for the school's future with the governors, staff and parents. The turn-round in opinion is phenomenal. Parents in particular were very explicit about the improvements he has made to the school. During the academic year, 1999-2000 a significant number of parents had removed their children from the school. But the large number of parents who responded to the questionnaire or spoke to the inspection team made it clear they had confidence in the present headteacher to deliver high quality education for their children. This confidence is justified because the school is now improving rapidly, particularly where standards, teaching and learning are concerned. The headteacher provides excellent leadership to the school,

works tirelessly with staff to make things better for the pupils, and is determined and cheerful. These qualities are what make the school the effective place of learning it is today.

60. Accompanying the headteacher on this personal mission to build on strengths and eliminate weakness is the deputy headteacher. She is a very capable teacher who works equally effectively across the school providing a good model for others to follow. She works in successful partnership with the headteacher to motivate and encourage all staff to strive for continuous improvement. She, like the headteacher, has very good insight into the successes and shortcomings of the school and has sensible ideas for the realisation of school priorities. The headteacher and deputy headteacher are joined in the senior management team by the senior teacher one of only two members of the teaching staff who was at the school in 1997. This trio is leading from the front the many practical strategies, which are translating the vision into reality. All other teachers and teaching assistants are committed to school improvement and work hard to bring this about. As a result of the careful use of time the school teaches a five session day and staff development is very effective because it arises from the monitoring of teaching and learning.

61. This is a school where teaching and learning are vigorously monitored. Consequently school managers know the strengths and weaknesses well. They have been very successful in improving the quality of teaching, particularly in literacy and numeracy through a very good programme of staff development. The school is working towards the Investors in People award and should complete the assessment process later this term. The line management system established in the school means there is thorough and detailed dialogue between line managers and all members of staff. There are several very important outcomes of this process. All staff members know and understand their role and responsibilities in relation to school, professional and personal improvement. All have good access to training and all feel well motivated and supported. This is one of the reasons why the school has excellent capacity to continue to improve at a good rate.

62. The school development plan is a practical comprehensive guide to school improvement. It is well founded on an excellent understanding of the work which needs to be done. The inspection team endorses the plan and encourages the school to proceed with it as rapidly as possible. The school has been so successful in bringing about improvement in the previous four terms that it is clear some aspects of the plan can be usefully accelerated. For example, given the high quality of leadership and the commitment and good understanding of the governing body the five-year plan for school governance is ripe for more rapid implementation. Although there is more work to do subject managers all prepare good subject action plans that contain the necessary strategies to bring about improvement. Plans are well focused on the key priority but sometimes the success criteria needs to be more directly linked to raising standards. In a number of subjects such as mathematics, science and ICT subject managers have an exceptionally good understanding of what needs to be done to improve work in the subject. Most staff are fully ready for the challenges that more responsibility for evaluating standards across the whole school will bring. Less experienced staff are being prepared to assume subject leadership roles in due course.

63. Governors know what the school does well and what needs improvement. They are well involved in the life and work of the school and are supportive and interested friends. Governors receive good quality information from the headteacher to assist them in the process of checking and evaluating school performance. They are familiar with the grades in the Autumn package and receive regular reports from subject managers. A recent very significant development has been the establishment of a 'governance committee'. Governors expect this committee to take the leading role in setting the agenda for the school and all governor committees. The headteacher and the governors are using the principles of 'best value' to consult, compare, compete and challenge as they examine the work of the school to

bring about improvement. The arrangements to consult with parents and pupils about school improvement are exceptionally well founded. Governors ensure that the school meets its legal responsibilities and that it publishes all the necessary information.

64. Led by the headteacher the school has made a very good start to the collection and interpretation of data to show how well the school is doing. The headteacher has obtained from the local education authority much data about attainment on entry to the school and has put in place systems to check pupil progress regularly. This was an essential first step as there was little reliable data on pupil performance when he joined the school in September 2000. The headteacher analyses the results from a range of testing to show the achievement of individuals and groups. He sets targets that reflect likely achievement for the following year and shares these with class teachers. This target setting takes good account of the value the school expects to add to the high proportion of lower attaining pupil's progress and to those pupils of average ability. The school also has high expectations for the standards to be achieved by above average pupils and is actively working towards improving the percentage that achieves level 5. The school is not yet specifically targeting those pupils who may well have a chance of achieving at level 6 when they are eleven although this has been identified by the headteacher as the next step. Very good use is made of national data to compare how well the school is performing against other schools nationally and locally. Current targets therefore are very challenging and individual pupils will need support, perhaps mentoring, as well as close monitoring to help them achieve the best.

65. In the last four terms, subject policies have been systematically updated and appropriate guidelines have been incorporated into schemes of work as part of the review process. The appointment of subject co-ordinators has been ongoing and many have been appointed in the last four years. All co-ordinators have written curriculum action plans and most have spent time monitoring resources and subject planning, though few have had opportunity to observe teaching and learning directly. However all co-ordinators know when their subject is priority for improvement and are preparing to take the lead in due course. There are however some inconsistencies, which they need to be aware of most notably standards achieved in written work in English are better than those in other subjects such as religious education, history and geography.

66. The school has sufficient staff, adequate learning resources and accommodation for the pupils' needs. Resources in some subjects are only just adequate. Library provision is very limited although plans are in hand to improve the provision of books but at present research skills are not well developed. Much has been done recently to improve facilities and the use and appearance of the buildings internally but external redecoration, by the local education authority, is urgently required. The caretaker and cleaners ensure that the buildings are kept clean and tidy and staff use resources well to support learning. The newly completed ICT suite and the good emphasis on teaching ICT skills are having a beneficial effect on standards.

67. The use of resources to provide for pupils with special educational needs is good throughout the school. The quality of support given by teaching assistants in lessons is very good and ensures that the pupils they work with learn well and make good progress in their learning within the whole curriculum of the school. The needs of these pupils are quickly and accurately identified and trigger a clear and effective programme of action involving all staff that work with the pupils. Individual education plans have improved since the previous inspection and are now clearly detailed with realistic targets of what individual pupils are to achieve. Effective links continue to exist between the school and parents. Parents are informed about their children's learning targets and the progress they make and good liaison between them, the school and outside agencies enhances pupils' learning. The school values all pupils and ensures equality of access and opportunities for all pupils to take part in

the school's curriculum and activities outside lessons. Pupils gain confidence and appropriate skills, particularly as they work within groups of similar ability. The work with teaching assistants is well organised so that pupils rarely miss important teaching points, particularly in literacy and numeracy. Resources for them are stored in a recently refurbished, attractive, designated room to which pupils can be withdrawn for specific support when necessary.

68. The headteacher has made sure that there are adequate resources for teaching and learning across the school. However, he is hampered in this by the state of finances, which were in deficit, when he joined the school. Pupil numbers in the school are too low to sustain 8 classes and a teaching deputy headteacher who works with all classes and provides release time for subject co-ordinators. The headteacher and governors are rightly planning ahead but are not helped by the difficulty in obtaining three-year projections from the local education authority. The most recent internal audit by the local education authority shows that the management and control of finances meets the necessary requirements. The headteacher and governors know that prudence and some harsh decisions will be necessary but are determined to continue the improvements already made to the quality of pupils' education and the pursuit of improved standards.

69. The future for John Fletcher Junior School is very bright. It is improving rapidly and there is a very clear vision of where the school is going underpinned by very effective management systems and strategies. Spending is broadly average to educate each pupil and standards are not yet high enough. For these reasons, it currently offers satisfactory value for money, but the potential for continuing improvement is positive and the time when the school will provide good value for money is not far off.

## WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

70. In their work to further raise standards and improve the quality of education at the school, the governors, headteacher and staff should:

- (1) Improve standards in mathematics by:
  - Making a detailed assessment of the strengths and weaknesses of what pupils in Year 4, particularly in the lower set, know, understand and can do;
  - Putting in place a programme to address these pupils' needs and monitor its effectiveness;
  - Improving marking of all mathematics work so it highlights more precisely what all pupils need to do to achieve the next level;
  - Monitoring, counselling and supporting individual pupils particularly in Year 5 to make sure they are on track to achieve their personal targets;
  - Improving standards from Year 3 onward by paying more attention to accuracy and layout of work, to increased use of mental challenges which need explaining, as well as to number work, so that basic skills become firmer and more secure;
  - Giving constant feedback to pupils so that they know which of these areas they need to improve.(Paragraphs: 2, 5, 7, 29, 30, 85-88)
- (2) Make sure work, particularly in history, geography and religious education, challenges the most able pupils and continue to do so in mathematics and science by:
  - Improving the marking of all work so that it highlights more precisely what all pupils need to do to achieve the next level;
  - Planning activities which are different in nature for the most able pupils;
  - Making sure tasks given to pupils are sufficiently challenging, for example by making greater use of investigations, research and problem solving activities which are sufficiently open-ended to provide opportunities for pupils to achieve at the highest levels;
  - Improving teachers' subject knowledge, particularly in science, music and religious education, so they know how to challenge the most able pupils.(Paragraphs: 27, 29, 30, 93, 109, 116, 117, 119, 125, 127, 129)
- (3) Implement fully the five year school development plan at a more rapid pace than currently planned by:
  - Developing the role of the governance committee more rapidly so that it reinforces the drive for school improvement and evaluation of performance as soon as possible;
  - Reviewing the present timescales in the plan to address some issues, particularly those which will have the most impact on raising standards, earlier than presently planned for.(Paragraphs: 62-66)

## PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

### Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	52
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	33

### Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Number	0	8	27	17	0	0	0
Percentage	0	15	52	33	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. Care should be taken when interpreting these percentages as each lesson represents more than one percentage point.

### 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)	211
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	38

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs	Y3 – Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	6
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	47

English as an additional language	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	5

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	12

### Attendance

#### Authorised absence

	%
School data	5.4

#### Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.8

National comparative data	5.6
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National comparative data	0.5
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*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	30	22	52

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	24	21	30
	Girls	19	13	19
	Total	43	34	49
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	83 (73)	65 (64)	94 (89)
	National	75 (75)	71 (72)	87 (85)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	26	20	29
	Girls	19	15	19
	Total	45	34	48
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	87 (64)	71 (57)	92 (79)
	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	1
Black – African heritage	0
Black – other	1
Indian	4
Pakistani	1
Bangladeshi	0
Chinese	0
White	204
Any other minority ethnic group	0

*This table refers to pupils of compulsory school age only.*

### ***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	5	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.*

### ***Teachers and classes***

#### **Qualified teachers and classes: Y3 – Y6**

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	10
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	24
Average class size	27

#### **Education support staff: Y3 – Y6**

Total number of education support staff	6
Total aggregate hours worked per week	110

*FTE means full-time equivalent.*

### ***Financial information***

Financial year	2000/2001
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	£
Total income	406 528
Total expenditure	410 039
Expenditure per pupil	1 934
Balance brought forward from previous year	13 522
Balance carried forward to next year	10 011

### ***Recruitment of teachers***

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	5
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	5

Total number of vacant teaching posts (FTE)	0
Number of vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of a term or more (FTE)	0
Number of unfilled vacancies or vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of less than one term (FTE)	0

*FTE means full-time equivalent.*

## ***Results of the survey of parents and carers***

### **Questionnaire return rate**

Number of questionnaires sent out	180
Number of questionnaires returned	118

### **Percentage of responses in each category**

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	54	41	5	0	0
My child is making good progress in school.	42	47	4	2	4
Behaviour in the school is good.	26	62	5	0	6
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	27	47	19	6	1
The teaching is good.	37	54	3	3	3
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	34	47	12	3	3
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	58	37	3	1	1
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	53	43	1	1	2
The school works closely with parents.	43	44	8	3	3
The school is well led and managed.	44	49	0	3	3
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	37	55	4	1	3
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	39	43	11	3	4

## **PART D: THE STANDARDS AND QUALITY OF TEACHING IN AREAS OF THE CURRICULUM, SUBJECTS AND COURSES**

### **ENGLISH**

What the school does well

- Standards are improving.
- The quality of teachers' planning ensures that there is step-by-step development of what pupils' should know, be able to do and understand.
- Teachers develop pupils' listening and speaking skills well.
- Assessment is thorough.
- The setting of individual targets for pupils with special educational needs is good.
- Pupils have very positive attitudes to learning and try their best.
- Teaching assistants support and extend pupils' learning well.

What could be improved

- The consistency of approach to spelling and handwriting.
- The consistency of the quality of marking.
- The earlier introduction of non-narrative writing.
- Pupils' research skills.
- Library provision.

71. By the age of eleven, standards in English, as measured in the National Curriculum tests in 2001, placed pupils in line with the national average when compared with all the schools in the country and below the national average when compared to similar schools. In these tests, 83 per cent reached the nationally expected standard of level 4 and 17 per cent attained the higher level 5. There were fewer pupils placed at the lower level 3 than nationally. Girls outperformed boys. The school's results have improved since the 2000 test results and are a significant improvement compared with the 1999 results. These results have been clearly affected by the difficulties of the past, including the significant change of teaching staff and the large number of pupils with learning difficulties in the upper school, but are now improving rapidly.

72. Inspection findings indicate that by the age eleven, standards are close to those expected nationally and pupils are making satisfactory progress. Progress since the previous inspection, has fluctuated, largely because of staffing and teaching problems. By the age of eleven, standards are similar to those expected nationally, and pupils are making satisfactory progress, with more higher attaining pupils likely to reach the higher levels in the 2002 results, but with many likely to be below. Since the previous inspection, the National Literacy Strategy has been fully implemented and is now a central part of teaching. The setting of pupils into ability groupings supports the teaching and learning and standards in English are improving rapidly.

73. Pupils' learning English as an additional language and those with special educational needs make good progress. Where appropriate they have detailed realistic, individual education plans and do well in achieving their targets. This is due in part, to the provision of appropriately planned work by teachers, combined with the good support given during lessons by teaching assistants. All pupils have full access to all aspects of English.

74. By the end of Year 6, most pupils' speaking and listening skills are well developed and they achieve standards above those expected for their age. All pupils, including those learning English as an additional language and those with special educational needs make good progress. Many pupils speak fluently, lucidly and with confidence. The least able pupils

demonstrate immaturity in these skills, but they are able to communicate their ideas satisfactorily. All pupils are now given regular opportunities to express themselves fully and explain their ideas through discussion. The teachers encourage a high level of discussion and in response, the pupils express their ideas clearly and expressively. For example, one pupil addressed the class in defence of school uniform with the riveting opening, 'Do you want to be Wallys in wellys, has beens in hats and ridiculous in robes?' Years 3, 4 and 5 pupils listen attentively to stories, plays and biographies, such as 'Jack and the Beanstalk' and 'The True Story of the Three Little Pigs' and are given the opportunity to read to the class and discuss the feelings evoked. Sometimes there are missed opportunities when reviewing books, to use pupils' enthusiasm, so as to develop and extend vocabulary, such as in a Year 3 lesson when the discussion was too short to be productive. Most pupils listen carefully and respond eagerly, clearly enjoying the group activities. Year 6 pupils demonstrate their abilities to use different character voices expressively when using 'Hot Seating' questioning and answering sessions to debate, and show their understanding of issues such as 'Corporal Punishment'. Year 5 pupils were highly motivated when awarding a mark to their own piece of punctuation and then justifying it to the class. Pupils perform publicly and well in school productions, such as 'The Pied Piper of Hamelin' and musical events and these offer valuable opportunities for pupils to use spoken language in more formal settings.

75. Teachers are successful in using many opportunities to develop and extend vocabulary, not just in English but in subjects as well, where the correct use of appropriate musical, historical and scientific vocabulary is a feature of many lessons. For example, Year 5 pupils use technical terms such as 'echo' 'rhythmic patterns', 'spinet', 'Pavane' and 'reversible change', knowledgeably as a result of the very good teaching they receive.

76. By the age of eleven, overall standards in reading are close to the national average. Overall, pupils make satisfactory progress, with some higher attaining pupils making good gains in their learning. Pupils learning English as an additional language and those with special educational needs make good progress towards their individual targets. There are significant differences between the ability of the most able pupils and the lower attaining pupils. The most able pupils read a range of texts, fluently, expressively and with confidence. They understand the significant ideas in passages from books, refer to the text to explain and support their opinions and are beginning to retrieve and collate information independently. As a result, reflective, perceptive and critical readers are emerging. The average pupils read fluently and accurately and can use a range of strategies to self – correct, but the lower attaining pupils use these skills less well. Most average pupils have developed the ability to read in complete phrases rather than word by word. This demonstrates their ability to 'read' ahead and understand what they are reading. Less able pupils are more hesitant at selecting the main points when retelling what a passage in a story is about and are unsure about the meaning of the words they have read such as 'formation', 'domestic' and 'insecure'.

77. All pupils enjoy reading and talk with enthusiasm about the different types of books they have read, such as 'The Lord of the Rings' by J. R. R. Tolkien, 'The Hork-bajir Chronicles' by K. A. Applegate, and 'The Hundred Mile An Hour Dog' by J. Strong. The wizardry of Harry Potter and the mysteries of the Roald Dahl adventure books are great favourites, as are books about animals. Teachers have implemented good systematic planning linked to effective learning strategies, which is monitored and assessed by the classroom teachers, the English co-ordinator and the headteacher and targets are set for individual pupils. Occasionally the reading books for lower ability pupils are too difficult for their level of reading skills and they are unable to understand what they have read. Very good home school links and the range of homework activities in which the pupils are involved is effective and make a positive contribution to raising standards. The quality, quantity and range of the school's library and class library books are barely adequate, but following an audit carried out by the County Library service, plans are in hand to increase the number and

range of fiction and non-fiction books and refurbish the re -located school library. This will give pupils increased access to a greater range of books from which to research independently. During the inspection, pupils made little use of the libraries in order to use and enhance their research and retrieval skills and find information. In some classrooms the use of space and promotion of displays were not used effectively to enhance the library area.

78. By the age of eleven, pupils' achieve standards in writing that are close to those expected nationally, because of the good and very good teaching they receive. They make satisfactory progress. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress towards their individual targets. The basic skills of writing are taught well. There is now a clear focus throughout the school on the different types of writing such as fiction, persuasive writing, play script or formal letter writing and pupils examine in detail their relevant characteristics and styles. Year 3 pupils write traditional stories, compose poems such as 'Autumn', create 'Shape ' poems such as 'The Brightest Day' and compile notes, for example, on 'Guinea Pigs', although fewer examples of non narrative writing were seen. Higher attaining pupils achieve well and many pupils create or capture atmosphere well in their writing.

79. The teaching of English is good overall. In the majority of lessons, it is good or very good. Teachers are confident and effective in teaching literacy. Lesson objectives are clearly stated in all lessons and reinforced during the lesson. The plenary at the end of the lesson focuses on what the pupils have learned through questions, answers and demonstrations by pupils. In the best lessons, pupils are left in no doubt as to what they are to do. Skilled choice of teaching methods and effective management ensures that all pupils work with interest and enthusiasm. Lessons are well planned, teachers' knowledge is good and the effective use of good resources stimulates pupils' interest and enhances their learning. This was seen to good effect in the writing produced by pupils following a visit to Shugborough Hall. A Year 6 pupil composed a compelling, poignant poem about the dire consequence of a bombing raid. 'Then the odd bomb dropped. BOOM! The siren went to say it was clear. We walked out. There was nothing!' Most pupils show a high level of interest in their work. Some exceptional presentations of the issues of whaling were seen in a class with pupils, mostly boys, who have special educational needs. The class activity had developed the use of bullet points, paragraphs, a fact box and punctuation to draw attention to the specific information and the high interest and motivational level resulted in them all achieving to the best of their ability.

80. The conventions of English, such as adjectives, adverbs and powerful verbs are taught systematically and are developing well throughout the school. The consistent and effective approach to spelling seen in some classes ensures that it is taught systematically and progressively throughout the school. Dictionary and thesaurus work is used to draw pupils' attention to spelling but words such as 'treasure' (treacher), 'dropped' (doped) in Year 6 and 'their' (thier) and 'bored' (board) in Year 4 are spelt wrongly. The standard of handwriting for many pupils of all abilities, is high, but varies throughout the school. The newly introduced hand writing scheme has not yet had sufficient time to make a significant impact on pupils' writing and the appropriate skills acquired in formal sessions are not transferred when pupils are writing in other subjects.

81. Homework is used effectively and shared with all pupils to extend learning. Year 6 pupils demonstrated a very good grasp of the structure of the techniques of an effective argument in writing, when they responded to the headteacher's decision to change the year group that would go on residential visits. In this lesson their thorough understanding of the tasks to be completed, good organisation and the use of appropriate resources resulted in a high level of concentration and produced work of very good quality and quantity. The pupils' use of individual whiteboards, for brainstorming, planning and drafting purposes, helps pupils to write confidently, knowing that mistakes can be erased and rectified quickly and easily. The teaching assistants give good support.

82. The quality of learning in the lessons seen matched teaching. Where teaching is very good, the learning is also very good. Pupils enjoy the tasks set and are enthusiastic in their attitude to work. The vast majority are keen to progress and work co-operatively with others to achieve this. Pupils' attitudes and behaviour in lessons are good, because teachers manage pupils well and provide a range of interesting experiences for them. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress because the work is appropriately matched to their level of ability.

83. The school has worked effectively with governors, pupils and parents in a joint venture to raise standards. The co-ordinator evaluates the work of teachers and pupils through the examination of pupils' books and teachers' planning and teaching. The literacy governor takes an active interest in the school. This helps inform governors' decisions. Tests and assessments are analysed effectively and the resulting information is used to improve standards and track the progress of individual pupils. The data analysis of pupils' test results prompted the school to split the Year 6 class into three sets and each of the other year groups into two sets. This has resulted in all pupils benefiting. Challenging but achievable targets are then set to raise standards. The higher attaining pupils are provided with more challenging tasks whilst the lower attaining pupils are not intimidated by the more able pupils and are making better progress. Marking is done regularly and conscientiously. It is encouraging, and some, for example in Years 3 and 6 is challenging to extend pupils' learning. Computers are used well to support spelling and reading and to word process finished items.

## **MATHEMATICS**

What the school does well

- Teaching and learning are now good and this is beginning to drive up standards.
- Setting arrangements are being used effectively to make sure all pupils do hard enough work.
- Analysis of results is very good and well used to set challenging targets for improvement.
- Pupils have very positive attitudes to learning and try their best.
- Teaching assistants support and extend pupils' learning well.

What could be improved

- Standards are not high enough at age 11 because too few pupils achieve levels 4 and 5. Pupils make too many errors because they do not readily identify what strategies are required to solve problems.
- Marking is not specific enough to promote maximum improvement.

84. The 1997 standards in mathematics were well above average, teaching good and progress sound in Years 3 to 5 and good in Year 6. By 1998 results in National tests were below average and this situation has remained unaltered. Improvement since 1997 is unsatisfactory. When the present headteacher joined the school in September 2000 he quickly identified that the National Numeracy Strategy had not been implemented effectively. With support from the local education authority shortcomings in teachers' knowledge and understanding have been addressed and teaching and learning are now good although standards are still too low. In 2001 pupils' results were below those achieved nationally and well below average when compared to similar schools. The proportion of pupils achieving the higher levels was very low last year and girls outstripped the boys in overall attainment. The school's performance in mathematics is improving at a slower rate than the national improvement.

85. The attainment of the current Year 6 is below that expected at the age of eleven. This is no different to the position in 2001 or the previous three years. The close scrutiny of pupils' work shows that the current Year 5 class is likely to achieve the expected standards when they take their National Curriculum tests in 2003. However, work produced by a significant number of pupils in the current Year 4 is once again below the expected standards while Year 3 pupils are expected to achieve above the level expected in 2005. This inconsistency owes much to the standards on entry to the school but there is an urgent need to address the serious shortcomings in basic understanding evident in Year 4. While pupils are clearly benefiting from improved teaching and better implementation of the National Numeracy Strategy there are still some aspects of pupil performance where improvement is still required. For example, untidy layout leads to inaccurate counting, place value is not well understood and many pupils fail to identify the key words in problems and so although pupils have been taught a range of strategies they do not know which to employ. Some of these errors are still evident in the top set in Year 6 whilst there are many weaknesses in the performance of pupils in the lowest set in Year 4. Many pupils in this set have very little understanding of place value and are not sure of how to read numbers above 1000. Some of the best work seen when compared to pupils' previous work was seen in the lowest set in Year 6. Although these pupils are operating at about level 3 they made very considerable gains in the lesson. The sets in years 3 and 5 show pupils working at the expected levels and in the top sets there is good evidence of high standards.

86. Good teaching is having a positive effect upon learning. A Year 3 mental mathematics lesson was conducted at a brisk pace and because the teacher observed pupils very closely, she knew when to let them take the lead in devising and solving problems for each other. This was well used to extend the pupils' thought processes. In Year 4 the teacher asked open questions that reinforced pupils' understanding of the quick methods, they can use to add and subtract mentally. In Year 5, in response to the challenging pace set by the teacher pupils quickly rattled through the factors of 25. The teacher gradually increased the level of challenge so that learning built on learning. One of the reasons why learning was so successful was that he made his expectations very clear. This enabled pupils to demonstrate their good knowledge and understanding of prime numbers for example, and because they were well motivated, they all wanted to take part. In a different Year 5 lesson the teacher made imaginative use of the overhead projector to help less able pupils grasp what a factor is and why they are important. In a Year 6 lesson the teacher made effective use of time targets so that pupils knew how much work they were expected to produce. Pupils were expected to explain their methods and this reinforced the use of techniques such as halving, doubling, rounding and the use of decimals to solve problems. About half these pupils were working at about level 5 and the rest at level 4. Nevertheless, as the teacher monitored pupils' work carefully she quickly identified strengths but also some significant weaknesses in their understanding. Questioning confirmed her judgement and she modified her teaching plans to meet their needs appropriately.

87. The headteacher has rightly given priority to establishing exactly what pupils know, understand and can do. He has undertaken very detailed analysis of the available data; set challenging targets for pupils and shared them with class teachers so that everyone knows what is expected of them. Targets have been shared with pupils in years 5 and 6 but more now needs to be done to counsel these pupils regularly to ensure they know what and how they need to improve. The published targets set for attainment in mathematics were missed by 4 per cent in 2001 and the revised targets are demanding, but achievable. This reflects the value the school expects to add to attainment in mathematics in the future. These revised targets have yet to include even greater demands on the most able pupils. The headteacher and subject co-ordinator have identified the potential for some pupils to achieve level 6 and are rethinking the present organisation to achieve this. Meanwhile they are also very conscious of the considerable numbers of pupils who are unlikely to achieve level 4. There is a good sense of determination to do things well and the potential for improvement to standards looks good.

88. Standards are rising in lessons mainly because the curriculum has been improved and teaching and learning are now good. The numeracy strategy has now been introduced with considerable success and the sharper focus on knowledge, skills and understanding that this has brought is benefiting progress and standards. There are several strengths of teaching including the management of pupils, the teaching of basic skills and the very good contribution made by teaching assistants. This last strength is a central reason why pupils with special educational needs and those learning English as an additional language make the good progress in mathematics that they do. Teachers mark pupil's work regularly and they make very good use of question and answer sessions in lessons to check knowledge and understanding. But feedback to pupils is not sufficiently specific in order to help them improve the level of their work. In the very best lessons learning is reviewed very well and reinforced at the end of the lesson but sometimes teachers run out of time and this vital activity is curtailed. Overall, learning for all pupils is now more interesting, enjoyable and memorable. Pupils work hard in lessons and produce good amounts of work. They make good progress in lessons and show increasing maturity and responsibility in their learning.

89. The subject is well led and managed by an enthusiastic co-ordinator who provides a good model as an effective practitioner. Mathematics is a continuing priority for the school but school managers know well what needs to be done and have the energy and commitment to succeed.

## **SCIENCE**

What the school does well

- Teaching and learning are now good and are beginning to drive up standards.
- The able pupil's project in Year 5 is very beneficial and makes a major contribution to improving standards.
- Analysis of results is very good and well used to set challenging targets for improvement.
- Pupils have very positive attitudes to learning and try their best.



What could be improved

- Standards are not high enough at age 11 because too few pupils achieve level 5.
- Some teachers do not have secure enough subject knowledge to extend the learning and often set the same work for all pupils in the class.
- All work is marked but the comments do not always help pupils to understand how they can improve or what they need to do next.

90. Pupils at the end of Year 6 in 2001 attained below average standards in the national tests when compared with all schools nationally. Although a very high proportion of pupils attained the average level 4, very few attained the higher level 5. When compared with similar schools, standards were well below average. During the previous inspection in 1997, standards in science were judged to be above the national average. In tests in the interim period, standards fell but now are improving again. The trend for improvement is in line with the national trend. During the inspection this improvement was confirmed. Pupils at the end of Year 6 in 2002 are likely to attain average standards in science and improvement is evident across the year groups because of good teaching, very good leadership and careful evaluation of performance. Challenging targets for improvement are set in every year group and progress carefully monitored.

91. Pupils are making satisfactory progress from an average starting point when they join the school. Pupils with special educational needs and those with English as an additional language make good progress from their starting point in the school. Pupils who have the potential for higher attainment are not always given enough challenge in their work. All pupils are fully included in science. In Year 3, pupils have learnt to consider the food we eat and what constitutes a healthy diet. They can put different foods into three categories according to their properties, for health, energy and body building. They put this into practice while making sandwiches in a design and technology lesson. They understand how to maintain healthy teeth. Pupils have learnt to record their work effectively in simple pictures and text. Pupils in Year 4 have learnt some of the basic principles of electricity effectively. For example, they understand the difference between mains electricity and battery power. They know that water and electricity do not mix and together they are dangerous. By Year 5, pupils can make electrical circuits efficiently and higher attaining pupils can identify the properties of materials that are conductors or insulators of electricity. They are learning that water can be a solid, a liquid or a gas and that changes in water are reversible. In Year 6, pupils can identify the factors that affect the rate at which a jelly dissolves through a practical investigation and know that changes in materials can be reversible or irreversible. They know that light, air and water influence plant growth and investigate the best growth conditions for cress. They know the parts of a plant and how a plant functions in terms of transporting nutrients. They also know the parts of a human body and how they function. They use scientific terminology satisfactorily and with understanding, such as transparent, solid, gas, liquid, soluble, solution, evaporation and micro-organisms. They record their work effectively, using a variety of strategies, such as block graphs, charts, diagrams and text. Literacy and numeracy are well supported.

92. On the evidence of lesson observations, planning and pupils' previous work, teaching and learning are good overall and never less than satisfactory. There are only two teachers in the school who were present at the previous inspection but despite all the change, quality has been maintained. When teaching is good, teachers have high expectations of pupils in terms of effort and behaviour. The pupils are clear about what they are expected to do and learn in the lesson, which proceeds at a brisk pace and maintains pupils' interest and enthusiasm. Time is used effectively between whole class and group work, discussion and activity, leaving adequate time for sharing what pupils have learned by the end of the lesson. Teachers manage the class and prepare and organise the lesson well so that pupils learn to work collaboratively and concentrate on interesting tasks.

93. Weaker teaching does occur when subject knowledge is not secure and this can lead to the same work being set for all pupils in a class. Sometimes an extra task is set for higher attaining pupils but this may extend literacy skills rather than scientific thinking. Learning objectives are sometimes too general and do not promote harder work for more able pupils. Lower attaining pupils are well supported so that they can reach the highest possible standards. The school is aware of the need to improve the teaching of higher attaining pupils. These have already been identified; the school has a new co-ordinator, a good policy and structures to help raise standards attained by these pupils. It is well set to make improvements. A good example of this initiative was observed in Year 5 when ten pupils with the potential for higher attainment were taught separately as a group. They were challenged to work independently and collaborate in pairs to test conductivity. By the end of the lesson they had successfully tested a range of materials, having first predicted the results and then recording the results effectively. The teacher facilitated this through good planning, secure knowledge of the subject and good questions to make pupils think. All work is marked but the comments do not always help pupils to understand how they can improve or what they need to do next.

94. The science curriculum is very effectively led by the co-ordinator. A new scheme of work and planning format are in place, an improvement since the previous inspection. There is an excellent process for monitoring performance and a new policy for monitoring teaching and learning. The co-ordinator is keen and very knowledgeable in support of the subject. She will monitor teaching and learning next term. There are clear priorities for action that are bringing about improvements in teaching and learning. The school has not defined what impact they expect these improvements to have on standards.

## **ART AND DESIGN**

What the school does well

- Standards by the age of 11 are above average.
- Teaching and learning are good.
- Cross-curricular links are well developed and are helping to raise standards.

What could be improved

- The subject action plan needs to be implemented as soon as possible.

95. Good provision for art and design has been sustained so that satisfactory improvement has been maintained since the last inspection. This judgement is based upon more observations than were made in the last inspection, together with a sample of work and displays around the school. These all confirm that standards remain above those that could normally be expected for eleven year olds as a result of the range of interesting activities. The activities develop the skills of art and design systematically. The well-conceived and executed techniques of art and design are used to support development of knowledge and understanding in other subjects. At the same time the discrete skills of art and design are retained as part of the pupils' learning.

96. In Year 3, pupils make canopic jar designs in their sketchbooks that arise from their history study on Ancient Egypt. Once designs have been evaluated for practicality they build a coil pot expertly out of clay around a yoghurt pot. They skilfully add detail with tools and fingers. They roll out coils successfully and share each other's skill sensitively as they congratulate one another on their expertise. One pupil who has some concentration difficulties is told "That looks great" and visibly grows in confidence. A lesson in Year 4 provides a good opportunity for collaboration and discussion. Pupils gather information from the school courtyard in order to plan a sculpture that will improve the area. Two boys plan a

light structure and appreciate that they will need to weigh it down, as it will be in an exposed place. Another pupil says "We must keep it simple because if we have complicated structures it will be too difficult to make." Skilful use of pencils as a media in observational work continues throughout the school. Understanding of proportion and shading are effectively confirmed as pupils in Year 4 design a matrix of shapes and objects using coloured pencils. The work of artists such as Paul Klee and Andy Warhol gives pupils contrasting views of making art. Skills and techniques are brought together systematically in Year 6 to confirm the good progress made by all pupils throughout the school. As a fully inclusive school pupils learning English as an additional language and those with special educational needs make equally good progress. Pupils ably put movement in to figure drawings. They use pen and ink to show fine detail in drawings of birds and buildings. Paint is also beginning to be well used to show blending and depth in colours being mixed together. Three-dimensional work in art and design is being developed as a group activity when pupils make dragons connected to lessons about the Chinese New Year. Models of an Egyptian mummy and obelisk are made to link to history work on Ancient Egypt.

97. Teaching and learning is good. Secure subject knowledge is supported through the provision of an appropriate scheme of work. The scheme develops activities systematically so that learning is built upon learning in art and design. At the same time it continually gives pupils effective opportunities to develop their creative skills and understanding. Teachers plan imaginative tasks, which are well resourced. Lessons are well organised as teachers manage the resources effectively.

98. All pupils are enthusiastic and keen learners. Pupils with special educational needs and those learning English as an additional language learn as well as the rest of their class. The sensitivity with which pupils share with one another leads to good levels of personal development. Pupils are well behaved because they are interested in their tasks. They enjoy using the range of media presented to them and are able to do so with growing levels of skill.

99. Art and design work is strong in the school. It is being well led by the headteacher, but with a well-informed newly qualified teacher shadowing the subject with the intention of taking over its leadership. Resources are adequate.

## **DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY**

What the school does well

- Teaching and learning are good.
- Pupils are confident designers, makers and evaluators of their work.
- Cross-curricular links are well developed.

What could be improved

- The school has the capacity to hasten its programme of improvement in design and technology more rapidly.

100. Standards are what would normally be expected from pupils aged eleven. This sustains what was found when the school was last inspected. This satisfactory improvement is in place against the background of the headteacher temporarily co-ordinating the subject whilst carrying out major improvements across a range of whole school issues as described elsewhere in this report. A newly qualified teacher is shadowing the subject this year with the intention of taking over leadership of its development in the school. The teacher is well qualified to take on this role and is already making contributions to its improvement strategies.

101. Pupils learning English as an additional language and those with special educational needs, are already making steady progress over time. By the time they are in Year 6 progress is good overall. In Year 6 pupils are trialing the use of a design and technology folder. Examples of this confirm they are consolidating their design and technology knowledge and ably increasingly their skills. They are showing confidence in the use of a variety of materials after completing appropriate designs of different sorts of shelters.

102. This learning is being built upon past experiences that are useful in building a strong capacity to turn designs into practical objects. Pupils have already made effective purses from materials in earlier years. They have found out about designing, making and eating delicious biscuits in Year 3. The emphasis upon food technology was shown in the inspection week in Year 3. In a lesson on giving consideration to a healthy diet pupils tested for appearance, smell, taste and texture of sandwiches with different fillings. They analysed with care and thoughtfulness. They considered one another's likes and dislikes. One pupil was very considerate of his partner who did not like any of the fillings as he sensitively said "I don't like eating as my partner won't want to even though I like the fillings."

103. Teaching is good. Teachers are more secure than they were previously in their knowledge of the skills to be taught in design and technology. They have a policy to support them that has been reviewed in order to give clear, systematic guidance. This helps them on what to teach, when and with skills clearly defined. In consequence continuity and progression in learning is securely in place. Tasks are interesting to pupils. They are adequately resourced by teachers who have given careful thought to their sequencing of work through their thorough planning. Design and technology work is often cleverly linked by teachers to other areas of learning without losing the discrete skills of the subject. For example, shelters have been designed and made by some pupils in Year 6 to link with their studies of World War 2 in history.

104. Pupils talk with enthusiasm about the range of experiences that they have had from their tasks in design and technology throughout their time in the school. There is a good level of recall of experiences, which confirms the depth of what their learning has been about. They enjoy their work and respond positively as they develop skills appropriately. They work confidently as a result of natural interest and curiosity that has been well generated by teachers' well-devised tasks.

105. The school has a clear action plan for developing work in design and technology. The clarity of the plan focuses upon raising standards in the subject. The school has the capacity to hasten the process of bringing about further improvement more rapidly than shown in its current planning.

## **GEOGRAPHY AND HISTORY**

What the school does well

- The co-ordinators have a good understanding of how to develop the subjects further.

What could be improved

- Tasks need to be more demanding so that pupils can achieve higher standards.

106. At the time of the previous inspection, standards in geography and history were average at the end of Year 6. Despite a period of intense change for the school, these standards have been maintained and pupils attain the standards normally seen at the end of Year 6 and there are signs of improvement as a result of good teaching, a new scheme of work and very good management. Pupils make satisfactory progress. Those who have special educational needs or English as an additional language make good progress from their starting point when they join the school. They are fully included in all aspects of work in geography and history.

107. Pupils gain satisfactory knowledge and understanding about periods of British history. In discussion with Years 5 and 6 pupils, they demonstrated a sound understanding of chronology and could place Romans, Tudors and Second World War in order of time. Year 5 pupils are learning the chronology and dates of the Tudor period. In Year 3, pupils learnt to use an interesting range of sources of information and activities to gain understanding and knowledge about Ancient Egypt, such as how and why they made pyramids and used hieroglyphics. In Year 4, pupils used objects from the period, such as pieces of pottery and a visiting group to enact the Roman period effectively. They contrast and compare the lives of children then and now and what affect the Romans had on life today. By Year 6, pupils can explain well the changes, events and people of the Second World War. Letters from evacuees and poetry about being in an air raid shelter, as well as constructing a shelter, show that pupils have gained an effective insight into life at this time.

108. In geography, pupils in Year 3 study the affect of rubbish on the environment. They learn about re-use, recycling and reducing rubbish and demonstrate sound understanding in a well-presented display of work. They demonstrate their good mapping skills by using a map of the grounds to find different sites and identify the quietest and noisiest places in the school site. They can draw a plan of the school accurately. In Year 4, pupils make good progress in understanding how to sustain or improve the environment through a study of traffic and how and why to control it. They discuss local life, traffic problems in Telford and how they might be improved. They discuss the viability of building more motorways and provide good evidence to justify their argument. In Year 5, there is a link between history and geography in the study of Shropshire and particularly of Shrewsbury with its Tudor buildings and history. They draw careful maps of Shropshire and the surrounding counties as well as a detailed plan of Shrewsbury. Pupils also study a developing country in Year 6. They learn about the physical and human features of Pakistan, interestingly linked to the study of Islam in religious education. At the beginning of this topic, pupils learn about the climate and weather in Pakistan. They use a map and books to work out the hottest, driest region (the desert), the coldest region (the Himalayas) and the hottest and coldest months of the year. They skilfully compare and contrast these with the United Kingdom. They know that the capital city is Islamabad and the main river is the Indus.

109. Teaching and learning in history and geography are good and have been maintained through many changes since the previous inspection. Teachers have a secure knowledge of both subjects. They work hard and are committed to raising standards. They have clear objectives for learning in their planning and make it clear to pupils what they have to learn in each lesson. This results in good learning. Teachers know their pupils well and in the best

lessons use interesting ways of assessing prior learning. For example, a quiz in Year 3 helped to identify what pupils knew about Ancient Egypt and a starting point for future work. Teachers also encourage learning through a good range of activities, including visits to places of interest, like Shugborough Estate, Wroxeter or Arthog. They find contexts for written work that motivate the pupils, such as writing about the Battle of Bosworth as a sports commentary or searching a database for information about Richard III, Henry VII and VIII. Teachers encourage pupils to use graphs and diagrams, such as a block graph of the methods of transport used by pupils to get to school. Literacy and numeracy skills are well learnt and used effectively to extend pupils' knowledge and understanding. Work is generally set for the whole class. Some tasks are extended for the higher attaining pupils and the teacher or support staff often support lower attaining pupils effectively. The work is not always challenging enough; however, to ensure that higher attaining pupils reach the highest possible standards in developing skills, knowledge and understanding about history and geography. The school is aware of the need to raise standards in this area and is developing new policy and practice to support the learning of pupils with the potential for higher attainment. Marking is not well focused in making it clear to pupils how they can improve.

110. The co-ordinators have a clear management role and responsibilities, which they are very effectively implementing. The priorities for developing the subjects are excellent. New schemes of work and planning structures link both subjects closely to National Curriculum requirements, a good improvement since the previous inspection. Assessment is as yet informal but a process for improvement is now in place and the co-ordinators plan to provide a portfolio of assessed work.

## **INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY**

What the school does well

- Good teaching and learning.
- Outstanding leadership for the subject is bringing about rapid improvement.
- Good cross-curricular links are improving learning.

What could be improved

- Standards could be higher by the age of 11 years.
- The school should hasten its programme of subject improvement in order to raise standards more rapidly.

111. Little work was observed at the time of the last inspection and no real judgement was made about standards. The school has worked hard to improve standards and provision is much better now. A computer suite has been established. An adequate amount of work is regularly timetabled to take place in the computer suite. All pupils, including those learning English as an additional language and those with special educational needs, benefit from the opportunities given to them to develop their ICT skills across its areas of learning. The school is well placed to develop the skills within class when funds allow. An outstandingly well qualified and informed co-ordinator has given excellent leadership to the present level of development.

112. It was possible to observe all year groups working with their class teachers in the computer suite. Learning was often linked to other subjects confirming the schools determination to use ICT skills across the curriculum. In Year 3, pupils develop a secure ability to use a database confidently. They have learnt how to store information on favourite toy animal's characteristics for future use. Pupils are fully aware that their current work is going to be useful to them in the future if they work with accuracy. They are able to follow a logically sequenced format as they accurately use the mouse and cursor. Pupils open files and move to drive successfully. In Year 4, pupils effectively explore the use of Encarta as an

information source as they work in pairs to find animation clips and sound files. In Year 5, pupils are taught by the co-ordinator and develop skills in making a database linked to their history study of Tudor times. Pupils have learnt how to use the graph and lift facility and print their work with high levels of confidence. They move around the programs with accuracy. In Year 6, pupils work with the deputy headteacher to increase their knowledge of irregular plurals. Pupils also worked with information retrieved from the Internet to plan a web page for the school. Work in ICT supports pupils literacy skills effectively.

113. Teaching is having a positive effect upon learning. The consistently good quality of the teaching in all year groups is assuring good progress over time for all pupils. All pupils, including those who have concentration difficulties, are well focused on their ICT work. Teachers have good levels of confidence in teaching ICT skills to pupils. They are well supported by a highly committed co-ordinator. Where teaching is at its best there are clear introductions to tasks. Lessons are well organised with different levels of work to suit pupils' needs. Teachers give pupils opportunities to work in pairs and small groups as well as at an individual level. When lessons are less effectively organised, which is infrequently the case, learning is less well supported. For example, where pupils were not given enough guidance for their work before sitting at the computers.

114. Pupils' response is particularly good when they are excited by their tasks. They are invariably interested and eager to get on with finding out for themselves as they explore ICT skills and techniques. They are able to do this because resources have been much improved since the last inspection. There is a clear action plan for further development in order to raise standards further. The use of resources such as an interactive whiteboard is recognised by the co-ordinator as just one of the ICT tools that is planned to increase skills, and therefore standards further.

## **MUSIC**

What the school does well

- The co-ordination of music.
- A well thought out scheme of work.
- Specialist teaching.
- Pupils enjoy music.
- Music in assembly.

What could be improved

- Teacher confidence and subject knowledge.
- Assessment procedures and practices.

115. Provision for music is satisfactory and standards are in line with national expectations throughout the school. Standards had declined since the previous inspection due to a significant number of teachers leaving, a temporary teacher acting as co-ordinator and teachers' lack of knowledge of music. Standards are improving. A specialist music teacher, who is also the recently appointed co-ordinator, gives clear direction to the school through professional support and has written a scheme of work which forms the foundation for future good teaching. The tuition provided by visiting specialist teachers enhances well the music provision. Pupils with special educational needs and those learning English as an additional language take full part in music lessons and achieve as well as other pupils.

116. The quality of teaching and learning in the three lessons seen is satisfactory overall. In Year 5, music is taught by the co-ordinator who is a music specialist. Here, the standard of music is significantly higher than in other classes where the teachers' subject knowledge is sufficient to teach basic music skills and knowledge, but not sufficient to challenge and

extend pupils' creative abilities. In the very good lesson seen, pupils were given the opportunity to follow and refine a musical score and play a wide range of instruments skilfully and productively. The skilful use of the computer enhanced pupils' understanding of the music structure when parts of the taped music were added or taken away and pupils were asked to name the parts. The end result was that most pupils developed very good awareness of rhythm and timing. Musical vocabulary was enhanced by use of words such as 'Parvane', 'Courtly Dance'. The teacher's sensitive evaluation of the music-making session led pupils to a deeper understanding. Instruments were used well, particularly to develop the composition into a more complex musical performance. Musical vocabulary is not well developed throughout the school. Year 6 pupils confused 'quartet' with 'quaver' when talking about notation. Some had difficulty recognising, naming and describing the function of instruments which more musically talented pupils had demonstrated well in the lesson.

117. In other lessons, the teacher provided opportunities for pupils to listen to extracts from 'The Carnival of the Animals' by Saint Saens, such as the elephant music and then used percussion instruments to create their own composition. Pupils created their own musical notation and used this to play the pieces. A few pupils held their instruments, such as beaters, incorrectly, and this went unchecked. Some pupils showed understanding of pictorial score reading and recorded their efforts, but there was insufficient discussion and assessment of what they had done was sketchy. In another lesson, the teacher had limited knowledge of the instruments being discussed and there was insufficient challenge to extend pupils' knowledge and understanding.

118. All pupils enjoy their music making activities. Pupils with special educational needs and those learning English as an additional language enjoy the activities with the rest of their class and make the same progress. All pupils enjoy singing well-loved hymns such as 'Autumn Days' or 'Colours of Day'. In assemblies, they sing enthusiastically such hymns as 'God loves you and I love you', with good diction and control of the volume and tempo. Pupils playing the piano, guitar or other musical instruments sometimes accompany their singing.

119. Leadership and management of the subject are very good. There is a clear view of strengths and weaknesses in the subject and there is an appropriate plan for further development. There has been satisfactory improvement since the previous inspection. The curriculum is well planned. There is a good music policy and detailed scheme of work in place, which supports teaching. Support and guidance for staff is effective and beneficial to pupils' learning. Currently, little assessment is undertaken. Monitoring of planning takes place and monitoring of teaching is listed in the school's detailed Action Plan. Musical Performances, such as 'The Pied Piper' take place, which are appreciated by the community. Music has a developing status in the curriculum and in the community. The number of pupils taking part in clubs, such as guitars and recorders is increasing and five pupils took part in the Wrekin Schools' Music Festival. Pupils' resources are good. There are good opportunities for pupils to work alone and with others, which improves their social development. Assemblies enhance pupils' spirituality by giving good opportunities to reflect on the power of musicians and the beauty of music.

## **PHYSICAL EDUCATION**

What the school does well

- Co-ordinator's vision for the development of physical education and games.
- Curriculum provision for invasion games and gymnastics.
- Pupils have very positive attitudes to learning and enjoy their lessons.
- Appropriate dress by pupils and teachers to ensure the requirement for health and safety is met.



What could be improved

- Teachers' planning to ensure that there is step-by-step development of what pupils' should know, be able to do and understand.
- The teaching of dance.
- Extra curricular activities.
- Assessment of teaching and learning.

120. During the inspection only one games and two gymnastic lessons were observed in Years 3, 4 and 5. No dance or swimming lesson was seen. It is only possible to make judgements in the areas observed and not overall, especially since no Year 6 lessons were seen. It is not possible to make realistic comparisons with the previous report.

121. The overall teaching and learning seen in gymnastics was good and pupils made good progress. Lessons were well planned to allow pupils to progress in their acquisition of physical education skills. Skills and techniques were taught well. For example, pupils refined and practised the basic actions of balancing using different parts of the body such as the hands, toes and back with developing poise. Pupils were given the opportunity to improve their practice as the lesson went on. Teachers dressed appropriately to allow for demonstration and to motivate pupils to dress correctly themselves. Pupils' attention was drawn to the issues of health and safety such as safe lifting and handling of floor mats and the importance of warming up and cooling down before and after rigorous exercise. All pupils were included in the activities and boys and girls contributed enthusiastically and performed equally well. In these lessons, attainment matched the expectations of pupils of similar age nationally. Pupils enjoy the lessons, usually respond quickly to the teachers' suggestions and work well together. On the rare occasion when the pace of teaching slowed, it was because of the pupils' slowness in putting out the apparatus, which required a new lay out.

122. All pupils have satisfactory opportunities outside class lessons to practise skills in football, tennis and athletics. Boys and girls enjoy the opportunities to play games such as tennis, hockey and football and Year 6 pupils appreciate their participation in football and netball clubs during the appropriate time of the year. They enjoy all the activities, but one boy expressed his self-consciousness when participating in dance lessons. They recalled with relish, their opportunity to work with a Shrewsbury Town football player. In swimming all the pupils who left Year 6 last year were able to swim the basic standard of 25 metres and many pupils achieved above this target.

123. Subject co-ordination is improving. The co-ordinator, recently appointed, is now in post he is addressing the criticisms of the previous inspection in a systematic way. However, he has not been in post long enough to have made a significant inroad. An audit of the subject is planned for spring 2002. The long term planning gives teachers satisfactory support and guidance and ensures that pupils cover the requirements of the National Curriculum games, gymnastics and athletics and develop skills in a logical progression. Dance is covered by a series of creative dance modules and taped programmes. Training to support teachers is limited. Resources to deliver the curriculum have been purchased and are satisfactory overall. The school is planning to enrich provision by the use of other expertise, including football coaches and inter-school activities and there are plans in place to enlist the support of Madeley Football Club to train pupils in these skills. There are plans for all Year 6 pupils to attend a residential centre for outdoor and adventurous activities to enhance their work in physical education. Currently there is no monitoring of teaching or learning, but this is included in the school action plan. Physical education supports pupils' moral and social development well. No use of ICT for example, to plot pulse rates after exercise was seen.

## **RELIGIOUS EDUCATION**

#### What the school does well

- The programme for religious education meets the requirements of the locally agreed syllabus.
- Teaching and learning are satisfactory.
- Pupils have very positive attitudes to learning they show good respect for the beliefs and values of others.

#### What could be improved

- Standards of written work do not compare well with standards demonstrated in English.
- Some teachers do not have secure enough subject knowledge to extend the learning and often set the same work for all pupils in the class.
- All work is marked but the comments do not always help pupils to understand how they can improve or what they need to do next.

124. The 1997 inspection judged that standards in religious education were at the expected level for eleven-year-olds, and teaching and learning were satisfactory. These standards have been sustained although the subject has been low on the school's list of priorities. Religious education is due for development later this year and the headteacher who has oversight of the subject has already identified areas for improvement. The findings of the 2002 inspection largely agree with the strengths and weaknesses already identified by the school.

125. The current provision for religious education is satisfactory and meets the requirements of the locally agreed syllabus. As a subject its place in the timetable is secure and the staff show very good commitment to the subject. There are also some good links to other subjects such as in Year 6 where the study of Islam is planned to coincide with the study of Pakistan in geography and pattern work in art and design. However some teachers lack a detailed knowledge and understanding of the different faiths covered by the local syllabus. As a consequence teaching lacks the confidence seen in other subjects. Teachers sometimes give incorrect information and spellings, do not always deal with pupils' questions effectively and plan tasks for pupils that lack variety and imagination.

126. All pupils are positive and responsive in lessons. Pupils with special educational needs and those learning English as an additional language respond with the same levels of interest as the rest of the class. Pupils are expected to be respectful to the beliefs and valued of others and they demonstrate this well in the way they listen carefully, ask thoughtful questions and handle religious objects with care.

127. Some good work was seen in the work of pupils in Year 5 when they studied Judaism. Pupils showed considerable interest in the Torah and knew to handle the scrolls with great care. They empathised with the Jewish boy as he was allowed to handle the documents for the first time and reflected on the beauty of the text. The teacher very cleverly demonstrated the similarities between chapters in the Torah and the Old Testament by getting pupils to read from each text in turn. Pupils in Year 6 are in early days of their understanding of the different parts and functions of the Mosque but their drawings are of high quality. Pupils in Year 3 were also learning about Judaism and made a Seder plate. Some pupils showed good recall of what each item represented. They listened attentively to the story of the plagues of Egypt and asked some very interesting questions that demonstrated their ability to reflect on fundamental questions at a deep level. Some of these questions were unexpected and the teacher found it difficult to respond because she lacked the confidence to reflect the questions back to the class. In Year 4, a lesson intended to explore ideas of God began to lose its way when a very small minority of pupils was allowed to hijack the discussion briefly. Sensibly the teacher moved pupils on to the next part of the lesson. An examination of pupils' books revealed that recording was often at a lower level than seen in pupils' English books and that some of the tasks were undemanding and were unlikely to motivate and stimulate pupils effectively. Some tasks were so defined they did not allow more able pupils to express the full range of their knowledge and understanding.

128. Teaching and learning are satisfactory overall. Strengths in teaching are in pupil management and the fostering of tolerance and respect. This is very well achieved as teachers do not tolerate any inappropriate response or comment. Some less attentive behaviour is linked to uninspiring tasks but teachers apply the school's code of conduct effectively and lessons are orderly. Teachers have the confidence to share personal experience with pupils and try to link work in lessons with the everyday experience of pupils. While a good example of this was seen in Year 5 overall this is an area for improvement so that pupils more readily gain insight into the principles and rules by which to live. The main weakness in teaching is variable knowledge and understanding of the different faiths and this is reflected in a lack of imagination in teaching the subject. Pupils are keen to contribute and teachers receive their comments with sensitivity and respect. Good opportunity was taken to reinforce their speaking and listening skills. Teachers provide some good opportunities to support writing skills. In Year 3, for example, pupils retold the story of Rama and Sita and in Year 5 pupils wrote about Moses. This work shows good understanding of the Plagues of Egypt. The work was very carefully illustrated with detailed drawings that showed good knowledge and understanding. In Year 6, pupils wrote their own moral stories and retold the story of The Prodigal Son from the father's point of view.

129. Marking varies considerably across the school. The best marking is reflective and is designed to make pupils think more carefully about their responses but some comments on effort rather than content. The subject leader has identified many of the strengths and weaknesses in the subject. The school has indicated in the school development plan its intention to address these issues later this year.