

INSPECTION REPORT

ST NICHOLAS C of E MIDDLE SCHOOL

Pinvin, Pershore

LEA area: Worcestershire

Unique reference number: 116861

Headteacher: Mrs K Saddington

Reporting inspector: Mr Sean O'Toole
20891

Dates of inspection: 31st March – 3rd April

Inspection number: 247708

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Middle
School category:	Voluntary Controlled
Age range of pupils:	9 – 12 years
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Main Street Pinvin Pershore Worcestershire
Postcode:	WR10 2ER
Telephone number:	01386 554196
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Appropriate authority:	The Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr A Ragbourne
Date of previous inspection:	November 1997

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members			Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
20891	Sean O'Toole	Registered inspector	English as an additional language; Equal opportunities; Art and design; Physical education.	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.
13526	Richard Barnard	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.
20911	Judith Dawson	Team inspector	History; Music; Religious education.	
20350	Vivien Davis	Team inspector	Science; Geography.	How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils.
3692	David Hill		Mathematics; Design and technology.	
17454	Brian Aldridge		English; Information and communication technology (ICT); French.	

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

St Nicholas CE Middle School, a smaller than average sized middle school, is located in Pinvin, close to Pershore. The school draws pupils from a wide area that is above average socio-economically. A total of 323 pupils aged between nine and twelve attend the school with slightly more boys than girls. Very few are from ethnic minority backgrounds and none of the pupils is at an early stage of English acquisition. Thirty-four pupils have special educational needs (below average) and four have statements of special educational need (average). Attainment on admission is above average overall although in recent years the levels of pupils' attainment starting at the school has fallen slightly. Since the previous inspection there have been significant changes of staff including the appointment of a new headteacher and a recent re-allocation of leadership responsibilities.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

The school provides a satisfactory quality of education. Standards in most subjects are above average by the end of Years 6 and 7. Teaching and learning are satisfactory. The leadership and management of the school are satisfactory and the new headteacher is beginning to make an impact on school improvement, well supported by the governors. The school provides satisfactory value for money.

What the school does well

- Pupils in Year 5 make rapid progress benefiting from good teaching
- The standards attained at the end of Years 6 and 7 in English, mathematics, information and communication technology, history and geography are above average
- Specialist teaching is effective in some subjects especially science and design and technology where standards are well above average
- Governors make an incisive contribution to school improvement

What could be improved

- Some teaching is not good enough because it lacks sufficient challenge
- Some aspects of leadership and management are unsatisfactory, especially strategic planning and developing a common vision for school improvement
- Boys in Years 6 and 7 make insufficient progress in English
- Standards in religious education are below average
- The provision, teaching and progress of pupils with special educational needs are unsatisfactory
- The school does not do enough to promote spiritual and cultural awareness and this hampers pupils' personal, social and emotional development
- The information provided to, and the involvement of, parents

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

Since the previous inspection in November 1997 improvement has been mixed but satisfactory overall. The school has made satisfactory recent improvement and tackled the issues raised in the previous inspection report. There has been good improvement in standards in ICT and design and technology and in English, mathematics and science standards have risen satisfactorily. More remains to be done to accelerate boys' progress in reading. The quality of teaching has improved in some areas but is still too variable. There are strengths in some aspects of leadership and management notably the effective contribution of the governors. The new headteacher has begun to have an impact but more work remains to be done in providing a strategic plan which guides improvement. The school has satisfactory capacity for further 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
	2000	2001	2002	2002
English	B	B	B	C
Mathematics	B	C	B	C
Science	B	C	A	B

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

The school achieved its targets last year. Inspection evidence shows that by the end of Years 6 and 7 standards are above average in English, mathematics, ICT, French, history and geography and well above average in science and design and technology. Standards in art and design, music and physical education are average but are below those expected in religious education. Progress is inconsistent because of the variable quality of teaching. Pupils in Year 5 make good progress and achieve well because of consistently good and better teaching. The rate of progress in Years 6 and 7 is mostly satisfactory and often good for average and able pupils in English, mathematics and science. Pupils with special educational needs make satisfactory and sometimes good progress when receiving additional support but in some lessons the teachers take insufficient account of their individual education plans and progress is unsatisfactory. More able pupils make similar progress to their peers. Girls achieve better than boys in English; boys' achievement in English is unsatisfactory in Years 6 and 7.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Satisfactory. Pupils are enthusiastic about extra-curricular activities. Girls have more positive attitudes than boys.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Satisfactory. Pupils are not orderly enough when moving around the school. Pupils in Year 5 are well behaved and interested learners. There are some isolated incidents of bullying. There were three exclusions last year.
Personal development and relationships	Satisfactory. Pupils enjoy their role on the school council. In many lessons pupils have limited opportunities to make choices and decisions. They work together effectively.
Attendance	Good. Attendance is above the national average.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils in:	Years 5 – 6	Year 7
Quality of teaching	Satisfactory	Satisfactory

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.

Teaching at the school is variable. In the lessons seen most teaching was good and there were examples of excellent and very good teaching, although some lessons were unsatisfactory. The impact of teaching over time is satisfactory. Teaching at its best, usually in Year 5, often inspires and enthuses the pupils and learning is at its most successful in this year group. Setting pupils by ability for English, mathematics, science and French works effectively for average and above average pupils. The teaching of English, mathematics and science is good overall.

In most lessons the needs of different pupils are met. However, the teaching of pupils with special educational needs is unsatisfactory in English and mathematics in the sets in Years 6 and 7 because insufficient attention is given to using well focused individual education plans to plan work which meets the needs of the pupils. Basic skills in literacy and numeracy are taught satisfactorily. Pupils' learning is satisfactory; most apply themselves to the tasks in hand and work hard but boys in particular do not take sufficient pride in presenting their work. The teaching of basic skills in ICT is good. The main weaknesses in teaching are a lack of pace and challenge in some lessons where teachers' expectations are insufficiently high. Some teaching in Years 6 and 7 lacks vigour and imagination and this produces listless and disinterested pupils who are sometimes disruptive because they are not challenged.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Satisfactory. All subjects are taught and there are very good extra-curricular activities.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Unsatisfactory. Individual education plans lack sufficient focus. Setting by ability does not work well enough for pupils with learning difficulties. Support staff contribute effectively in lessons, especially science.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Unsatisfactory. The school provides satisfactory opportunities for pupils to develop sound moral and social values but spiritual matters and awareness of cultural differences are not given high enough priority. Pupils are not prepared well enough for life in a culturally diverse society.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Satisfactorily. There are good procedures for child protection. Assessment procedures are satisfactory but staff use them inconsistently. There is good assessment of ICT.

The school has a satisfactory partnership with parents although parental concerns about communication and information are justified. Parents are supportive of the school in fund-raising and help their children at home.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Satisfactory. The lack of an effective strategic development plan has hampered the school's improvement. There is a new and keen leadership team but some senior staff and subject leaders have resisted change and slowed school improvement.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Very well. Governors have a shrewd understanding of what needs to be done to improve the school. They are keen and supportive of new initiatives and monitor well the school's work.

The school's evaluation of its performance	Satisfactory. Until recently priorities have not been clear enough. Recent analysis of test results has guided target setting but much remains to be done to sharpen up some teaching. Performance management is now being used to set challenging targets for the headteacher and staff.
The strategic use of resources	Satisfactory. Funds are managed well and governors satisfactorily consider best value when purchasing supplies and services such as the recent spending on improved toilet facilities.

The school's accommodation and resources are satisfactory although the current absence of a library is a weakness. There are sufficient well-qualified teachers and support staff. Professional development and staff training have not been sufficiently high priorities until recently. The administrative staff make a good contribution to the smooth running of the school.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Their children like school • The school helps their children to become mature • There are good expectations that the pupils should work hard • Most staff are approachable 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Homework • Information about their children's progress • How the school works closely with them

The inspection team agrees with most of the parents' views. The school makes satisfactory provision for homework but there is some inconsistency between classes. Information about the pupils' progress is poor.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS

The school's results and pupils' achievements

1. Though the school admits pupils with a full range of abilities, attainment on admission is above average overall. Since the last inspection the school's intake has changed and attainment on admission although still above average in English is closer to average in mathematics. There are approximately the same proportions of pupils with special educational needs, including those pupils with statements. The school has a stable population who come from a wide variety of backgrounds; few pupils join or leave the school at times other than the normal points at the beginning of Year 5 and the end of Year 7. Overall, the results of national tests at the end of Year 6 have changed little since the previous inspection and the school has maintained above average standards in English and mathematics and improved the results in science to well above average. At the time of the previous inspection standards in design and technology and information and communication technology (ICT) were insufficiently high and there has been substantial improvement in these subjects which are now above average in ICT and well above average in design and technology. Although test results have kept pace with the rising national trend in improvement overall, the gap between boys' and girls' performance has widened and boys do not achieve well enough in English in Years 6 and 7. There is little significant difference in the standards achieved by boys and girls in other subjects. The main reason for boys' underachievement in English is low expectation by some teachers resulting in lack of challenge. Teachers are not consistent enough in expecting good presentation of work and effective use of spelling, grammar and punctuation.
2. The school sets appropriate targets for attainment in national tests each year and achieves them. Its success is due in English to the good quality of work done by girls. Target setting has improved under the guidance of the new headteacher and English subject leader and more attention is focused on boys but some staff still do not insist on sufficiently high standards and are too ready to accept mediocre work from boys.
3. Progress is at its best in Year 5 where teaching is geared to meeting the needs of pupils of different abilities and good account is taken of previous learning when planning lessons. Progress in Years 6 and 7 varies significantly between classes, sets and subjects. Overall, pupils make satisfactory progress in Years 6 and 7 and good progress in Year 5. The progress made by pupils with special educational needs is too variable and is unsatisfactory overall. This is because individual education plans lack focus and do not match pupils' needs sufficiently. In science, pupils with special educational needs receive good support from learning assistants and this enables the pupils to participate fully in lessons and learn effectively. These pupils are grouped in sets for English and mathematics and the quality of teaching is often not good enough so that pupils are frustrated in their learning and make unsatisfactory progress. In general, more able pupils are given sufficient challenge and this is reflected in their performance in national test results. Most of these pupils benefit from being in sets where teaching is well focused and often challenging, although in Year 7 the most able pupils in mathematics could do better. The school has begun to identify gifted and talented pupils but as yet makes little special provision for them. Girls make better progress than boys in English.
4. The results of the most recent national tests and inspection evidence show that standards in English and mathematics are above average at the end of Years 6 and 7

and well above average in science due to very effective teaching. When compared with schools with similar intakes standards were average in English and mathematics and above average in science. Throughout the school, pupils have good speaking and listening skills and are able to sustain a conversation and discuss a range of issues. They speak clearly and audibly in public and listen to others' views. Pupils have above average reading skills and these are developed very well in Year 5 but given less emphasis in Years 6 and 7 where tools such as the reading journals are not used as consistently to extend pupils' reading and writing skills. Some teachers in Year 6 keep inadequate records of reading and pay scant attention to promoting pupils' enjoyment and competence in using books to enhance their skills in research. The lack of a suitable library also limits opportunities for pupils to gather information working independently. This is particularly detrimental to boys. Pupils' writing skills are above average overall and some aspects of writing are developed very well as pupils write imaginatively and in depth, showing a clear understanding of how to sequence ideas logically.

5. In mathematics, pupils attain above average standards but their rate of progress slows in Years 6 and 7. Pupils have a good grasp of number and how to apply their knowledge in problem solving. They have a good grasp of shape, space and measures and also competently present data in a variety of forms, often making good use of ICT. Progress is good in science and pupils achieve well throughout the school because of effective teaching and good resources. Pupils have a good grasp of scientific ideas and principles and are competent in carrying out systematic investigations. They have a secure knowledge and understanding of materials, forces and life processes.
6. Some teachers encourage pupils to make good use of basic skills in literacy, numeracy and ICT in lessons in a range of subjects. Pupils write well in history and geography including pertinent argument. In design and technology and science they present their work and results in graphs and charts and are careful to record accurately using a variety of measures. Pupils enjoy using computers and boys respond well to opportunities to present their work in this way. However, there is insufficient use of literacy in art and design and music.
7. There have been some improvements in the standards in several subjects since the previous inspection.

Standards achieved in other subjects		
Subjects	By the end of Year 6	By the end of Year 7
Art and design	Average	Average
Design and technology	Well above average	Well above average
French	Above average	Above average
Geography	Above average	Above average
History	Above average	Above average
ICT	Above average	Above average
Music	Average	Average
Physical education	Average	Average
Religious education	Below average	Below average

8. Pupils achieve well in design and technology and combine artistic and computer skills in designing and making complex models. They are good at evaluating and improving their work. Pupils' success in French is due to good teaching and pupils are developing good oral skills through regular practice. The pupils have a good grasp of skills and techniques in ICT because the teacher builds very effectively on what has been taught previously and expects much of pupils. They have a good grasp of all elements of the subject and apply skills well at home and at school.
9. Several factors contribute to the average standards achieved in art and design, physical education and music. Subject leadership is not as good in these subjects and assessment is not as focused as it should be on building on previous learning. In art and design there are limited resources and insufficient opportunities in some classes to explore ideas and use skills and techniques creatively. In music, there are insufficient opportunities for pupils to listen to and appraise music. In physical education, some of the teaching is weak and swimming is not taught. Standards in religious education are not high enough because too little attention is given to promoting pupils' understanding of spiritual and moral issues and applying them to their own lives and in understanding how the major faiths impact on the lives of believers.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

10. Pupils' behaviour, attitudes, personal development and relationships are satisfactory. Standards are not as good as those reported at the time of the previous inspection. Pupils with special educational needs like school on the whole. However, in some lessons they are bored because their needs are not met and some of their teachers do not make enough effort to make the lessons interesting for them. Attendance is good, being well above the national average overall. Unauthorised absences and cases of lateness are very few.
11. Parents generally feel that children like school. Pupils themselves have mixed views about school and this is demonstrated in their attitudes in lessons and their achievements. Pupils in Year 5 display good attitudes, enjoy their lessons and work hard. This was seen in a lower set mathematics lesson where the pupils clearly enjoyed the teaching and quickly got on with their work in extending number sequences very well. In Years 6 and 7 attitudes are generally satisfactory and occasionally unsatisfactory. Many pupils say they do not like school and find concentration difficult, especially when they find their work lacks interest. For example, in a Year 6 religious education lesson pupils were bored and the teacher had to tell them to stop looking at the games lesson outside. Girls generally show better attitudes to work than boys. Throughout the school pupils show good interest in practical work in science and design and technology, ICT and extra-curricular activities.
12. Behaviour is satisfactory. Pupils in Year 5 are well behaved in lessons where they respond well to the effective variation in teaching styles which encourages them to take risks and learn independently. Older pupils are sometimes disrespectful and cause minor disruptions in lessons, which slow the pace of learning for all. Most pupils know the school rules well but their response is variable. For example, pupils have good manners and behave very well in the dining room but as soon as they move into the corridors they become ill disciplined. This behaviour is made worse by the constant movement in and out of the buildings at lunchtimes with a lack of awareness of others. Parents and pupils expressed some concerns about bullying. Pupils' records reveal a number of incidents of roughness and aggressive behaviour and also name-calling and oppressiveness. There were six temporary exclusions for

poor behaviour last year but there have been none so far this year. This indicates an improvement in behaviour under the influence of the new headteacher.

13. Pupils' personal development and relationships are satisfactory:
 - Pupils enjoy the responsibility of being on the recently formed school council
 - They develop independence well through participating in residential visits
 - They enjoy representing the school in sporting events
 - Pupils lack independence in learning because they have limited opportunities to make choices and decisions in lessons.
14. Most pupils show satisfactory respect for the feelings, values and beliefs of others but a few, especially in Years 6 and 7, lack respect for others.
 - Pupils' personal qualities are not enhanced by the promotion of their spiritual, social, moral and cultural education
 - Excitement in learning and discovery is limited although there was a good example in a Year 5 science lesson when pupils showed wonder and excitement when they examined the stamen and pollen from daffodils
 - Pupils have limited opportunities to reflect on moral and social issues.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT

15. Although teaching overall at the school is satisfactory there is much variation in the quality between classes and year groups. The majority of lessons seen during the inspection were good and there were examples of excellent and very good teaching. However, pupils' work and discussions with them show that learning in some subjects is hampered by lack lustre teaching. Teaching at its best, usually in Year 5 and science, often inspires and enthuses the pupils. The teaching of pupils with special educational needs is mostly unsatisfactory. Setting pupils by ability for English, mathematics, science and French works effectively in most instances. However, in some sets in English and mathematics, pupils with low ability are not taught well enough because the teaching is not planned effectively to take sufficient account of the pupils' needs and tasks are too demanding. Although some aspects of teaching have improved since the previous inspection there is still some way to go in ensuring consistency between year groups and subjects.
16. The teaching of special educational needs is largely unsatisfactory and is not as good as reported at the time of the previous inspection. The school does not meet the requirements of special educational needs pupils. Teachers do not use individual education plans to set precise targets and detail activities to achieve these targets within a short time span. This is linked to unsatisfactory learning in the lower sets in Years 6 and 7 in English and mathematics. There are good aspects to the teaching of special educational needs including the use of support staff in science and also in withdrawal groups.
17. Most of the teaching of English, mathematics and science is good. Teachers have secure subject knowledge and follow national guidelines making suitable use of the national literacy and numeracy strategies. Some subjects benefit from specialist teaching and this is most effective in ICT, design and technology and French because teachers plan challenging lessons which interest pupils and challenge them. History and geography are taught well and often include the use of computers and visits to enhance learning. The teaching of art and design, music and physical education is satisfactory overall but lacks a sharp edge because subject leadership is insufficiently focused.

18. Pupils' learning is satisfactory overall. Few pupils show real enthusiasm and a thirst for learning because the styles of teaching do not meet their needs fully. Their independent skills and desire to research information and take charge of their own learning are hampered by an often closed approach which requires them to fill in worksheets or follow a line of enquiry based only on the teachers' views. Conversely, learning is good in Year 5 and some subjects in Years 6 and 7 because staff engage the pupils, set challenges and expect much from them. The result is that pupils are enthusiastic, hard working and produce good quantities of well-presented work. For example, in a Year 5 art lesson the teacher set good time limits for pupils to complete a challenging task. In dance and games lessons the teachers encourage individual expression and for pupils to share their ideas so that everyone benefits. Some teaching in Years 6 and 7 is without energy and lacks expectation. For example, in English and mathematics the expectations of pupils' presentation and productivity are sometimes too low and boys, in particular, do the minimum expected.
19. The following aspects of teaching are mostly good and contribute to pupils' achievement.
- In some subjects, such as design and technology, ICT and history and geography, high expectations ensure that pupils want to do their best and take pride in their own and others' achievements as reflected in well written and presented work
 - Science teaching is challenging, focused on pupils making decisions about their own learning and planning investigations which they record effectively
 - Teachers in most upper sets have good subject knowledge and teach basic skills in literacy and numeracy well
 - Homework is used regularly in most classes
 - Teachers of younger pupils have a good understanding of how pupils learn and plan lessons which include a variety of learning styles
 - Some teachers mark pupils' work very effectively and provide focused guidance on the next steps in learning so that pupils are clear about what they need to do to improve.
20. Some teaching is not good enough as it lacks challenge and teachers are not involved sufficiently in promoting high standards and care in presentation of work.
- Some lessons lack pace and do not hold pupils' attention; this is particularly the case in Years 6 and 7 and applies mostly to boys
 - There is insufficient use of apparatus and other resources in some lessons such as art and design and mathematics and this adversely affects the rate of learning especially for lower attaining pupils
 - Some teachers do not mark and assess pupils' work with sufficient rigour; this is especially the case in reviewing the pupils' reading journals which receive scant attention in some Year 6 and 7 classes
 - The limited range of approaches in teaching art and design and music and lack of coverage of some aspects of these subjects has a detrimental impact on pupils' creative learning.
21. The most significant weakness in teaching relates to lack of consistency in planning challenging work and the good work done in some lessons is undone by this inconsistency because pupils lose their enthusiasm.

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

22. The school provides a satisfactory curriculum that meets statutory requirements in almost all aspects, although currently swimming is not taught. There is sufficient time allocated to the subjects and the school provides good opportunities for the pupils to learn French and for personal, social, health and careers education. The school has improved some aspects of the curriculum since the previous inspection and issues raised have been tackled well. This has brought about much improvement in standards in ICT and design and technology. However, there has been insufficient focus on religious education and standards in this subject have fallen.
23. The breadth, balance and relevance of the curriculum are satisfactory. A strength of the timetable is that the school provides three full lessons in the morning, so offering a full curriculum to pupils and using time well. In most subjects all aspects are covered. However, in music there is not enough attention paid to the work of established composers and music from other cultures. In religious education pupils are taught facts about major faiths but not provided with sufficient opportunity to respond to them.
24. Learning opportunities for different groups of pupils are mostly satisfactory.
- Boys and girls have similar opportunities
 - There are good opportunities for pupils to learn French
 - Setting by ability works well in most instances; the provision for more able pupils is good in English and mathematics because setting arrangements favour these pupils
 - There are very good extra-curricular activities which include sport, music, ICT and the arts.
25. The provision for special educational needs pupils is inadequate overall because individual education plans do not provide precisely described, manageable and quantifiable targets to guide teachers on planning lessons. Pupils with statements of special educational needs are provided with some individual support that enables them to access the subjects of the curriculum. These pupils make good progress when supported by learning assistants. Statements are regularly and carefully reviewed. When well-focused programmes of work are used as in small withdrawal groups the pupils with special educational needs make good progress. Classroom support staff also offer very good support in mixed ability classes in science and humanities. However, there is insufficient link between individual education plans and suggestions from outside agencies to pinpoint exactly what each pupil needs to be taught.
26. Learning opportunities in the basic skills are satisfactory.
- The national literacy and numeracy strategies are satisfactorily implemented across the school including Year 7
 - The school is beginning to make good use of cross-curricular links particularly in science, history and geography
 - English is used well in these subjects because teachers pay close attention to the development of subject vocabulary and encourage pupils to use their descriptive skills fully when writing up their work
 - Computers are used effectively for research and presentation
 - Arithmetic, data handling and measure and are also applied well in subjects such as design and technology and science.
27. Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is unsatisfactory overall although the school makes good provision for PSHCE (including sex and drugs). A lesson seen in

Year 5 reflected this good quality and enabled pupils to reflect on personal issues well. As yet the new programme has not had a significant impact on pupils' personal development. The associated policies including the sex and relationship policy are good and provide clear guidance and there is good leadership in this area.

28. The school makes satisfactory provision for pupils' moral and social development but provision for pupils' spiritual and cultural development is unsatisfactory. There has been a decline in the quality of provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development since the last inspection. The school has appropriate systems to promote pupils' moral and social development. The school now has an effective behaviour policy and personal, social, health and citizenship lessons are part of the timetable. Assemblies are planned to cover a range of social issues, for example, during the week of the inspection the theme was "Families". The teachers use a suitable range of published resources and in-service training to support these initiatives. There is, however, a lack of consistency in the approach to moral and social provision that has had an impact on pupils' behaviour, particularly amongst the older pupils. The very good range of extra-curricular activities, open to all pupils, gives pupils a sense of responsibility and opportunities to socialise across the year groups.
29. There are some good aspects to the cultural provision. Many pupils learn to play musical instruments and there is a choir and school orchestra and there is good provision for all pupils to learn French. However, there are significant weaknesses in the provision for pupils' spiritual and cultural development because;
- there are too few opportunities for pupils to explore their own beliefs and those of others or the impact of beliefs and feelings on people's lives
 - assemblies rarely include issues relating to spirituality or a sense of reflection and thoughtfulness
 - religious education lessons consist mainly on facts about religions and does not provide enough opportunities for pupils to learn from what they have been taught
 - there is little connection between aspects of the curriculum to give pupils a sense of continuity in learning
 - opportunities for pupils to listen to music or respond to art are infrequent
 - there are not enough opportunities for pupils to learn about the attitudes, values or traditions of other cultures.
30. The aims of the school are not clearly reflected in its work because the school has not yet developed a policy for spiritual, moral, social and cultural education and there is a lack of understanding of the need to create a whole school approach amongst some of the teachers and other adults in school. The headteacher has recognised this and has provided a useful framework to improve the school's provision.
31. Other contributions to the curriculum:
- Extra curricular provision is very good and makes a major contribution to pupils' enjoyment of school through the variety of clubs including music, drama and sports activities
 - The school supports various children's charities including an orphanage in Kenya
 - There are good residential visits which include visits to France and West Malvern Outdoor Education Centre that make strong contributions to personal and academic development
 - Fieldtrips enhance pupils' understanding of geography and history
 - Liaison with partner schools is good overall; the school liaises well with its partner first schools so pupils' induction is well handled and there are some curriculum links in history and geography

- Relationships with the upper school are good and include some liaison between departments to secure continuity and progression in pupils' learning
- Links with the community particularly the church are underdeveloped; pupils rarely visit the local church, although they visit Pershore Abbey for special celebrations
- There are limited business links.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS

32. The school provides satisfactory care for each of its pupils. Standards are similar to those reported at the previous inspection. Health and safety procedures have improved. The school has made satisfactory headway in improving the procedures for assessment but more remains to be done to ensure consistency between classes and year groups.
33. The school is successful in the following areas:
- It has established good child protection procedures; the child protection officer is very aware of potential issues and shares her very good experience well with all members of staff
 - Health and safety procedures are good and all risks assessed and recorded appropriately; good care is taken in relation to assessing risks in relation to the school trips
 - Security arrangements are good
 - Satisfactory monitoring and promotion of attendance allows the school to maintain high levels of attendance
 - Pupils' personal development is monitored well; members of staff know pupils and their backgrounds well
 - The new headteacher has established good procedures, which are reducing incidents of bullying and oppressive behaviour
 - There is a positive behaviour policy and pupils are sure about rewards and sanctions.
34. The following areas are relatively weak:
- The consistency in behaviour management of some teachers
 - The supervision of pupils' movements around the school
 - Playground supervision at lunchtimes.
35. The school has appropriate procedures for assessment and staff mostly make satisfactory use of the information to group pupils by ability. There are good examples of effective assessment being used to plan work in some subjects especially English, ICT and science. The staff have begun to analyse the school's performance in national tests and have identified areas for development including raising the attainment of boys in English. However, all staff do not take the needs of boys into account when planning lessons and this results in lack of progress and underachievement. Some teachers keep good records but others do not and this is unsatisfactory.
36. Pupils with special educational needs are encouraged to take part in all aspects of school life and receive a good level of personal support but the assessment of pupils with special educational needs is not good enough. Although the school makes use of support from outside agencies their advice is not always reflected in pupils' individual education plans, which are vague. Pupils with statements of special educational needs are assessed satisfactorily and their work reviewed appropriately; in some lessons, they receive good additional support in working towards their targets.

However, in some sets in mathematics these pupils struggle because the teachers take insufficient account of pupils' individual education plans when planning lessons and the work is too hard.

37. Teacher assessments and national test results are similar. The school collects and collates data from its feeder school but there has been no history of analysis of this information until recently and the school's systems of tracking pupils' performance over time are underdeveloped. In English, the staff have begun to set targets for pupils and these are linked to lesson planning and reviewed regularly. There is some moderation between the year groups in order to monitor progress but this is at an early stage and more remains to be done to ensure that all staff take account of previous learning. A notable exception is the good assessment of ICT and the use the teacher makes in planning the next step in learning. Suitable information is passed on to the high school.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS

38. The school has established a satisfactory partnership with parents. Parental concerns about communication and information are justified. Standards appear lower to those reported in the previous inspection. Parents are given encouragement to support their children and contribute to statements of special educational needs.
39. Parents have mixed views about the school. In the pre-inspection survey and at the parents' meeting they identified the following as main strengths of the school.
- Children like school
 - Children's progress and behaviour are good
 - They feel comfortable approaching the school
 - The school expects children to work hard
 - The school helps children to become mature.

In several aspects of its work – especially in relation to progress and behaviour - the inspectors take a less generous view of the school.

40. A higher than usual proportion of parents expressed concerns about the school's provision for homework, the quality of teaching, information on their children's progress and how closely the school works with parents. Inspection evidence supports these views. The level of homework set is about normal for children of this age but parents feel they are not given sufficient information on the school's homework policy. The quality of teaching does vary. Information on pupils' progress is poor. Reports do not give sufficient, accurate information on achievements and parent consultation evening arrangements are not effective. Some newsletters and general communications are bland.
41. Parents provide sound support for their children's learning through:
- Positive support at home
 - Co-operation with problems such as behaviour
 - Support through the Friends' Association especially fundraising
 - Supporting regular and prompt attendance.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED

42. Since taking up her appointment the headteacher has worked closely with the governors and established a new leadership team which is beginning to improve the quality of education. Much remains to be done to ensure consistency between all

classes, teachers and subjects. The headteacher has made good recent strides in establishing a commitment to school improvement but some senior staff and subject leaders do not fully share the headteacher's vision. She also leads by example in balancing management duties with an effective teaching programme. Overall leadership and management are satisfactory but there are some areas for development. Improvement since the previous inspection has been accelerated recently and good progress has been made in raising standards in ICT and design and technology since 1997 with the rate of development gaining momentum in recent months.

43. The governors make a good contribution to school development and are fully involved in decision making and monitoring the school's performance. They have shrewd and well-focused ideas and a determination to support the headteacher and staff in order to improve the quality of education. They have made good use of performance management strategies to set challenging targets for school improvement. Governors clearly understand the school's strengths and areas for development and are robust in challenging the headteacher and staff to ensure that standards improve. There are regular meetings in which strategy is formulated and decisions have been linked well to the allocation of finance and other resources. For example, staff responsibilities for design and technology have been re-allocated and resulted in good improvement in standards and resources have been made available for ICT and standards are now above average. Governors fully understand their statutory responsibilities and fulfil them. They carefully consider best value in purchasing supplies and services and have begun to measure the school's performance against other schools in order to secure higher quality and standards.
44. The school's financial systems are good and spending is monitored and controlled effectively. The administrative staff contribute very well to this aspect of the school's work and provide up-to-date information for the headteacher and governors. However, the school has a weak development plan that has nearly run its course. Senior staff and governors have had training in strategic planning and their ideas are good but have not yet been translated into an incisive, plan with costs, timescales, measures of success and responsibilities and this is a weak area of management.
45. The new senior leadership team have a shared commitment to school improvement and to creating a purposeful learning environment; this has been reflected in their leadership of subjects such as English, history, geography, French and ICT where standards are good. There is a determination to succeed and to establish consistency across the school reflected in the development of a monitoring schedule. This is not sharp enough if it is to succeed in raising pupils' achievements, general demeanour and attitudes. For example, the analysis of test results and of pupils' work has only just begun in earnest and some staff do not take sufficient account of previous learning in setting challenges for pupils. Overall, the headteacher has raised expectations, sets challenging targets for attainment in national tests and the governors keep a check on how well the school is improving. However, subject leadership of art and design, music, religious education and physical education is lacking in a critical edge and standards are not as high as they should be in these subjects.
46. The special educational needs co-ordinator is conscientious but has not provided sufficient guidance to ensure that pupils' individual education plans are useful documents. In consequence, in Years 6 and 7, some teachers are not clear about the contribution they need to make to help individual pupils make progress. Statutory requirements are met satisfactorily and there is a suitable register but much remains

to be done to sharpen up the provision, management and organisation of the work with pupils with special educational needs.

47. The school has satisfactory accommodation and recent improvements to the toilets have pleased the pupils. Some staff work hard to create attractive displays of pupils' work in classrooms and corridors but others make insufficient effort. The absence of a school library hampers pupils' opportunities for research and slows progress in some subjects. The school has good resources for ICT and specialist teaching contributes well to standards in this and subjects such as design and technology, English, mathematics and science. The school has a good number of teachers and sufficient support staff. Until the arrival of the new headteacher training was poorly focused but this situation has improved and there is more cohesiveness in planning and staff development. The school has satisfactory resources overall but there are shortages for some aspects of art and design and the use of mathematical apparatus to support learning is unsatisfactory.
48. Given the average cost of educating pupils, their backgrounds, above average attainment on admission and standards achieved at the end of Years 6 and 7 the school provides satisfactory value for money.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER

49. In order to accelerate improvement at the school, the headteacher, staff and governors should:

Improve the consistency of teaching by:

- providing a better pace to lessons
- matching work more carefully to the needs of pupils
- managing behaviour more effectively
- making better use of assessment.

(Paragraphs 9,12,15, 20, 32, 36, 52, 62, 67, 71, 72, 95, 97, 98)

***Improve leadership and management by creating an effective strategic plan with well-defined targets, timescales and measures of success**

(Paragraphs 42 – 45)

***Raise boys' attainment in English by:**

- ensuring that work is matched well to their needs
- improving some teachers' expectations of boys' performance and presentation.

(Paragraphs 1, 3, 18, 35, 37, 50 – 55)

Raise standards in religious education by;

- improving the quality of teaching
- providing more opportunities for pupils to learn from religions as well as about them.

(Paragraphs 7, 9, 23, 99 – 102)

Improve the provision for pupils with special educational needs by:

- improving the quality of individual education plans
- focusing on the pupils' specific needs when planning lessons
- making better use of resources to help pupils with learning difficulties to understand through practical work.

(Paragraphs 1, 3, 15, 16, 25, 36, 46, 50, 54, 57, 59, 61, 99)

Extend opportunities for pupils to develop spiritual and cultural awareness which prepares them well for life in a multi-cultural society

(Paragraphs 9,14, 27 –30, 94, 99, 101, 102)

Improve the school's relationships with parents by providing better information on pupils' progress, clearer guidelines on homework and more complete curriculum information

(Paragraphs 11,12, 38 – 40, 98)

OTHER ISSUES TO BE CONSIDERED BY THE GOVERNORS FOR INCLUSION IN THE ACTION PLAN

- Improve standards, progress and subject leadership in music, art and design and physical education (Paragraphs 7, 9, 69 – 72, 92 – 98)
- *Improve the school's library. (Paragraphs 4, 47, 53)

*** Denotes that the school has already included this issue in its school development plan**

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed

60

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

25

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Number	1	14	26	15	4	0	0
Percentage	2	23	43	25	7	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

	Nursery	YR – Y7
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	0	323
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	0	5

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs

	Nursery	YR – Y7
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	0	4
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	0	34

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	9
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	12

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	4.7

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.3

National comparative data	6.1
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National comparative data	0.3
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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	51	44	95

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	39	44	50
	Girls	41	36	43
	Total	80	80	93
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	84 (83)	84 (68)	98 (91)
	National	75 (75)	73 (71)	86 (87)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	43	43	45
	Girls	39	35	40
	Total	82	78	85
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	86 (84)	82 (74)	89 (85)
	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	No of pupils on roll	Number of fixed period exclusions	Number of permanent exclusions
White – British	306	6	0
White – Irish	0	0	0
White – any other White background	3	0	0
Mixed – White and Black Caribbean	0	0	0
Mixed – White and Black African	0	0	0
Mixed – White and Asian	0	0	0
Mixed – any other mixed background	2	0	0
Asian or Asian British - Indian	2	0	0
Asian or Asian British - Pakistani	0	0	0
Asian or Asian British – Bangladeshi	0	0	0
Asian or Asian British – any other Asian background	3	0	0
Black or Black British – Caribbean	1	0	0
Black or Black British – African	0	0	0
Black or Black British – any other Black background	0	0	0
Chinese	0	0	0
Any other ethnic group	5	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: YR – Y7

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	14.6
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	22.12
Average class size	26.92

Education support staff: YR – Y7

Total number of education support staff	7
Total aggregate hours worked per week	97

FTE means full-time equivalent

Financial information

Financial year	2002/2003
	£
Total income	737,980
Total expenditure	696,234
Expenditure per pupil	2,299
Balance brought forward from previous year	48,833
Balance carried forward to next year	41,746

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	7
<hr/>	
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	323
Number of questionnaires returned	186

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	35	55	7	2	1
My child is making good progress in school.	26	62	11	0	2
Behaviour in the school is good.	24	63	7	2	4
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	18	58	19	4	2
The teaching is good.	23	58	11	0	9
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	19	44	31	5	1
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	46	44	7	2	1
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	40	54	3	0	3
The school works closely with parents.	16	46	26	4	9
The school is well led and managed.	23	56	5	1	15
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	27	59	5	1	8
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	41	47	8	1	4

Due to rounding these figures may not total 100.

Other issues raised by parents

Although parents expressed general confidence in the school many felt isolated from the school and insufficiently involved in their children's education. They raised concerns about lack of challenge for the oldest pupils although described achievement in most subjects as good. There was a general feeling that the school is not responsive and does not do enough to seek parents' views.

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

ENGLISH

50. By the end of Years 6 and 7 standards in English are above average and this level of performance has improved since the previous inspection. Pupils make good progress overall and progress is at its most rapid in Year 5 because of lively teaching. Pupils with special educational needs receive some focused support and this is used well to help them to make good progress. The trend in improvement has kept pace with the rising national trend. Girls have continued to improve at a better rate than boys. The gap in performance in national tests at the end of Year 6 between boys and girls is widening. Inspection evidence shows that standards are above average at the end of Years 6 and 7 but they are insufficiently high for boys. Pupils in the lower sets of English are not served well. Lessons are not sufficiently challenging and do not take enough notice of pupils' needs. The individual education plans for speaking, spelling and reading are poor; they are not based on the good quality advice from the learning support service and do not pinpoint with any clarity what or how pupils should learn.
51. The main reasons for boys' underachievement:
- Teachers do not insist on sufficiently well-presented work and expectations are too low
 - Most boys take little pride in presenting their work which lacks correct spelling, grammar and punctuation
 - Teachers are too easily satisfied with written work which lacks vibrancy and richness of language
 - Some teachers do not provide a good model for handwriting
 - Teachers do not always plan lessons with specific tasks to motivate and inspire boys.
52. Speaking skills are well developed and pupils have plenty of opportunities to practise their skills. Pupils enter the school able to talk clearly and about a range of subjects. Teachers build well on these skills and in science and English give pupils lots of practice in using technical terms. Low attaining pupils use term such as *non-chronological order* and in science pupils use and understand terms such *photosynthesis*. Speaking is best when teachers plan opportunities for pupils to use their skills in new and interesting ways. For example, in a Year 7 English lesson centred on Macbeth, pupils read aloud their letters from Macbeth to his wife and adopted his character. Listening skills are above average throughout the school. Pupils are attentive during lessons that capture their imagination. At times lessons lack pace and do not hold pupils' attention; this is particularly the case in Years 6 and 7. In these lessons teachers have to work hard to encourage pupils, notably boys, to participate because they have grown accustomed to sitting back and not volunteering.
53. Reading is above average although there are differences in achievement between the year groups. Pupils start school as keen readers and with a good understanding of how books are used for enjoyment, fiction and information purposes. In Year 5 these skills are developed well and in this year group pupils gain in their understanding of how to use punctuation to help them phrase sentences when reading from a range of reading material. Progress is satisfactory in Years 6 and 7. This has much to do with the quality of teachers' work in monitoring the pupils' reading, including reading journal entries. In Year 5 teachers intervene in pupils' learning and set challenges, such as; "*Could you concentrate on discussing the main characters.*" In Years 6 and 7 most

teachers simply tick and initial entries rather than pose further challenges and activities. The best readers in each year group read fluently and with good and at times very good levels of expression. They adopt the specific voices of their story's characters and read with pace and conviction. Those pupils who have difficulty in learning letter sounds and how these sounds make up words in English are supported well in those classes where teaching is good. However, in the lower sets pupils do not have the benefit of clear individual education plans that set out what pupils should learn to meet their needs. Generally pupils enjoy reading; however, boys' attitudes to reading are not as positive as those of girls. The school has bought in new books, which should help boys to develop an interest in reading, but older pupils often use their own books from home. Boys and girls talk of the school books being boring. At the time of the inspection the school was in the process of developing its library but older pupils do not know how to find books in a library. While younger pupils talk of finding books by searching for a particular theme or looking for signs on shelves, during the reading discussions with inspectors no pupils could describe the system of decimal coding usually used to locate library books. Pupils do know how to find information within books and are adept at locating information on the Internet. They have a good understanding of how to use search engines efficiently.

54. Writing is above average with variations in the rate of progress that pupils make. These rates vary between year groups and the sets, boys and girls and between pupils of different abilities. The quality of pupils' work and their rates of achievement are directly related to the quality of teaching and the arrangements made for them within classes. Pupils with special educational needs, those in the lower attaining sets and boys do not make enough progress. Not enough is expected of boys and some teachers accept poorly presented work too readily. Handwriting is not joined and, although targets are set for pupils to help them develop a mature style, some teachers do not follow up these targets. Girls generally present their work well, spell complex words correctly and take a pride in their work. This is not the case with boys. The quality of teaching in the majority of the lower sets in English does not promote an interest and an enthusiasm for writing. This is because teachers do not use a wide range of methods and they do not require pupils to think hard and present their work in a variety of ways. Pupils with special educational needs are not effectively helped to develop the basic skills they need to acquire in order to write. There are exceptions to this; the work of the special needs assistant is of very good quality. Pupils in these groups have work that is well suited to their needs and they make good rates of progress. In these groups pupils have interesting work which captures their imagination and which they present in a variety of motivating means. Generally teachers in these sets and classes have high expectations, do not accept written work of poor quality and encourage pupils to try hard. Where teaching is good in other subjects such as geography, history and science, pupils use their writing skills to good effect, producing reports, diaries and written work of very good quality in a variety of interesting forms. Pupils understand how to use word processing programs to present their work and how to use publishing software to prepare leaflets and discussion papers.
55. The quality of teaching is satisfactory overall. However, there are variations in the quality of teaching that are mirrored in the rates of pupils' learning. Some classes and sets benefit from high quality work, which is stimulating, well paced and challenging. Pupils learn very well in Year 5 and in the top sets in Years 6 and 7. For example, in a Year 5 class, pupils were asked to write a fable. They talked about characters in fables having strong dialects and using colloquial speech. The teacher asked pupils to read the news in slang rather than the usual Standard English and very effective interaction produced very good reasons for the use of a form of English that everyone

could understand. Because the teacher was very enthusiastic pupils were very keen to get started and the teacher consistently reminded pupils about presenting their work well. This and similar lessons in Year 5 help to produce work which is well above the expected levels for pupils of this age. Given that the lower sets have very small numbers of pupils, teaching is generally not producing fast enough rates of progress.

56. The subject leader manages the subject well and has a very good understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of provision. Assessment is now being used more effectively to plan work.

MATHEMATICS

57. By the end of Years 6 and 7 pupils attain above average standards in mathematics and have a secure grasp of all aspects of the subject. Progress is good overall and especially good in Year 5 because of effective teaching which meets the needs of individuals. Pupils with special educational needs are mostly taught well although in some lessons the work set is too difficult and the lack of apparatus to reinforce understanding inhibits these pupils' progress. Boys and girls perform equally well and there is little difference in their performance in national tests. There has been steady improvement since the previous inspection as standards have kept pace with the rising national trend. Overall, standards are similar to those reported at the time of the previous inspection.
58. Most pupils are successful in each area of mathematics. By the end of Years 6 and 7 they calculate using all number operations accurately and apply these skills effectively. For example in design and technology they measure precisely. Their good understanding of English enables them to use their literacy skills well when reading and devising their own mathematical problems.
- Year 5 pupils enjoy their mathematics lessons; the higher attaining pupils are achieving levels usually found in Year 7
 - When pupils are set problems relevant to their own lives, for example when constructing route maps with distances, as in Year 6, they are enthusiastic and achieve well
 - Pupils have good skills in writing and solving complex problems involving money and measurement
 - Pupils have a firm grasp of pattern in number; they achieve good standards in mental arithmetic and competently described different mathematical processes
 - Pupils make good use of ICT when working on graphs and in handling data; they present their work well and are able to draw explanations from charts showing a good understanding of graphical representation but there is insufficient use of computers in mathematics lessons overall.
59. Teaching and learning are mostly good although in the lower sets observed in Years 6 and 7 the lessons are not planned well enough to meet the needs of pupils with special educational needs and this hampers their progress and results in unsatisfactory teaching and learning. Teaching is at its most effective in Year 5 and in most upper sets in Years 6 and 7.

60. Strengths in teaching and learning

- There is a good understanding of the National Numeracy Strategy and the staff in Year 7 make good use of further guidance for mathematics in Year 7; teachers make good use of their subject knowledge to plan work which is challenging
- Learning objectives are well stated and discussed with pupils so that they know what the purpose of the lesson is and this enables pupils to focus on the task in hand
- Homework is used well to consolidate learning, especially in Years 5 and 6 and this has a beneficial impact on pupils' skills in mental arithmetic
- Most pupils have a good knowledge of their learning and make concerted efforts to meet their targets; in lessons they work hard and where teaching is well focused they produce good quantities of work
- Teachers use appropriate technical vocabulary so that pupils increasingly are able to use correct mathematical terms and know what these mean when presented with them in textbooks
- Most lessons are well structured and include opportunities for practising mental calculations at speed because the teachers ask challenging questions
- Teachers correct pupils' work and in Year 5 there is often good guidance for pupils on what they need to do to improve
- Support staff, where available, contribute positively to pupils' learning by explaining mathematical processes clearly.

61. There are a few areas for development in teaching and learning mainly as a result of insufficiently high expectations in some lessons:

- In some lessons there is an over-reliance on worksheets which are often not sufficiently focused on the needs of the pupils
- Insufficient use is made of apparatus to reinforce understanding and knowledge of processes, particularly in work with pupils with special educational needs
- Some pupils do not work as productively as they should; this is often due to poor behaviour and lack of attention; for example, pupils, especially in Year 7, do not show sufficient rigour, precision and presentation in written mathematics
- There is a lack of enthusiasm for the subject by some groups of pupils
- Resources are satisfactory, but teachers do not make sufficient use of it to develop the pupils' understanding of number, shape, space and measures.

62. Subject leadership is satisfactory; the co-ordinator has been in post for only a few weeks and is beginning to make an impact. Planning is monitored and there are plans to monitor teaching. The co-ordinator has written a comprehensive and useful development plan which highlights appropriate areas for action, especially in giving mathematics a higher profile in the school, particularly through displays of work (as in Year 5). Although assessments are made regularly and major assessments analysed by the co-ordinator, the overall analysis is not used consistently. Sometimes the arrangements for teaching sets of pupils by ability are over-complex, resulting in time lost through movement of pupils and teachers to different parts of the school. In addition, some sets are too small, especially in Year 6, allowing for little opportunity for interaction between pupils.

SCIENCE

63. The improvement of standards in science reported at the time of the previous inspection has been maintained. Inspection evidence and national test results show that standards are now well above average by the end of Years 6 and 7. Teaching

contributes much to the pupils' progress and opportunities to use a science laboratory also enhance learning. Pupils make very rapid progress in Year 5 and good progress thereafter. Pupils with special educational needs make similar progress in the subject to their peers because of the good support from learning assistants. More able pupils are given challenging work linked to investigation and make good progress. There are no significant differences in the performance of boys and girls.

64. The main reasons for improved standards since the last inspection are:
- Effective leadership of the subject ensures that the staff are clear about what is to be taught
 - Well focused and challenging teaching in most classes
 - Good use of national guidelines modified to meet the needs of pupils of different abilities
 - Effective support from learning support assistants.
65. Pupils achieve good success in science, benefiting from well-organised teaching, good resources and opportunities to carry out challenging investigations. The standards that pupils reach in all year groups are well above national expectations because:
- experiments are written up well and pupils use correct scientific terminology
 - pupils select a good variety of ways of recording modes including the use of mathematical tables
 - they draw conclusions and present arguments to justify results, for example when exploring the relationship between evaporation and surface area
 - special educational needs pupils work well because they are given very focussed support by classroom assistants
 - pupils' scientific knowledge of living things, materials and physical processes is very good.
66. Most aspects of the teaching and learning of science are good and in some classes there is excellent teaching. Specialist knowledge of the subject contributes much to pupils' understanding and grasp of new ideas and scientific methods. Teaching is often very good in Year 5.
- The teaching of investigative science has a high profile and all lessons seen were based on firsthand knowledge
 - Teachers pay good attention to experimental techniques and pupils respond very well to this style of teaching; for example, in Year 6 pupils were aware of the importance of variables when dissolving sugar
 - Lessons are very well prepared by the teachers, are interactive and have a logical structure
 - Teachers make lessons interesting and exciting so that pupils really enjoy their learning, behave very well and work at a very good pace
 - Feedback to pupils is very focussed and honest so they know what is good about their contribution and what needs re-thinking; pupils felt able to learn from their mistakes in these classrooms and want to contribute
 - Teachers have very good relationships with their pupils and treat them with respect and humour so the learning atmosphere is warm and relaxed and all pupils including those with special needs are able to contribute
 - Marking is consistent and comments provide pupils with good information about what they do well and what needs improving.
67. There are a few areas for development in some lessons which were the result of inadequate preparation and the use of resources. In one of these lessons too much

time was spent in waiting for a balloon to fill with carbon dioxide with no alternative activity and the pupils became restless. Sometimes teachers do not keep the pace of lessons moving through well-focused questions and by providing opportunities for pupils to independently make choices about materials and methods of working.

68. Other factors which contribute to good achievement in the subject.
- The subject leader provides very good guidance to colleagues and leads the subject well through exemplary teaching
 - Resources are of good quality; the opportunity to use dedicated laboratory space enables teachers to conduct experiments more easily
 - Subject planning is very good and helps non-specialist teachers to approach lesson preparation with confidence
 - There is clear guidance on assessment following the completion of a topic
 - Links with English, mathematics and some aspects of ICT enhance the teaching in this subject.

ART AND DESIGN

69. As at the time of the previous inspection standards by the end of Years 6 and 7 are average in art and design. Pupils make satisfactory progress overall and good progress in Year 5. Pupils with special educational needs make similar progress to their peers and achieve equally well. More able pupils attain average standards and could do better given more focused teaching on improving their skills and techniques. Boys and girls achieve similar standards. Although the standards are average they are insufficiently high given pupils' previous experience and skills.
70. The pupils develop appropriate skills and techniques in art and design but have a limited understanding of the work of famous artists. It is rare for pupils to make use of literacy skills to enhance their work in art and, although pupils know how to access a variety of computer programs, they rarely use ICT to improve their art and design skills. Pupils make satisfactory use of mathematics in drawing and reproducing patterns. They achieve average standards overall and their work in Year 5 is often of better quality.
- Pupils have satisfactory skills and techniques in using paint, pastels and charcoal to create expressive pictures of the weather
 - In Year 5 they use a variety of materials and fabrics to make good collages illustrating scenes from the seaside
 - Pupils have satisfactory skills in using clay to make three-dimensional models using a variety of simple tools for moulding, shaping and adding detail to their representations of people
 - Pupils are competent in weaving and, because of good guidance from the teacher, create good designs using an interesting variety of materials
 - Year 7 pupils understand how artistic skills have developed over the ages through their studies of medieval techniques in producing manuscripts.
71. Teaching and learning vary much between classes due to the expertise and enthusiasm of the teachers. Teaching is good in Years 5 and 7 but unsatisfactory in Year 6 where the pace of lessons is too slow and not enough is expected of the pupils.
- Lesson planning is satisfactory, although in Year 6 there are insufficient examples of the teacher demonstrating techniques and pointing out how pupils might improve by emulating the work of famous artists

- Teachers have satisfactory subject knowledge but make insufficient use of assessment to guide them in developing pupils' skills, knowledge and understanding building on previous work
- Satisfactory use is made of resources, although the school has insufficient prints, pictures and books to support the teaching
- In Year 5 the teacher started the lesson very well by setting a challenging tasks involving creating lines of different thicknesses using a wide variety of tools to improve pupils' skills
- In good lessons the teachers review with the pupils what they have achieved and make good suggestions for improvement.

72. Subject leadership is unsatisfactory overall as insufficient guidance is given to staff on building upon pupils' previous learning. There has been insufficient rigour in acquiring resources and in setting targets for improvement in art and design. Assessment is weak as not all staff keep adequate records of progress.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

73. Since the previous inspection, and particularly since the start of this academic year, the school has made significant headway in tackling the issues raised in the previous inspection report. The subject now meets statutory requirements and health and safety aspects are covered well. The school makes very good provision for design and technology and by the end of Years 6 and 7 standards are well above average. Pupils achieve well through working hard, applying a good range of skills and techniques and evaluating their work rigorously. Progress is very good for pupils of all abilities, including those with special educational needs. More able pupils respond very well to the subject and show high levels of understanding of the process of design. Boys and girls achieve equally well.

74. The main reasons why standards have greatly improved since the last inspection are:

- teaching throughout the twelve classes is undertaken by a specialist teacher who has very good subject knowledge and high expectations
- there is a secure scheme of work which covers all requirements of the National Curriculum
- pupils take a pride in the process of designing, manufacturing, evaluating and further improving their work
- the design and technology curriculum club is highly successful indicating the keen desire of pupils to further their knowledge, skills and understanding of the design process.

75. Teaching is very good and the pupils enjoy design and technology because lessons are made interesting through challenging tasks which often have very good links with ICT, although these links could be further extended to include experience of computer-aided design and manufacture (CAD/CAM) and systems of control, especially for Year 7 pupils. Pupils also make good use of their literacy and numeracy skills when designing, making and evaluating models. Pupils learn effectively and work hard applying good concentration and skills. They are keen to improve their skills and take pride in making robust and well-constructed models.

- The teacher knows clearly the requirements of the National Curriculum and makes good use of national guidelines to build consistently on pupils' previous learning
- The teaching of basic skills, especially safety aspects, is very thorough and pupils work hard and carefully when using a range of tools and equipment

- The very knowledgeable teaching assistants provide very good support to less confident pupils through working alongside them and asking challenging questions
 - Homework is used well to foster interest and involvement in research
 - There is a suitable balance of activities, including food technology, textiles, ICT and designing and making products using relevant materials
 - Topics covered are relevant to the pupils, for example, in circuit design to illuminate a mask by Year 7 pupils, and working model fairground rides by Year 6
 - Textiles have been used well to make slippers for different purposes; in these activities, pupils have been given good opportunities to use their imagination
 - Teacher interventions are well timed and effective in order to promote creativity and move learning on.
76. The subject co-ordinator has achieved a great deal in the seven months she has been in post. Pupils are gaining very good quality experiences in designing and making and they have a clear understanding of the whole process. They have the advantage of working in a well-equipped specialist room with enclosed food technology adjacent. All pupils are knowledgeable about health and safety requirements. Design and technology is making a valuable contribution to pupils' learning. It is a very successful area of the school's curriculum.

GEOGRAPHY and HISTORY

77. The provision for history and geography and the quality of teaching and standards have improved since the previous inspection. Pupils make good progress in both subjects and achieve well. Pupils with special educational needs are fully integrated in lessons and make good progress; they are sometimes given additional support by learning assistants and this enables them to be fully involved in lessons. More able pupils are provided with similar work as their peers but tend to produce better quality and an increased quantity of work which includes a more thorough analysis of topics. By the end of Years 6 and 7 pupils attain above average standards in geography and history and achievement is sufficiently high. Pupils' competence in written English and their use of ICT for research contribute significantly to their success in these subjects.
78. Pupils' progress in geography is good and by the end of Years 6 and 7 they understand the symbols used on Ordnance Survey maps, draw maps to scale and understand and use contour lines.
- Pupils use and make maps to display information; for example, in Year 5 they make use of this skill when studying the local town of Pershore and in Year 6 they extend their skills in using maps to illustrate land use on the River Severn
 - Pupils have a good understanding of patterns and processes in physical geography. In Year 5 pupils acquire good understanding of the water cycle, in Year 6 this work is further developed by a study of the development of a river
 - There is good application of geographical knowledge to environmental, social and political issues
 - Pupils' understanding is enhanced through reference to global issues; for example, in Year 5 they know that some countries value water more than others and write letters, as though they were farmers in remote Indian villages, explaining the impact of lack of water on their lives
 - In Year 7 pupils contrast very carefully the impact of a volcanic action on the lives of people living in rich and poor countries.

79. By the end of Years 6 and 7 pupils have a good knowledge of major historical events and competent skills in historical research. Progress is most rapid in Year 5 where all classes are achieving well. It is good in Years 6 and 7 although there is variation between classes because of the quality of the teaching.
- Year 5 pupils successfully research aspects of Ancient Egyptian burial rites, drawing upon their knowledge of Egyptian society and gods
 - Pupils' books in Year 6 contain comprehensive studies of life in Ancient Greece and they write showing an understanding of the role of, for example, the philosopher and an Athenian child
 - Pupils also develop good skills in analysing possible reasons for events in history such as the murder of Becket
 - From Year 5 pupils develop a secure understanding of the way history is presented and by Year 7 they distinguish between primary and secondary evidence and understand that information from written sources can be subjective making good use of procedures for gathering evidence from historical artefacts and first-hand accounts and making valid deductions from their evidence
 - Pupils have a good understanding of chronology and establish links between historical and geographical evidence such as the work in Year 7 on the feudal system.
80. The teaching is mostly good and teachers often make effective use of resources and visits to enhance lessons and to promote effective learning. Subject knowledge is strong because of the quality of support given by the subject leaders so pupils undertake a range of interesting projects many related to local places.
- Teachers develop pupils' enquiry skills well so that pupils are able to use local evidence to help them debate issues associated with building a local by pass
 - The Internet is used very effectively to expand pupils' historical studies; pupils are encouraged to use hyperlinks to explore topics in greater depth
 - Teachers, particularly in Year 5, insist on good presentation and, as a result pupils' work including maps, diagrams and tables shows care and pride in good work
 - Most teachers make good use of English, mathematics and ICT so pupils can apply their learning in a meaningful context
 - Pupils take a pride in presenting their historical studies in attractive and logical forms because the teachers provide interesting and varied tasks that call for a range of presentation skills.
81. However, there are some areas for development in teaching.
- Preparation of individual lessons in Years 6 and 7 so that the correct equipment including suitable atlases and overhead projectors are available
 - Improving some aspects of planning so that lessons follow a logical sequence and key skills are fully explored; in one geography lesson pupils did not have a proper understanding of the task set so did not appreciate the importance of data analysis on the design of a traffic questionnaire
 - The expectations of pupils' achievements throughout the school vary too much; while most teachers expect pupils to complete their work, some unfinished work is not commented on.
82. The subjects are very well co-ordinated by a humanities specialist. In consequence, overall topic plans are very good and include assessment tasks. She regularly monitors and evaluates the curriculum and the planning and she supports her colleagues very well. However, she has not had the opportunity to evaluate the

teaching and learning in the classroom to iron out variations and raise standards further.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY (ICT)

83. Standards and the provision for ICT have improved much since the previous inspection and the issues raised in the report have been tackled very well. Boys and girls achieve equally well and apply themselves effectively in lessons. Progress is good and different groups of pupils have work which is matched carefully to their needs. Pupils with special educational needs often receive specific support and tasks that are geared to their level of understanding. The more able are challenged well because the teacher thinks imaginatively when planning demanding tasks. By the end of Years 6 and 7 standards are above average and pupils also have good skills in applying what they have learned in ICT lessons to their work in several other subjects.
84. The main reasons for the improvement in standards
- All pupils are now taught ICT on a regular and frequent basis
 - The level and quality of equipment has improved substantially since the last inspection
 - There is a strong commitment by the governing body, headteacher and co-ordinator to improve the quality of provision
 - All classes are taught by a teacher who has good levels of subject knowledge
 - The curriculum and assessment systems have improved.
85. Pupils make good progress in lessons and learn well. Pupils understand how to present work in a variety of ways. They use their skills in English, mathematics, science, geography and history to good effect. They produce good quality pamphlets, information leaflets and presentations, taking care to think of their intended audience. They write letters and e-mails showing they understand the conventions of setting. They make graphs of the information they have collected and use spreadsheets to determine the outcomes of their spending when planning a party and other calculations. There are lots of good links with other subjects and notably with design and technology. After designing their fairground rides pupils add electric motors, which they control with computers. Pupils use the Internet extensively for research purposes and for communication. Pupils consider computers to be an extension of their normal classroom learning and routines.
86. The quality of teaching is never less than good and the development of skills is often very good; there are several strengths in teaching that have a positive impact on pupils' learning.
- Planning is effective and builds well on what has been learned previously
 - Resources are well prepared
 - Lessons are interesting and based on real- life situations which pupils enjoy
 - Because the ICT co-ordinator sets a very good example, pupils are industrious and want to learn in lessons
 - Pupils' learning is assessed very well and is used to plan the next lesson.
87. The school's decision for one teacher to take all groups, while raising the subject knowledge of other teachers, has been extremely valuable. This means that classes in each year group have the same high quality provision and have the facility of using ICT in other subjects. The work of the subject leader, governors and headteacher has been instrumental in bringing about a very good rate of improvement since the last

inspection. The provision for ICT and the achievement of pupils is a strength of the school.

MODERN FOREIGN LANGUAGES (FRENCH)

88. Pupils enjoy French and respond very well in lessons to teaching which is lively, interesting and challenging. Pupils of all abilities make good progress and those with special educational needs are fully included in lessons through well-focused questions so that they are able to contribute to discussion and learn effectively. Boys and girls achieve equally well because the teachers motivate both groups and expect much from them. By the end of Year 7 pupils attain above average standards. Pupils at the end of Year 6 have a better than expected knowledge and understanding of French when compared with pupils of a similar age and this prepares pupils well for French in Year 7. The school has extended and improved its provision since the previous inspection.
89. Pupils' oral skills develop well although listening skills are better developed in lessons when teachers continually use French as a learning medium. The school has a higher than average proportion of teachers who are fluent in French and speak the language well. Pupils benefit from the rich spoken language used by many of their teachers. Pupils' spoken French is satisfactory although their understanding and written work is above average. Year 5 pupils now learn French and pupils in this year groups are enthusiastic and want to do well. As their teachers prepare an interesting range of learning activities, they pick up vocabulary well and use it in simple sentences and phrases. They respond well to questions posed in French. In Year 6 this rate of achievement continues with pupils producing graphs and learning the male and female nouns used in French among other vocabulary. In Year 7 pupils write grammatically complex sentences using punctuation well. They work at home on long pieces of work which add to the learning that takes place in class.
90. The quality of teaching is good for a number of reasons.
- Teachers generally use French well to enrich pupils' vocabulary and sharpen listening skills
 - Lesson plans contain an interesting range of methods such as playing games, question and answer sessions and role play activities
 - Lessons are brisk and encourage pupils to learn at a fast rate
 - Teachers develop very good relationships between pupils and there is a high level of trust
 - Standards are high in most classes where teachers expect boys and girls to perform equally well.
91. The subject is managed well. The co-ordinator has a good level of subject knowledge and uses this to good effect to monitor the work of teachers.

MUSIC

92. By the end of Years 6 and Year 7 standards in music are average, as they were at the time of the last inspection, and many pupils' skills in instrumental work and composition are above average across the school. However, pupils' knowledge and understanding of musical elements and vocabulary, the music from different cultures and the work of musicians and composers is not as good as it should be. Progress for all pupils including those with special educational needs is good in composing and performing but unsatisfactory in listening and appraising because the subject leader places insufficient emphasis on this aspect of music.

93. Music is taught by a specialist teacher throughout the school and, in the lessons observed during the inspection, it was consistently good. The teacher knows his pupils well and has good relationships with all the classes. He expects the pupils to behave responsibly which results in very sensible, mature and careful setting up and packing away of instruments, some of which require the setting up of amplifiers. Pupils enjoy their lessons and control themselves well when groups record their work. The lessons for all year groups were similar, as pupils were preparing for the annual "Artsfest" and groups had worked cooperatively to produce programmatic music to accompany Sea Shanties [Year 5] a story [Year 6] or describe pictures relating to Roman life [Year7]. There is appropriate progress between the year groups. When the school was last inspected there was not enough singing. The teacher now includes singing in all lessons. Pupils perform enthusiastically but have little opportunity to listen to or evaluate their performance because the recorded accompaniment overpowers their voices. The teacher does not use technical vocabulary frequently enough and pupils are not expected to use it in their lessons. For example the compositions are called "plans" and there was no reference to rhythm, pulse, ostinato or phrasing.
94. There is a very good range of extra-curricular opportunities for music. Over 60 pupils have instrumental lessons, playing keyboards, violins clarinets, flutes or saxophones. Some learn the guitar or recorders in their clubs. There is a school choir and orchestra and one group of pupils are designing an instrument using the parts of an old piano. Pupils participate in concerts and a musical "get together" with the contributing first schools is a very effective liaison project. However, while the subject leader is very active in developing performing skills pupils have few opportunities to listen and respond to music. There is no planning for this aspect of the curriculum. There is little application of music outside the lessons or clubs. For example, the coordinator has very limited input in assemblies. Pupils' written work has examples of composition and notation but no evaluation of music, descriptions of musical forms or evidence of knowledge of composers from other cultures. The subject makes a good contribution to pupils' social development but not enough is done to promote pupils' spiritual development and the understanding of their own and other cultures.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

95. Standards in physical education are average in Years 6 and 7 and similar to those reported at the time of the previous inspection. Extra-curricular activities make a significant contribution to pupils' progress in sport. Boys tend to achieve better than girls in games although girls are more successful in dance. Progress is satisfactory overall but in some lessons the pupils make unsatisfactory progress because the teaching lacks pace, challenge and control. Pupils with special educational needs take a full part in the physical education curriculum and achieve as well as their peers. More able and gifted and talented pupils have good opportunities to compete against other schools and the staff encourage these pupils to join clubs in the community to further extend their prowess. Although there are plans to re-introduce swimming lessons in the next academic year, currently swimming is not taught at the school and this is unsatisfactory. No lessons in gymnastics were seen due to timetable arrangements. Overall standards are insufficiently high as subject leadership lacks a sharp edge in promoting pupils' achievement.
96. Pupils' successes are due in part to the wide range of extra-curricular activities opportunities provided.
- Pupils achieve good success in competitive sport and have a secure knowledge of tactics in football, netball and hockey

- They apply good physical effort and compete keenly showing an appropriate level of understanding of tactics and fair play
 - They pass, dribble, shoot and defend with an increasing awareness of position
 - In dance, many pupils move with poise and grace and create energetic and creative sequences which express mood and emotion well; for example, in interpreting the crowd and players part in a tennis match
 - Girls, in particular, express themselves imaginatively making effective changes of direction, using height, springs and turns to create different moods.
97. Teaching varies from very good to satisfactory and is satisfactory overall. In Year 5 the teaching is at its best because the staff expect and get high standards from the pupils. The pupils say that games is their favourite subject and they apply good effort in most lessons, showing a keenness to improve their skills and techniques. The rate of learning is marred in a few lessons in Years 6 and 7 by lack of incisive teaching where the teacher has insufficient control and the pace is too slow.
- Lessons are planned satisfactorily, with good planning in Year 5 and include an appropriate balance between practising skills and taking part in games or other activities
 - Lessons begin with a warm-up and good examples of pupils leading these were seen; however, some classes take much too long to get changed for lessons and valuable time is lost
 - Teachers have good subject knowledge and stress the importance of exercise and healthy eating in keeping fit
 - In the very good lessons in Year 5 the teachers demonstrated a good range of techniques and also used the pupils as examples so that good gains were made in refining skills and movements
 - Teachers in Year 5 make good use of assessment and record the progress pupils make but this practice is inconsistent in other parts of the school
 - Some teachers provide opportunities for the pupils to devise and develop their own games and this helps pupils to improve their confidence and leadership skills.
98. Subject leadership is satisfactory but there are inconsistencies in developing pupils' skills, knowledge and understanding in physical education because of variations in the quality of teaching that have not been ironed out through monitoring. Assessment is inconsistent and not used well enough by the subject leader to monitor pupils' progress and to report to parents. The school has satisfactory resources and also enhances the physical education curriculum through extended visits that contribute satisfactorily to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

99. Standards in religious education are not high enough by the end of Years 6 and 7 and few pupils meet the expectations of the syllabus followed by most schools in Worcestershire. This represents a decline since the previous inspection and is due to lack of effective and consistent teaching. Teachers seldom challenge pupils to think about what they might learn from religious studies and the curriculum is focused almost entirely on acquiring facts about major faiths. The subject contributes little to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Although pupils make satisfactory progress in the acquisition of facts, progress across the whole religious education curriculum for pupils of different abilities, including those with special educational needs, is uneven, inconsistent and unsatisfactory overall.

100. Teaching and learning are too variable and unsatisfactory overall although during the inspection teaching in the lessons seen varied between satisfactory and good. There are some strengths in teaching and learning which include:
- The teaching of facts about the religions studied is thorough; pupils in Year 5 look up references in the Bible, Year 6 pupils understand the basic differences between the Christian denominations and in Year 7 pupils correctly describe the food and rituals related to the Shabbat
 - Teachers vary the way they expect pupils' work to be presented; pupils take a pride in the layout of their work and most write neatly and accurately
 - Teachers make good use of ICT; pupils in Year 7 use the Internet effectively to create multi-media presentations about aspects of Jewish life.
101. Some aspects of teaching are unsatisfactory.
- Teachers do not provide enough opportunities for pupils to respond to their learning; although there are examples of pupils comparing different ideas of God in Year 6 and analysis of the nature of God shown in the psalms, much of the teaching and learning is factual with very few opportunities for pupils' to develop their spirituality through an understanding and respect of their own and others' beliefs
 - In one lesson the teacher's expectations were too low, the pupils lost interest, behaved badly and they did not learn enough
 - Some teachers loose sight of their objectives for the lesson, teaching religious education lessons as if they were history or English lessons; in one lesson Year 5 pupils learnt how to find Bible references but did not carry out the planned discussion on traditional and liberal interpretations of the scriptures
 - There is not enough teaching of the fundamental beliefs of the religions studied; Year 7 pupils describe the Shabbat meal but not the relationship between Judaism and Christianity.
102. The school's links with the local church are limited but there are plans to improve these with the support of a newly appointed governor. There are no links with religious leaders or visits to places of worship of non-Christian faiths and not enough is provided to enable pupils to learn to respect the beliefs or values of their own or other faiths. The school does not have a specialist teacher for religious education and the lessons are often taught by teachers with no other commitments at the time. The headteacher is co-ordinating the subject and has identified the weaknesses in the provision for the subject, particularly in the development of pupils' spiritual and cultural education. There are no systems for assessing pupils' progress or monitoring the provision for religious education. Teachers follow the Agreed Syllabus in the teaching of facts but many do not have the expertise to fulfil the spiritual aspects of the curriculum effectively.