

INSPECTION REPORT

OLD HALL JUNIOR SCHOOL

Chesterfield

LEA area: Derbyshire

Unique reference number: 112669

Headteacher: Mrs S Stone

Reporting inspector: Mrs R Spencer
2766

Dates of inspection: 25th and 26th November 2002

Inspection number: 247254

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Junior
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	7 to 11 years
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Old Road Chesterfield Derbyshire
Postcode:	S40 3QR
Telephone number:	01246 273801
Fax number:	01246 273801
Appropriate authority:	The governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr S Randall
Date of previous inspection:	January 1998

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Located in the Brampton area of Chesterfield, the school draws most of its pupils mostly from the neighbouring catchment areas including Walton and Somersall. The area is socio-economically above average. The school educates pupils from seven to eleven years old and with 293 pupils (150 girls and 143 boys) it is bigger than most other junior schools. The roll has risen since the last inspection in 1998 because it is popular and oversubscribed. Attainment on entry is above average. Ten pupils are of minority ethnic heritage but none speak English as an additional language. Twenty-nine pupils are on the register for special educational needs, which is below average, and seven have a statement of special educational need. The number of pupils eligible for free school meals is well below the national average. Currently, the headteacher is managing with no senior management team, as there has been a substantial turnover of staff in the last six months.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

This is a good school with some outstanding strengths, well led by the recently appointed headteacher. Pupils make very good progress in Year 6 and good progress overall and, by the age of eleven, standards in English, mathematics and science are high. Teaching is good overall and very effective in the top juniors. The school provides an active and lively focus for the community and is exceptionally well supported by the parents. Pupils are highly motivated and enthusiastic learners. Good value for money is provided.

What the school does well

- Pupils reach very high standards in English and mathematics because of very good teaching in Year 6.
- Pupils have positive attitudes to learning and their personal development is very well promoted.
- Parental involvement, both in school and in their children's learning, is a significant strength.

What could be improved

- Aspects of teaching and the setting of individual learning targets.
- Financial planning and the use of resources so that they contribute more effectively to raising standards.

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

The school has continued to improve since its last inspection in January 1998. High standards in English and mathematics have been maintained and there has been a significant increase in the number of pupils who achieve the higher level 5. Most of the key issues in the last inspection have been addressed satisfactorily. There is now a proper policy for special educational needs and the provision and monitoring have been improved. Individual education plans have improved but need greater consistency and better match for individual pupils. Assessment procedures for non-core subjects have been established. The refurbished and improved accommodation, which includes a new ICT suite, has made a significant impact on the general ambience and standards. The school is well placed to maintain its high standards.

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
	2000	2001	2002	2002
English	A	B	A*	A
Mathematics	A	A	A	A
Science	A	A	A	B

Key	
Well above average	A
above average	B
average	C
below average	D
Well below average	E

The results show that standards have remained high in 2002. The school's performance in English was within the range of the top five per cent of all schools and in mathematics and science in the top 25 per cent of all schools. The school exceeded its targets. The current pupils aged eleven achieve high standards in reading and number work. Overall, standards are high in Year 6 in English, mathematics and science and pupils make very good progress. Standards vary in other classes in the school but are at least satisfactory. Pupils with special educational needs make satisfactory progress. Pupils from ethnic minority backgrounds make progress at the same rate as other pupils. More able make good progress overall and very good progress in Year 6.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Pupils' attitudes are very positive. They are highly motivated to increase their learning.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Pupils behave very well.
Personal development and relationships	Relationships are very good and pupils respond very well to taking responsibility.
Attendance	Very good. The attendance rate is well above the national average.

Pupils take pride in being members of the school council and take their responsibilities very seriously.

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.

The quality of teaching is good overall. It is satisfactory or better in all lessons in the top junior class and is very good in a significant minority of lessons. Reading, writing, speaking, arithmetic and algebra are taught thoroughly. Significant strengths in teaching include a very clear focus on developing key skills and understanding. Expectation, pace and planning are very good in the top junior classes and this contributes significantly to the rapid progress which pupils make. Progress in a significant minority of classes further down

the school is slower than expected because the pace of lessons is not always as fast as it should be, work does not always match pupils' abilities and pupils do not work to clear individual targets. Pupils are highly motivated, diligent and sustain their concentration very well.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Satisfactory. The curriculum is broad and balanced.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Provision and progress are satisfactory.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Provision is good. Assemblies contribute very well to pupils' spiritual, moral and social development and are rightly judged by the parents as a strength of the school as they demonstrate very effectively the school's strong sense of community.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Staff, governors and parents work well together to ensure a very high level of care. The caretaker is a valuable resource.

Singing, music and drama make a strong contribution to cultural development. Moral values are well embedded and pupils show a high level of respect and a sense of responsibility.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	The recently appointed headteacher demonstrates a very strong commitment to achieving high standards. She has made a very good start. In a relatively short period she has analysed accurately the strengths in teaching and standards and is already focused on improving areas that need further development.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	The governors fulfil their pastoral responsibility exceptionally well and are rapidly increasing their knowledge and understanding of their responsibilities in the academic area. The governors support the headteacher very well.
The school's evaluation of its performance	The work of the school is being evaluated systematically and analytically.
The strategic use of resources	Whilst the governors consult effectively and manage competitive tendering well, their long term financial planning is not sufficiently focused on academic issues.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Children love coming to school and have very positive attitudes to their learning and homework.• Teaching and progress are good.• Standards in sports, music and drama are high.• Parents are well informed.• The school is well led and managed and works closely with parents.• It is a happy, friendly school where parents feel secure about raising any issues.• Parents value the good quality supply teachers who serve the school regularly.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• A minor concern about bullying.

Parents are very positive about the school and the inspection team strongly endorses these views. The headteacher is very well informed about bullying and is dealing with the issues very effectively and sensitively.

PART B: COMMENTARY

WHAT THE SCHOOL DOES WELL

Pupils reach very high standards in English and mathematics because of very good teaching in Year 6.

1. Pupils reach high standards in English and mathematics largely because of the very good teaching in Year 6. In the 2002 national tests, pupils aged eleven reached high standards overall in English, mathematics and science. The percentage of pupils attaining the higher Level 5 overall in English was well above the national average. Similarly, the percentage of pupils achieving the higher Level 5 in mathematics and science was above the national average. Achievement over time is good in Years 5 and 6 and pupils achieve well in lessons where the quality of teaching is good or better. Standards of presentation and handwriting are very high and pupils produce a great deal of work of very high quality.
2. By the age of eleven, pupils have developed very good speaking and listening skills. They listen carefully and attentively in lessons and assemblies. They are confident, use a wide range of vocabulary and articulate words correctly. So, when discussing personalities, words such as *opinionated* and *arrogant* are used appropriately to describe people's characteristics. All pupils are enthusiastic readers and read very well with expression and a clear voice. Their very good phrasing of prose achieves the maximum impact for written works. Most pupils' attempts at characterisation are a joy to listen to. They tackle unfamiliar words confidently and, on the infrequent occasions when they are not sure, they use their word attack skills accurately to pronounce words like *ayah* and *veranda*, which they came across when reading 'The Secret Garden'. Their good knowledge and general vocabulary was illustrated well when a pupil explained that a veranda 'was like a raised platform outside on which you sit on hot days'. They talk enthusiastically about their favourite books and authors and can select examples from the text to support their opinions. Their higher order reading skills are very well developed. They are able to explain inferences and nuances by identifying different clues from the text. They can skim and scan, take notes and quickly produce drafts.
3. Pupils aged eleven write very well in a wide range of forms. There is evidence of pupils tackling descriptive, historical, factual and biographical writing, for example in their work on advertising the 'Eden Camp', pupils are clearly taught to be aware of the audience and see the need for clear structure, organisation and information which is snappy and attractive. In other written work they can vary the length and complexity of the sentence structure depending on the subject matter. They write imaginatively and use an interesting range of connectives. Very good teaching has made them avoid sentences with repetitive beginnings and endings. They have learnt to group several subjects before using a main verb and, as a result, their written work is interesting and imaginative and of a high standard. Most able pupils use punctuation very well. They spell words, such as *disdain*, *occurs*, and *independence* accurately and confidently. Their handwriting and presentation of work are of an excellent standard. These high standards in writing are not reflected in the lower juniors where the quality and quantity of work is of only satisfactory standard.
4. Year 6 pupils achieve high standards in mathematics. Work in number is especially thorough and good from Years 3 to 6. Pupils show a very good knowledge of multiplication facts. They thoroughly enjoy working out challenging problems mentally, hence sums, such as 'take a gross, reduce by half, add a score and multiply the result by 6' is seen as a fun exercise before going for lunch. There is good coverage of all aspects of mathematics. Scrutiny of pupils' work shows accurate calculations using decimals up to three places and ordering and converting fractions to

decimals and percentages. Teachers' high expectations ensure that pupils use technical language accurately, hence in Year 6 work in identifying lines of symmetry in two-dimensional shapes the teacher's emphasis on the language of symmetry ensured that pupils could explain *symmetrical*, *lines of symmetry*, *axis of symmetry* and *reflective symmetry*. The quality, quantity and range of work since September 2002 in Years 5 and 6 are very good. Pupils make very good progress. They enjoy mathematics lessons and respond with much enthusiasm, particularly when doing mental work. They compete eagerly to give the quickest response to problems presented. They have very well developed skills to manage and manipulate numbers accurately and now need more opportunities to apply their knowledge and skills in other subjects. Number skills are developed consistently throughout the school because of good medium-term planning.

5. The quality of teaching is good or better in the top junior classes. Lessons start with a clear focus, learning objectives are shared and discussed and resources are carefully prepared and well planned and organised. Precise instructions ensure that pupils understand the tasks and how these relate to the learning objectives. Initial opening sessions are lively with quick questioning and consolidation of previous work. Homework is checked and discussed and queries answered. Hence, the lessons start with a good rapport with the teachers and a fast pace is set to make sure every minute is used productively.
6. Pupils respond enthusiastically. They are bright and alert and enjoy the challenge. They want to learn and the teachers manage their learning well. One feature of lessons that is especially effective is the 'brainstorming of ideas' at the beginning of sessions. This was exemplified in a literature lesson in Year 6. Pupils had read 'The Secret World' and were now learning to plan their own story. The initial brainstorm enabled pupils to reflect and look for common factors such as how does a main character enter the secret place in different stories. The pupils, whose rapid response demonstrated their good knowledge of the literature, quickly identified six different stories. Skilful teaching enhanced and extended their learning by teaching them further how to look for clues and make notes.
7. Brainstorming reveals a good range of opinions that are supported with argument and evidence, so a pupil explains 'it creates excitement but does not say too much and hence encourages you to read on'. These lively discussions enhance pupils' speaking and listening skills and the teacher encourages them to consider how the meaning of words can be changed and difference can be implied or inferred. There is mutual respect. When pupils are 'off task' the teacher is fully confident that they are thinking, debating and reflecting on what is required. She respects this, recognises its importance and makes time and space for it.
8. Teachers' own blackboard work is a good model. Their very high expectations ensure that pupils' presentation of their work and handwriting is all well above average. Letters and numbers are uniformly formed. They are neat and clear; headings are properly underlined and work is dated. Teachers respect pupils' work and mark it carefully with helpful and encouraging comments. Pupils in turn take enormous pride in their work.

Pupils have positive attitudes to learning and their personal development is well promoted.

9. Pupils enjoy coming to school. Their enthusiasm, relationships and behaviour have a significant impact on their learning and standards. They relate very well to adults and each other. They develop personal confidence and respect for each other's points of view; this is because there is a very strong ethos of care and valuing of pupils' contributions. This is well exemplified in the way pupils take the development of the school council very seriously. They know that their views are heard and respected by the staff and the governors. Their growing maturity helps them to understand that not all their suggestions will be accepted and that, in a democratic process, decisions have to be reached by consensus. They fully accept their responsibilities, explain their views and the role they play and how they represent their class. They have a highly developed sense of fair play. This was well illustrated when, having secured from the governors funding for new playground equipment, the school council members returned with a rota for using the playground equipment. They wanted to be fair to all age groups. In a Year 5 geography lesson on Kenya, pupils were introduced to complex problems of global markets and interdependence. They learnt to explore why coffee prices fluctuate and what fair trading meant. Pupils listened to the session quietly initially. They role played bringing coffee beans and getting paid a lower amount each time. Their growing and developing maturity was illustrated well when the more able pupils, instead of simply expressing moral outrage began to thoughtfully consider the different factors that contributed to their moral, social and economic dilemma. These children have a good general knowledge, which they retain, recall and apply well. They enjoy being challenged, especially when asked to explain their thinking or give accounts of what they have learnt.
10. The school encourages good manners and, almost without exception, the pupils are courteous to each other and to adults. For example, when going to the hall for assembly pupils come in quietly and wait eagerly. They love assemblies and sing enthusiastically and well. The merit system is used well by the school to reward academic, personal and team achievements. This engenders keen but friendly competition between groups and teams and pupils are thrilled when rewarded. Parents are very positive that the school contributes much in helping their children to become responsible citizens and instils in them a joy for learning and an eagerness to come to school. The very high attendance confirms this.

Parental involvement, both in school and in their children's learning, is a significant strength.

11. Parental support for the school, financial, pastoral and academic, is exemplary. They ensure that their children complete their homework and recognise the importance of regular and punctual attendance. They are engaged in their children's learning, for example, many parents make written comments in pupils' reading/homework diaries. They track their children's progress and are confident to raise questions. The school encourages parents to play an active role and, as a result, there is nearly always a full attendance at meetings and curriculum evenings. They value education. They organise social functions and trips to places like London and York. The school functions are always arranged so that there are activities both for the parents and the children. Good attendance at these functions demonstrates the success the PFA and the school has in engaging parents constructively and productively. Parents are very pleased with their children's education and want to contribute materially. The Parents' and Friends' Association raised £7,500 and have funded the new ICT suite. Their support, interest and involvement are important factors that contribute much to successful learning.

WHAT COULD BE IMPROVED

Aspects of teaching and the setting of individual learning targets

12. Just under half of the teaching seen was satisfactory rather than good or very good. Most teaching of this standard was seen in each of the paired classes from Year 5 to Year 3. Sufficient attention is not always paid to the pupils' prior learning. Nearly half the pupils enter school having achieved the higher level 3 at the end of Year 2 in the infant school and so have a firm base on which to build. Whilst the classes are very large and there are a number of pupils who are not secure about their number bonds and number facts, nevertheless teachers' expectations are not sufficiently high to ensure learning is moving at a fast rate. This is exemplified in both literacy and mathematics lessons in Year 3 classes. Over 50 minutes of the lesson is used for 'word work'. Whilst the teaching ensured all pupils understood what a 'prefix' was, and their responses showed a good grasp of the idea, more able pupils continued being challenged and interested but the rest of the class struggled to keep going and maintain interest. There were not sufficiently varied tasks to engage pupils. Pupils' good work ethics and general desire to learn meant that, despite somewhat unimaginative teaching, they worked hard and behaved very well. Similarly, the mental warm-up in a mathematics lesson required pupils to count in 'tens' forwards and backwards and then further work subtracting and adding other numbers to make ten helped pupils to identify patterns. Pupils then used calculators to identify and consolidate their understanding of patterns by repeating the operation many times and then applying to work on 'a trio of numbers'. By this stage of the lesson the pace had slowed and the repeat of the function frustrated more able pupils. However, some who could not follow the development of the lesson and could not keep up were equally frustrated.
13. Teaching strategies are not always modified sufficiently to ensure a good match of the task to pupils' learning needs. The structure of lessons is sometimes unbalanced. Often, too little time is given for a proper plenary so that the teacher and pupils can jointly consider what new learning has taken place and what factors may have prevented them from learning. In some lessons, teachers talked for 35 to 45 minutes, leaving little time for written work. There is only a limited quantity of work in pupils' books since September, indicating that the pace at which pupils learn is sometimes not fast enough in the lower part of the school. The school analyses performance data and pupils' prior attainment but does not set individual learning targets. The headteacher and governors are aware of this shortcoming and it is being included as a priority in the school improvement plan.

Improve financial planning and the use of resources so that they contribute more effectively to raising standards.

14. The governors play a very active and supportive role in the school. They are keen to move the school forward and have a very good grasp of its strengths and areas for development. They play a very important pastoral role but their understanding of their strategic responsibilities in the monitoring of standards and of using the school's financial resources to make a positive and effective impact on standards is at an embryonic stage. The school has a large surplus of 13 per cent but does not have a budgeted plan to reflect longer-term academic priorities. The financial information received by the governors needs simplifying for them to access key information easily. The governing body satisfactorily manages other aspects of the best value process, for example, there is extensive consultation with pupils and the contract for the ICT suite was based on competitive tendering.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

15. In order to build on its academic success and further improve the quality of education provided by the school, the headteacher, staff and governors should:

(1) Improve aspects of teaching and set targets for individual pupils by:

- making more effective use of pupils' prior attainment and learning, especially Year 3 pupils;
- consistently planning lessons that have a proper three-part structure so that pupils get adequate time to write and contribute to the plenary;
- always adapting teaching strategies to meet the needs of pupils with a wide range of abilities and setting individual targets for all pupils
- accelerating the pace of learning in some lessons.

(2) Improve financial planning and the use of resources so that they contribute more effectively to raising standards by:

- providing training to improve governors' skills in monitoring standards and using finance more strategically;
- providing the headteacher and the governors with financial information which is up-to-date and accessible.

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	15
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	13

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Number	0	3	6	6	0	0	0
Percentage	0	20	40	40	0	0	0

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

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll	Y3 – Y6
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	293
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	1

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs	Y3 – Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	7
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	29

English as an additional language	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	0

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	14
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	3

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	3.4

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.2

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)

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2002	42	52	94

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	39	40	42
	Girls	51	50	51
	Total	90	90	93
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	96 (92)	96 (93)	99 (100)
	National	75 (75)	73 (71)	86 (87)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	33	38	38
	Girls	46	49	51
	Total	79	87	89
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	86 (90)	93 (92)	95 (95)
	National	73 (72)	74 (74)	82 (82)

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

Ethnic background of pupils

Exclusions in the last school year

Categories used in the Annual School Census
White – British
White – Irish
White – any other White background
Mixed – White and Black Caribbean
Mixed – White and Black African
Mixed – White and Asian
Mixed – any other mixed background
Asian or Asian British – Indian
Asian or Asian British – Pakistani
Asian or Asian British – Bangladeshi
Asian or Asian British – any other Asian background
Black or Black British – Caribbean
Black or Black British – African
Black or Black British – any other Black background
Chinese
Any other ethnic group

No of pupils on roll
284
0
1
0
0
0
0
0
1
0
0
0
1
0
0
2
4

Number of fixed period exclusions	Number of permanent exclusions
0	0
0	0
0	0
0	0
0	0
0	0
0	0
0	0
0	0
0	0
0	0
0	0
0	0
0	0
0	0
0	0
0	0

No ethnic group recorded

0

0

0

The table refers to pupils of compulsory school age only. It gives the number of exclusions, which may be different from the number of pupils excluded.

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers and classes: Y33 – Y6

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	9
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	37
Average class size	37

Education support staff: Y3 – Y6

Total number of education support staff	7
Total aggregate hours worked per week	120

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Financial information

Financial year	2001/02
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	£
Total income	552,257
Total expenditure	527,088
Expenditure per pupil	1,706
Balance brought forward from previous year	39,881
Balance carried forward to next year	65,050

Recruitment of teachers

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	3
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	2

Total number of vacant teaching posts (FTE)	1
Number of vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of a term or more (FTE)	1
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	293
Number of questionnaires returned	123

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	61	36	2	1	0
My child is making good progress in school.	50	42	6	2	0
Behaviour in the school is good.	46	52	2	0	0
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	32	50	15	1	2
The teaching is good.	47	50	0	1	2
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	45	52	2	0	1
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	69	28	2	0	1
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	71	29	0	0	0
The school works closely with parents.	41	55	3	0	1
The school is well led and managed.	46	46	0	1	7
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	52	47	1	0	0
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	33	49	11	2	5