

INSPECTION REPORT

CHURCHFIELDS CE JUNIOR SCHOOL

Rugeley

LEA area: Staffordshire

Unique reference number: 124271

Headteacher: Ms Liz Smith

Reporting inspector: Mr O L Thomas
16041

Dates of inspection: 6 - 8 May 2003

Inspection number: 248577

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school: Junior
School category: Voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils: 7 - 11
Gender of pupils: Mixed

School address: Sandy Lane
Rugeley
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Telephone number: 01889 256106

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Appropriate authority: The governing body

Name of chair of governors: Rev M Newman

Date of previous inspection: 17/11/97

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

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16041	O L Thomas	Registered inspector	Science Physical education	Information about the school How high are standards? How well are pupils are taught? Leadership and managment What the school should do to improve further?
19344	D W Jones	Lay inspector		Attitudes, behaviour and personal development Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development Partnership with parents
22578	G Jones	Team inspector	Mathematics Information and communicatio n technology Music	How well the school cares for its pupils?
30651	M Entwistle	Team inspector	English History Geography Special educational needs	The curriculum opportunities offered to pupils
30023	R Taylor	Team inspector	Art and design Design and technology Religious education	

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Churchfields Church of England (CE) Junior School is situated near the centre of Rugeley. The school is smaller than other primary schools with 161 pupils on roll; most are of white UK heritage, but a very small minority are from other ethnic backgrounds. There is a similar number of boys and girls. Most pupils live close by and transfer at Year 3 from the nearby feeder infant and primary schools. Over the last year a significant number of pupils have joined the school in other year groups than at Year 3. Thirteen per cent of pupils are known to be eligible for free school meals and 16 per cent have special educational needs; both below the national average. The school has a higher proportion than usually found of pupils with statements of special educational need. At the time of the last inspection the attainment of the pupils on entry to the school was broadly average. This inspection finds that the balance has shifted with about one third of pupils coming in with results below what is expected nationally. The socio economic circumstances of the families sending children to the school vary widely but overall lower than usually found. The school has suffered from significant staffing difficulties, which have stabilised more recently. At the time of the Headteacher's appointment, the school was designated as a cause for concern by the local authority. A proposed amalgamation with the neighbouring infant school is being discussed.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

Churchfields CE Junior School is fast becoming an effective school. Significant staffing difficulties initially held back the pace of improvements. However, the Headteacher, who has been in post for eighteen months, has grasped the need for swift improvement across the range of the school's work and is supported well by recently appointed, knowledgeable, keen, young staff; the school is moving onward and upward. Pupils attain broadly in line with national expectations by the age of 11. Teaching seen is good overall with a fair amount of very good teaching enabling good and often rapid progress to be made so that pupils achieve soundly by the time they leave. The exception to this good progress is in Year 3 where, all but the most able pupils who work with Year 4, have not achieved as they should since they entered the school in September. The situation has improved very recently and their achievement is increased as pupils move through the school. Pupils mainly have satisfactory attitudes to learning but this is awakened by lively and challenging teaching so they become well motivated, interested and well behaved. However, a significant proportion of Year 3 pupils do not have well-established self-discipline and a positive work ethic. The school is giving mainly good value for money but this is diminished by the slow start made by many pupils in Year 3.

What the school does well

- Excellent educational leadership and planning for improvement by the Headteacher in partnership with the governors, supported by a team of highly committed newly appointed staff.
- Good teaching makes very effective use of the national literacy and numeracy strategies to improve basic skills and uses assessment information well overall to aid pupils' progress.
- The very good behaviour management procedures, have led to improvements in many pupils' behaviour.
- The arrangements for the health, safety and well being of pupils and the very good relationships between staff and pupils.
- Governors' actions to improve accommodation.

What could be improved

- Standards overall but notably the underachievement of a significant proportion of Year 3 pupils in English, mathematics and science.
- Pupils' skills of independence and investigation, particularly in mathematics.
- The liaison with the schools where pupils come from.
- Continue the best efforts to involve parents in the education of their children.

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

Since the last inspection in November 1997 the leadership and staffing of the school have changed dramatically making comparisons more difficult. Only the Deputy Headteacher, currently absent, remains from the previous teaching team. The school has had a bumpy ride and overall improvements are judged to be good given that the school had declined to a point of concern. The Headteacher has made a powerful impact on key areas of the school's work, which affect pupils' progress and the standards they achieve. For example, the pupils' behaviour; the use of assessment information; monitoring of teaching and learning to ensure the higher achieving pupils fulfill their potential; writing skills and the work of subject managers all show improvement and beneficial impact. The governors now take a more active role in holding the school to account. The area of least improvement is in enhancing pupils' skills of independence and investigation when learning. Whilst much has been achieved, the school recognises that the progress of some pupils needs rapid improvement.

Given the involvement and interest of governors, the good teaching seen and the Headteacher's adamant determination to ensure all pupils receive the best possible deal the school is well placed to succeed.

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				Key
	all schools			similar schools	
	2000	2001	2002	2002	
English	E	D	E	D	well above average A above average B average C below average D well below average E
mathematics	E	E	C	C	
science	D	E	D	D	

Pupils have not been attaining as expected nationally over past years and this has been recognised by the local authority and the recently appointed Headteacher. In mathematics, the school did well in securing more pupils than is usually found attaining at the higher Level 5 but the test results show the underachievement in English and science. However, they do not reflect the good progress the pupils have made of late, that about one third of pupils entered the school not having attained as expected when they completed their infant education and that overall when they leave the school at age 11 most pupils attain what is expected of them nationally or close to it in their day to day work. Even though there are pupils falling short of

attaining the expected Level 4 and not enough attaining the higher Level 5, the inspection judges that the school is on the right course and has procedures in place to ensure most pupils achieve soundly given their prior attainment. The school fell short of achieving its own targets marginally in 2002 and although the school's trend is below the national one it is rising steadily from a low point in the year 2000. In spite of improvements there is no room for complacency. The school acknowledges that its goal, is to further raise standards and close the gaps in pupils' knowledge, skills and understanding borne out of disruption in staffing and inconsistent teaching provision in the past. To move swiftly towards this goal a key focus must be to eradicate the slow progress made since the start of the school year in September by pupils in Year 3 to enable them all to fulfill their potential.

Pupils, with special educational needs, progress well; their needs are analysed and catered for effectively. The higher attaining pupils are challenged with more taxing work and this enables them to move forward at a rate commensurate with their abilities. Funding is being used very well to provide additional booster support for low achievers and those pupils who are on the borderline of achieving the expected level.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Pupils come to school with mainly satisfactory attitudes but a good number are passive and at times disinterested learners. However, when challenged by the lively lessons and high expectations of teaching staff their attitudes blossom and become very good. A number of younger pupils are very immature and lack concentration for the interesting activities provided.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Good overall in lessons and about the school. Some younger pupils display challenging and immature behaviour; they clearly have not acquired the personal skills expected for their age in spite of the best efforts of the temporary teaching staff.
Personal development and relationships	Good. Pupils play well together. They are given responsibilities and rise well to them. As yet, all learning does not encourage and support pupils improving initiative and independence.
Attendance	Satisfactory.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils in:	Years 3 – 6
Quality of teaching	Good

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

Teaching is good overall. In almost nine out of ten lessons it was good or better and in one third of these teaching was very good and on occasion excellent. No unsatisfactory teaching was seen during the inspection. Key strengths of teaching include firm but caring management of pupils' behaviour, very thorough planning, efficient and effective use of support staff, time and limited resources and good teaching of basic skills enable pupils to

learn effectively, acquire basic literacy and numeracy skills well and learn at a good pace. Many pupils do not naturally transfer what they have learned to other subjects but the teachers plan carefully for usage of skills and there are some very good examples of pupils drawing on their reading and writing skills to complete other work. The picture is dimmed when pupils' work is scrutinised and reveals that for many pupils in Year 3 learning has been far too slow, resulting in pupils not being able to think problems through or apply what they know in English, mathematics and science.

During the inspection, teaching of the basic skills was effective and sometimes highly so when taught by staff with specialisms. The setting of pupils in Years 5 and 6 and the placement of higher attaining Year 3 pupils in with Year 4 pupils is very effective and showing significant benefits to aid learning and progress.

Pupils, notably those with special educational needs benefit from working with the highly skilled support staff.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	School provides a broad, balanced and relevant curriculum, which meets requirements although inconsistencies prevail for the youngest pupils. One aspect of ICT, control technology, is not yet fully in place. Extra-curricular provision is good. Investigative work is underdeveloped in mathematics.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Good.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Good overall however, pupils' knowledge and understanding of other faiths, cultures and growing up in a culturally diverse society are the weakest elements.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Good. High expectations for pupils' conduct support learning and very good relationships help pupils feel safe and secure at school. Good progress has been made in clarifying and implementing assessment procedures and analysing data except when pupils enter school and progress is consequently slowed because of this weakness.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Excellent leadership by the Headteacher gives a very strong steer to raising standards. There is no working senior management team but delegation to coordinators is effective. Shared commitment of staff is a strength.

How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Satisfactory. Requirements are met. The principles of best value are soundly applied. A firmer role in holding the school to account for consistency of pupils' progress is needed.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Very good. Areas of need swiftly recognised and action so far has been effective. The leadership of the school has a clear view of the way ahead. Coordinators have usefully been trained in monitoring procedures and use their knowledge well to improve teaching and learning.
The strategic use of resources	Good. Where staff specialisms are used this has a beneficial effect. The use of time for setting pupils in Year 5 and 6 has had a strong influence on pupils' achievements. ICT resources and staff training have supported raising standards. Grant funding has been very well used to boost lower achieving pupils' progress. Improvements to accommodation have improved the learning environment.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • That the children like school. • The progress their children make. • The quality of teaching is good. • The school's expectations for hard work. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Homework provision. • The information on their children's progress. • How closely the school works with parents. • The leadership and management of the school. • The range of interesting activities outside lessons.

Six parents attended the pre inspection meeting and 33 (20 per cent) returned the questionnaire.

The inspection agrees overall with the positive points raised by parents although there are inconsistencies in the expectations and the impact of teaching on learning. Homework provision is sound and the information provided for parents is good and regular as is the extra-curricular provision. The school has as a priority the need to work closely with parents although it is evident that not all parents support the pupils' learning at home. The inspection cannot agree with parents about the leadership and management of the school because the Governors, Headteacher and coordinators are having a very beneficial influence overall on the school's provision.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and pupils' achievements

1. Standards in the school have been low since the last inspection and the main reason the school was designated as a cause of concern by the local authority. However, although the school's trend is below the national one it is rising steadily from a low point in the year 2000. The school fell short of achieving its own targets marginally in 2002. The key weakness in test performance is that too many pupils are achieving Level 3 and too few, the higher Level 5; this lowers the average point scores in English and science. The exception to this is mathematics where the school did well in securing more pupils than is usually found attaining at the higher Level 5.
2. More pupils are entering the school with attainment levels below average and this is a decline since the last inspection. Pupils in Year 3 have made a slow start since September. A key reason for this is that the information on their abilities and performance when arriving in Year 3 has not been considered when planning the work offered to them. Expectations have been too low as scrutiny of work shows. Pupils' progress has speeded up recently and they are gaining more from their studies. As they move through the school pupils make good progress and at times, for example, when they are taught by teachers with specialisms or organised into ability sets, as in Years 5 and 6 for literacy and numeracy, their progress can be very good.
3. The inspection finds that about three out of four pupils are working at the expected level in English, mathematics and science except in investigational mathematics where pupils have too few opportunities to attain as expected. Pupils by the age of 11 achieve soundly overall, given that they have had a disruptive journey through school because of inconsistent teaching and too many supply teachers in the past. Even though there are pupils falling short of attaining the expected Level 4 and not enough attaining the higher Level 5, the inspection judges that the school is on the right course and has procedures in place to ensure most pupils achieve soundly given their prior attainment. In information and communication technology pupils attain as expected nationally except for control technology. In most other subjects, they attain as expected. No overall judgements could be made in art and design, design and technology and geography.
4. Pupils with special educational needs do not all achieve the standards in English, mathematics and science expected of all eleven year olds. However, they make good progress and the standard of their work is rising along with that of the majority of pupils. The development of assessment, tracking and target setting is having a positive effect upon their learning.
5. The school acknowledges that it needs to swiftly raise standards further and ensure all pupils make suitable progress.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

6. The pupils' attitudes to school are overall satisfactory but rise to very good when stimulated by interesting and challenging teaching. The quality of their personal relationships is very good, whilst their behaviour and personal development are good. Attendance is satisfactory.

7. Generally throughout the school the pupils' progress and learning are supported by consistently high expectations by teaching staff for good behaviour and hard work. Pupils' responses are encouraged by lively and imaginative teaching. When this expectation and quality of teaching are not provided their behaviour and responses are unhelpful to learning and progress is affected.
8. The pupils in Year 3 enjoyed a very lively mathematics lesson learning how to add and subtract numbers. The class included a number of pupils who lack maturity and the ability to concentrate. However, the very good teaching technique ensured that the pupils had to listen and concentrate in order to follow the sequence of number patterns being developed. Excellent behaviour management safeguarded the pace of the lesson and ensured that the pupils were on task. During a science lesson for a mixed class of Year 5 and 6 pupils they were learning about magnetism. The very good subject knowledge of the class teacher enabled her to make clear teaching points that captured the pupils' interest and stimulated their thinking. Their behaviour was very good and they worked well in pairs, sharing their ideas.
9. The quality of pupils' behaviour overall is good both in lessons and about the school. They enjoy stimulation and challenge and respond well to consistent expectation for appropriate conduct and responsible behaviour. Some of the younger pupils do not have self-discipline, a positive work ethic or an understanding of how to relate to one another. This has an adverse effect on their learning. Some pupils from this age group report that persistent bullying is a feature of their school life. They are however, secure in their relationship with all staff at the school and confident of support when incidents occur. The school has a clear stated policy for dealing with bullying and the level of pastoral concern is high.
10. Opportunities to help them develop and mature are provided, such as acting as monitors to assist staff, dealing with phone calls during the lunch break or holding appointments as house captains. Through the curriculum they are learning how to be responsible for their own health and well-being and the importance of citizenship.
11. Levels of attendance are broadly satisfactory, and the pupils mainly attend promptly for the start of the school day.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?

12. The quality of teaching is good overall, and a strength of the school. In almost nine out of ten lessons it was good or better and in one third of these teaching was very good and on occasion excellent. No unsatisfactory teaching was observed during the inspection.
13. The teachers' management of pupils, particularly their behaviour is first rate and a key factor in determining the generally good progress pupils make through out the school. Their subject knowledge for most subjects is secure and their grasp of the National Literacy and Numeracy frameworks and their ability to adapt them to suit the needs of their pupils is good, resulting in high quality lessons being delivered. Clear learning objectives are set at the beginning of lessons, these are shared with the pupils and revisited during plenary sessions to check on the level of success achieved during the lesson in what the pupils know and understand.
14. Planning is a particular strength. Teachers are working within an agreed structure of long, medium and short-term planning in a systematic and highly productive way, which supports pupils well and has helped standards to improve dramatically over the

last eighteen months. For example, in science pupils are being taught more effectively in developing their investigative skills and are required to track their own progress of their achievement, leading to greater understanding, productivity and a firmer acquisition of subject skills. Although, in mathematics, these skills have yet to receive the same degree of focus and determined use, and there is still the need for greater opportunity for pupils to determine their own lines of enquiry overall. A step recognised by subject managers in their action plans.

15. Teachers generally expect pupils to pay attention and behave well, which most of them do for the majority of the time. They encourage them to concentrate on their work and to persevere with tasks. Accordingly most pupils respond very well and their attitudes to learning and behaviour in lessons are almost always good. For example, when Year 5 and 6 pupils were expected to work together in pairs to discuss decaying food, they responded with maturity, were sensible, cooperative and worked well in agreeing outcomes and in communicating their ideas. This is much to do with the school's approach to learning and the staff's vigilance and the high expectations throughout the school. However, there is a small number, some of whom are on the special educational needs register who have a poor work ethic, are immature and have a low level of self-discipline, who, despite the best efforts of their teachers let themselves down, cause disruption and on occasion slow the pace of learning for themselves and others. A significant number of Year 3 pupils hold onto immature attitudes which at times evolves into poor behaviour; this is nipped in the bud by teaching staff who are constantly vigilant and rigorous in their behaviour management to safeguard the progress made by the individuals concerned and the rest of the class.
16. The teaching of pupils with special educational needs is good, as it was judged at the last inspection. This is largely because of the very good liaison and trust between the special educational needs coordinator (SENCO), subject leaders, class teachers and teaching assistants, and between the LEA Support Service personnel and the school. Individual Education Plans are now written to an improved format so that they are more specific, measurable, and achievable. Class teachers are closely involved in drawing up the IEPs. They are therefore able to plan carefully and accurately for their pupils, whilst keeping them in touch with the body of the lesson. This is a strength. For instance, a group of younger pupils from Year 3 and 4 worked at planning a story outline, as did the rest of the class, and learned to do this by recording their ideas in picture form. At the same time, they very successfully worked towards their personal targets, which were to write simple sentences by creating their own word banks of common words. The pupils met their targets in the lesson because of the planning and because of the good quality of support given by the teaching assistant who encouraged independence and personal effort. The quality of individual educational plans (IEP's) varies, but all are sound and some are good and very good.
17. A very good feature of the teaching is that pupils with special educational needs learn well alongside others. Their contributions to lessons are valued. For instance, a Year 5 group was chosen as the first group to feedback to others in the plenary of a literacy lesson. Because classes are 'setted' for literacy, pupils can often work towards their IEP targets as they complete tasks set to meet lesson objectives, so that their self-esteem is lifted. For instance, a group of Year 5 pupils with special educational needs in literacy concentrated beautifully upon drafting story openings on a whiteboard in the same manner as the rest of the class, because of the productive work ethos set by the class teacher and her positive attitude.

18. The work of the teaching assistants has a very good impact upon the progress of pupils with special educational needs. They have a good knowledge of the pupils' targets from the IEPs and are now completing records of progress using a standardised format. They meet with the class teacher on a weekly basis to share this information and discuss the week's plans, so that they and the teacher are clear about what the pupils' next steps should be.
19. The use of assessment to drive planning, deemed to be a weakness at the time of the last inspection is now a strength in most of the school. Planning has significantly improved and has a direct impact on the pupils' attainment and progress. Teachers generally use the resources available to them, and the accommodation efficiently and to best advantage. The pupils benefiting from the overall work ethic produced by the team of staff working to the common goal of providing an effective learning environment in which all the pupils whatever their needs, have equal access to all aspects of the curriculum being offered.
20. The parents who judged the quality of teaching to be good are correct. The lively approach and high expectations of the teachers as witnessed in the majority of lessons was inspirational, and a credit to the individuals concerned.

HOW GOOD ARE THE CURRICULAR AND OTHER OPPORTUNITIES OFFERED TO PUPILS?

21. The school currently provides a good, broad and well balanced curriculum, as it did at the time of the last inspection, and has dealt successfully with the issues within the last report. This has been achieved only very recently, under the direction of the current Headteacher. It has been done by making maximum use of national guidance, and by applying the principles of rigorous planning to every subject. 'Emergency measures' have been effective and within a short space of time, the curriculum has been stabilised. The school now feels ready to reshape its curriculum to make it more exciting, relevant and suited to needs of all pupils in 2003, and has already begun the process.
22. The literacy and numeracy strategies are at the heart of the curriculum, and the school has used the strategies' planning and teaching techniques to strengthen the delivery of other subjects. A key improvement has been in planning. This is now very good. A two-year rolling plan for the lower and upper schools ensures that there is no repetition, and planning teams build carefully upon what the pupils already know and can do. There is still no clearly laid out progression of skills in some subjects, but improved assessment procedures in English and mathematics enable teachers to plan work at the right level of difficulty for pupils' age and aptitude. Good liaison between teaching teams helps to ensure continuity as does the adoption of the nationally approved schemes of work. Links with the feeder High school have improved continuity of approach in mathematics, special educational needs and in developing thinking skills for pupils.
23. Irrespective of plans for a more innovative curriculum in 2003/4, the present curriculum at present has several good features that add to its richness and suitability. French is taught to all pupils in Years 5 and 6, giving them a broader perspective on the world beyond their locality, as do immediate plans for a partner school in France. Staff training in 'Thinking Skills' has had an impact on teaching across the curriculum, because teachers use techniques such as music and classroom colours to reduce pupil anxiety, and a variety of techniques for helping pupils to construct their ideas. Recently, a 'geography week' enriched and enlivened

learning, and lottery funding will be used to run an Arts Week linking music, art and literature early in the coming term.

24. Pupils regularly go on educational visits or have visitors to school to enhance their first hand experience. For instance, a local Head teacher talked to the pupils about William Palmer, the 'Rugeley poisoner', as part a local history study, and pupils visited a local heritage museum as part of their study of World War 2. Every two years, pupils in Years 5 and 6 join in a residential stay at Shugborough Outdoor Education centre. This makes a strong contribution to the pupils' personal development as well as to extending their knowledge of the wider locality. After school activities are largely sport oriented, but the range is wide and the parents are very supportive of these. Involvement in local tournaments extends links with other schools, and success in winning Netball and Football tournaments raises self-esteem. The school finds it hard to draw in members of the immediate community to support or add to learning – few adults other than members of the school staff were involved in school during the inspection week, for example. This is a disappointment for the school, as it divorces formal learning from the family setting, making it harder to foster positive attitudes to learning.
25. The school succeeds in ensuring that all pupils have equality of access to the curriculum. Boys and girls are treated equally, and gender differences in learning style are addressed in key subjects such as English. There is an After School Club for pupils whose families find after-school care difficult.
26. The school takes advice from the county Special Needs Advisory Service for pupils with particular needs and acts on this well. Gifted and talented pupils are not as yet identified as such but higher attaining pupils are challenged within lessons.
27. The school organises its provision for pupils with special educational needs largely through in-class support rather than through withdrawal groups. Individual pupils receive some specialist one-to-one teaching from the LEA support service, and 'target groups' of the younger pupils follow the nationally approved 'catch-up' programme for literacy. This is suitable for the pupils observed, and helps most to remedy earlier difficulties. The school is careful to ensure that pupils are not missing key lessons across the curriculum because of attending withdrawal sessions. In terms of meeting future needs, the school may wish to consider setting up an even more sharply focused letter-sound withdrawal programme for the weakest struggling readers. A central bank of resources to support SEN teaching would help teachers to improve their provision further.
28. Overall, provision for personal and social education is appropriate for pupils of this age. A policy for personal, social and health education, including sex and drug education, is in place, and the scheme for this is currently under review.
29. The development of pupils' personal values is good overall. Their spiritual, moral and social development is good whilst their cultural development is satisfactory.
30. The pupils' spiritual development is supported by the school's caring ethos and its commitment to teaching values based on Christian traditions. The celebration of worship is used well to explore these values and to reveal how they are shared with other religions. The delivery of collective worship meets statutory requirements. Within the curriculum the pupils have many opportunities to appreciate spiritual enjoyment, such as a physical education lesson for Years 5 and 6 when they danced the Maori Haka. During a geography lesson for pupils in Year 4 they gained significant

- pleasure and revelation in studying how physical and human features could be recognised from maps and photographs and in science, several classes are studying the amazing effects that micro-organisms can have on everyday items such as food.
31. Overall, the pupils' moral values are good and the majority understands right from wrong. Some of the younger pupils do not have well-developed moral values or relate well to the need to consider others. Some classes have contributed to classroom rules. The school's strategy is to recognise and praise appropriate behaviour and encourage the pupils to be responsible for their own actions. Through consistent application of this strategy, the learning environment is improved and the progress of lessons supported.
 32. Most pupils enjoy positive relationships, they work well together during lessons and their social and recreational activities are relaxed and friendly. Younger pupils recall being welcomed into their new school by seniors who show them around and help them to settle in. The pupils have supported a number of charities, and at a local level they have entertained elderly members of the community. They visit a number of venues as part of their topic studies and within the curriculum they are learning about the implications of citizenship. The development of their social values is evident in their response to visitors and other adults with whom they are friendly, confident and respectful.
 33. Cultural development is satisfactory. Pupils learn about their own history and social development in geography pupils are currently studying features of their hometown of Rugeley in the 19th century and comparing it with the modern day. The different styles of a number of well known artists is displayed about the school and through music and dance the pupils are introduced to the creative work of other cultures. In religious education and through collective worship comparisons are made with faiths and beliefs from around the World. However, there is limited depth to the development of the pupils' cultural insight and they have some way to go before they are fully prepared for life in a multi-cultural society.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

34. Overall the procedures for child protection and promoting the welfare of the pupils are good. The strong pastoral commitment of all staff serves to support the welfare of the pupils and provide a safe, secure learning environment. The school has well-structured policies and a shared commitment to manage behaviour effectively and develop pupils' self-esteem and independence. Some pupils are concerned about persistent bullying, which is yet to be fully resolved by the school. It is not affecting their desire to come to school and they are confident and secure in the knowledge that all staff are approachable to resolve these issues. Procedures for monitoring and improving attendance are good.
35. The school has made good progress in improving its strategies for assessment, which are now satisfactory. At the last inspection they were noted as being "insufficient" and at "an early stage of development". The school examines carefully the results of tests carried out in the previous schools, but this information is not used well enough in the class of the youngest pupils in order to support planning for their individual needs. The results are used well for focusing on pupils who might not reach the expected standards by the end of their first year in the school. A keen eye is kept on this focus group beyond that time, should it be warranted. However, the same attention is not yet being given to the group of pupils, remaining in that class, but who have higher ability, in order to prescribe appropriate work matched to their needs.

36. Half-termly assessments allow teachers to check pupils' progress well over time. The results are recorded on class proformas so that the needs of individuals and groups can be noted. The school is not yet recording this information, so that it gives a picture of progress beyond an individual year group. As a result, progress over the four-year period at Churchfields is difficult to see at a glance.
37. The results of assessments are mainly used well to set individual targets for writing. This is beginning to give good support to pupils and help them make progress, although only recently introduced. More general targets are set by the coordinator for mathematics for each class, although the school is proposing to extend the use of individual targets to other areas of English and to mathematics. Targets are shared with pupils and noted on reports for parents to see.
38. The results of the tests administered at the end of each key stage are used well to point to strengths and weaknesses in both teaching and learning. Class teachers examine results carefully and there is strong evidence to show that they are prepared to make adjustments to their own teaching in order to improve their own skills and in turn help pupils make better progress.
39. At the same time the school notes any differences in the ability of different genders seen in the results of the tests at age 7 and 11. It is not yet carrying out the same analysis for the intervening years, thus enabling the school to note if gender differences can be reduced over time.
40. The marking of work in nearly all classes is good. Teachers are at pains to suggest, in their notes, ways in which pupils might make better progress. In some classes this becomes an ongoing dialogue between teacher and pupil.
41. The policy and practices for special educational needs have been brought into line with the new Code of Practice. The school's new systems for assessment help with the identification of pupils in need of support and in the specification of their need. IEPs are in place for all pupils on the special need register. In the limited time available to her, the SENCO has been active in monitoring the quality teaching and learning experienced by the pupils on the special educational needs register. She has observed a lesson in each class according to agreed criteria, giving valuable oral and written feedback to class teachers. Teaching assistants have also been observed and given good quality feedback. As well as influencing teaching for the better, this monitoring exercise has allowed the SENCO to work with the pupils and to know more about each child's needs.
42. Reviews are regular, and parents are always invited through a standardised letter sent well in advance. There is very good practice in following up when parents do not attend, informing them of the outcomes by letter and requiring a written receipt.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

43. The relationship between the school and parents is not strong. Parents' views of the school are only satisfactory and the contribution of many parents to the children's learning and their support for the school are poor.
44. Despite the school's best efforts to involve parents, most fail to respond and are not actively involved in supporting their children's education or the life of the school. The quality of annual reports of pupils' progress is good and the school issues regular

newsletters that inform on all aspects of its activities and pupils' learning. The school has provided mathematics and reading presentations during the evening to inform parents of the children's work and advise how they can support their child's education. They received no response. No parents have volunteered to assist in school. The school uses the annual parents' evening to make a presentation of the children's topic, curriculum and homework for the forthcoming term. The school has applied through the local authority to participate in the Home/School partnership in order to improve the quality of relationships.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

45. To make comparisons with the previous report is difficult. Dramatic changes have taken place in the leadership and staffing of the school since the last inspection in November 1997. Only the Deputy Headteacher, who is currently absent, remains from the previous staff. The outstanding leadership provided by the Headteacher, who was appointed eighteen months ago, when the school had declined to a point of concern because of the underachievement of its pupils, has steered the school to its current level of success. She has brought a very clear vision of what sort of school Churchfields should be. The Headteacher is supported unstintingly by recently appointed staff. The many inherent, significant weaknesses and challenges have been addressed. The efforts by the staff have made a tremendous impact on standards attained by pupils, the quality of curriculum planning, assessment procedures and the behaviour and attendance of pupils. All staff are highly committed to the future of the school even though the threat of amalgamation is hanging over their future.
46. The Headteacher leads by example to promote a positive work ethic and without exception, is supported in her quest by a team who are equally dedicated to the school's success. There is no working senior management team but the overall leadership and management of the school by the Headteacher and subject coordinators in partnership with the governors in providing clarity of educational direction is good and the impact of this is one of the key factors in the school moving onward and upward. The Headteacher has the respect and confidence of the staff and the governors.
47. The Headteacher knows her school well and is active in all aspects of its work. The school's aims are focused on achievement and self worth, respect and care for individuals and a drive for high standards regardless of pupils' background or abilities. Aims are generally well met and the school's ethos is one of high expectations; this is appreciated by many of the parents who are pleased with the progress their children are making. However, the school's success at being "educationally inclusive" is dimmed by the slow progress made by many Year 3 pupils. Although monitoring of this year group has taken place it now needs to be undertaken with far greater rigour to iron out the weaknesses identified.
48. All members of staff have been allocated curriculum responsibilities and they fulfil all aspects of their role extremely well, including support to colleagues, planning, monitoring of teaching and learning and the moderation of pupils' work. The Performance Management process is fully in place. All staff have negotiated individual targets which support their professional development in meeting the demands on them to tackle the priorities identified in the school improvement plan. Despite budgetary constraints the Headteacher has funded training in; "how to monitor and its effect on individuals" and negotiated an agreed programme of classroom observation by coordinators. The work of the school is fully and thoroughly

monitored, particularly the quality of teaching and learning and its impact, and the behaviour of pupils. All staff including teaching assistants, have a keen awareness and understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the school and the challenges it faces. Governors are kept well informed and able to raise pertinent questions in holding the school to account. All are encouraged to be involved in determining the strategic direction of the school resulting in the school improvement plan which is wide ranging but well focused on the important priorities related to pupils' achievements and the raising of standards and success criteria by which initiatives are to be judged. For example, the organisation of a mixed Year 3 and 4 class and the setting of Year 5 and 6 pupils for literacy and numeracy both were judged by the inspection to be successful in raising the achievement of the pupils involved despite the concern expressed by a small number of parents,

49. The SENCO has made a strong impact and good progress since taking up post. She is providing good quality support to teachers and to pupils and has a very clear idea of how SEN provision could be improved, including the identification and support for gifted and talented pupils. The work of the SENCO has been of significant value in developing a whole staff approach to self-review. It is important now that she has time to develop her role and gain first hand knowledge of the pupils in each year group.
50. The governors fulfil their statutory responsibilities effectively. They have a relevant structure of committees and through these provide support and outside knowledge and skills to the overall management of the school. Governors have begun to apply criteria for identifying best value and they show questioning, prudence and consultation in their decision making. Sound progress is being made in their application of the principles of best value. Governors need to take a stronger role in holding the school to account for the progress made by all pupils.
51. The implementation of the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies has been very well managed and has had a significant impact on most pupils' achievement.
52. Accommodation is good. The decision by the governors to fund extensive refurbishment is well received by the parents who appreciate the enhanced overall quality and atmosphere of the building which is well used and cleaned to a high standard. The match of teachers and support staff to the demands of the curriculum is good. The school provides a good level of staffing and resources to meet the needs of pupils with special educational needs.
53. Financial control and management of resources are very good. Special grants have been very well directed to ensure optimum return. For example, booster classes have helped to raise standards of a significant number of pupils. The school seeks to achieve maximum benefit from its financial resources and governors and the Headteacher are fastidious in ensuring their limited funding goes directly to pupil support.
54. The school has yet to ensure that it has full and beneficial communications with its neighbouring feeder schools to support the continuity of pupils' education.
55. Given its staffing, resources, accommodation and the effectiveness of their use along with the good progress and achievements of most pupils, the good quality of teaching and the pupils' attainment on entry the school is giving good value for money. These attributes also show the school to be worthy of being a provider of initial teacher training.

56. WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

The governors, Headteacher and staff now need to:

Improve standards overall but notably the underachievement of a significant proportion of Year 3 pupils in English, mathematics and science by ensuring that:

- assessment data is used precisely on entry to the school to target pupils' needs with quantifiable targets which are tracked regularly for success;
- even greater rigour is applied to the monitoring of teaching and learning to pinpoint where precise improvements are needed;
- governors take a stronger role in holding the school and individuals to account for the pupils' progress.

Main references to these issues can be found in paragraph(s):2,35,47 and 50

Improve pupils' skills of independence and investigation, particularly in mathematics by ensuring that:

- the school's best practice is more widely shared;
- training needs are identified;
- new materials and resources are made available which target investigation;
- activities to foster independence and investigation are highlighted in planning;
- management monitors and evaluates the success in practice of initiatives.

Main references to these issues can be found in paragraph(s):3,14,22 and 72

Improve the liaison with the schools where pupils come from by:

- making every effort to improve communication to safeguard the smooth transition of pupils between schools;
- information meetings on pupils' progress are set up where possible to gain a clearer insight into their needs.

Main references to these issues can be found in paragraph(s):54

Continue the best efforts to involve parents in the education of their children by:

- giving high priority to the Home/School partnership initiative and homework policy;
- ensuring that all parents are given clear explanations of why management decisions have been made in the interests of raising standards for all pupils.

Main references to these issues can be found in paragraph(s):43 and 44

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	38
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	15

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Number	1	11	21	5	0	0	0
Percentage	3	29	55	13	0	0	0

The table gives the number and percentage of lessons observed in each of the seven categories used to make judgements about teaching. Care should be taken when interpreting these percentages as each lesson represents more than two percentage points.

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll	Y3 – Y6
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	161
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	21
Special educational needs	Y3 – Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	5
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	26
English as an additional language	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	5
Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	13
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	4

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	4.3
National comparative data	5.4

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.9
National comparative data	0.5

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

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

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2002	17	24	41

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	11	13	16
	Girls	17	15	21
	Total	28	28	37
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	68 (67)	68 (60)	90 (77)
	National	75 (75)	73 (71)	86 (87)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	13	14	14
	Girls	19	20	19
	Total	32	34	33
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	78 (52)	83 (65)	80 (75)
	National	73 (72)	74 (74)	82 (82)

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

Ethnic background of pupils

Categories used in the Annual School Census
White – British
White – Irish
White – any other White background
Mixed – White and Black Caribbean
Mixed – White and Black African
Mixed – White and Asian
Mixed – any other mixed background
Asian or Asian British - Indian
Asian or Asian British - Pakistani
Asian or Asian British – Bangladeshi
Asian or Asian British – any other Asian background
Black or Black British – Caribbean
Black or Black British – African
Black or Black British – any other Black background
Chinese
Any other ethnic group
No ethnic group recorded

Exclusions in the last school year

No of pupils on roll	Number of fixed period exclusions	Number of permanent exclusions
154	2	0
0	0	0
0	0	0
2	0	0
0	0	0
0	0	0
0	0	0
5	0	0
0	0	0
0	0	0
0	0	0
0	0	0
0	0	0
0	0	0
0	0	0
0	0	0
0	0	0

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: Y3 – Y6

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	14
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	23
Average class size	27

Education support staff: Y3 – Y6

Total number of education support staff	6
Total aggregate hours worked per week	103

FTE means full-time equivalent

Financial information

Financial year	2001/2
	£
Total income	£348,770
Total expenditure	£327,111
Expenditure per pupil	£2031
Balance brought forward from previous year	£15,530
Balance carried forward to next year	£21,659

Recruitment of teachers

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	7
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	6
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)	1

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	160
Number of questionnaires returned	33

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	39	61	0	0	0
My child is making good progress in school.	45	45	3	0	6
Behaviour in the school is good.	33	52	9	0	6
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	36	45	18	0	0
The teaching is good.	39	55	3	0	3
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	27	42	12	12	6
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	55	33	6	6	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	55	36	6	0	3
The school works closely with parents.	30	39	18	9	3
The school is well led and managed.	42	33	12	6	6
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	33	55	6	0	6
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	45	24	24	3	3

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

ENGLISH

57. Standards in English have improved significantly from the below average scores reached in the national testing of 2002. They are now broadly average. This is because the present Year 6 have benefited from effective teaching to correct a weakness in writing across the school. The quality of writing of the boys in general and of the lower attaining groups in particular, has improved. Although the school missed its target last year, the school should come close to meeting its challenging target of 77% in 2003.
58. There are a number of reasons for this recent improvement in standards.
- The school now makes full use of the National Literacy Strategy as the key to achieving the highest standards of literacy; and because it is up-to-date with recent training and guidance, it has adapted its provisions to suit the needs of its pupils.
 - The head teacher and subject leader create a strong sense of team work, involving teaching staff in deciding upon new approaches and techniques, so that these are carried through into practice.
 - The subject leader analyses test results, identifies areas of weakness and makes changes to curriculum planning and classroom delivery to create improvement.
 - Assessment is used to target groups of 'at risk' pupils and monitor their progress.
59. These steps have not had the same impact on every year group and this continues to slow down the rate of learning across the school. Although most of the youngest pupils enter school able to read and write satisfactorily, although not well, the teaching in their first year does not build well enough on this. They become more competent and confident as readers and writers from Year 4 onwards, however, and progress from this point is good.
60. Many pupils lack confidence in speaking out and expressing their ideas in discussion or in more formal situations, but they make good progress. This is because the school recognises the need for more learning through talk, and has set speaking and listening as a current focus for development. The way this has been carried out is a shining example of how well new initiatives are taken up across the school. Teachers have followed up a training session by including more drama and talk in their planning, and the subject leader has monitored its effectiveness in recent monitoring of teaching. 'Discuss your ideas with your partner' is a regular feature of lessons and pupils enjoy putting each other in the hot seat for public questioning about, say, their motives in role as characters from a story or novel. As a result, pupils are beginning to extend their ideas and develop their thinking orally, and this is having a beneficial effect on reading and writing. For instance, in one Year 4 class, pupils improved upon their initial suggestions for a story plan by listening and replying to the teacher's careful consideration and suggestions for relating their ideas to what they knew about the characters.
61. When pupils enter the school, many have 'cracked the reading code' and can use picture clues, word association and the general sense of the passage to read unfamiliar words. However, a significant minority of pupils are below this level. Most pupils, whose special educational need is in literacy, gradually learn afresh how to link letters and sounds and to feel more confident about reading. This happens because the SENCO and literacy coordinator (who teach some Year 3 and all Year 4 pupils)

plan reading activities for them based upon nationally approved intervention or 'catch up' programmes so that they gradually build up their skills a step at a time at the right rate and level of difficulty. This is followed through into literacy lessons, with careful planning and teaching assistant support. By Years 5 and 6, most pupils are competent readers who can cope with the reading necessary for learning in most lessons. For instance, Year 4 pupils managed to seek out dates, names and occupations from a densely written historical document! A small group of older pupils showed that they could grasp the meaning of heavily old-fashioned language from a nineteenth century novel extract in their reading book, picking out key words and phrases as evidence. However, they were less good at explaining the impact of the author's language and at reading between the lines for inference and deduction.

62. Pupils are generally not avid readers. Despite the school's best efforts, the pupils are not encouraged to read widely at home, and turn-over of borrowing from the new collections of fiction in classrooms is slow. This affects their higher order reading skills and few pupils are reading at the higher levels. Year 5 and 6 pupils say that they visit the local library, but mostly in order to loan reference texts rather than fiction. Information retrieval skills are adequate. Pupils can use the simplified Dewey system to locate texts in the school's modest library collection. The present stock is not sufficient to support important plans to develop literacy skills through the wider curriculum.
63. Writing has been the focus for intensive development in recent months, and the impact of this is showing in the work of pupils in Years 4 to 6, but less so in Year 3. On entry to Year 3, most pupils have reached the level expected of seven year olds in national testing, but samples of early writing do not show some of the features expected for their age. The more able pupils who are taught in the Year 3/4 class make progress, and improve handwriting, spelling and text structure. However, the rest of the year group is slow to improve and continue to over-use linkages such as 'and' and 'then' in their narrative writing. Year 4 pupils make much better progress. By the end of the year, their writing is at a level that compares comfortably with that of pupils in most schools and Year 5 teachers build well on this. The strength in these middle years is in narrative and descriptive writing, in the use of lively language, and in story planning and structure. This has been the main focus of teaching, with pleasing results. Year 6 pupils have made very good progress since September, when they produced only fairly short, under developed pieces. They are now much more certain about how to plan and organise their writing, linking ideas together, using paragraphs and connectives appropriately. Again, the strength is in composition and the choice of vocabulary for effect. They use more lively language and try to vary their sentence openings, although only the very best writers use a variety of complex sentences. Few pupils control these properly through using punctuation such as commas and semi-colons. Pupils do not always trouble to use the punctuation that they know about, and work is sometimes untidy.
64. The teaching of literacy lessons is good overall, despite weakness in Year 3. Some very good lessons were taught to upper junior pupils during the inspection. Teachers have an in-depth knowledge of the national literacy framework and its purpose, and have the techniques to deliver it well. Planning is very good, because the teachers work together in upper and lower school teams, so that they share expertise that benefits a wide spread of pupils. Years 5 and 6 are taught literacy in sets, put together by ability, so that teachers are able to pitch their explanations and discussions at the right level of difficulty. They also plan slightly different follow-up tasks for the levels within the class, so that pupils are working at the right level of challenge. Teachers and teaching assistants work smoothly together because plans

have been shared. The teaching assistants support the lower attaining pupils and those with special educational needs well.

65. Much of the improvement in structure and style comes from the teachers' good understanding of how to teach writing as an outcome of reading and an appreciation of a wide range of texts, so that the pupils have high quality models on which to base their own writing. For instance, Year 3/4 was learning to write in the style of Jacqueline Wilson, Year 6 to plan around the theme of 'justice' after recalling a tale by Geraldine McCaughrean. In both cases and in other lessons, the teachers demonstrated exactly how to do this, scribing the stages of the story plot onto an enlarged writing plan that all of the pupils could share. This very explicit teaching suits the needs of boys particularly well, and the tightly framed lesson structure means that they mostly concentrate as well as the girls. The active features of lessons, such as bursts of 'time out' to try out personal ideas through talk or using whiteboards, also benefits the boys' learning. When grammar is taught in an active way, linked to the text type being studied, the pupils begin to see how to vary their sentences to create an effect. This was effective in a Year 5 lesson where sentences were rearranged in order to suit the persuasive style of writing. Linking grammar more directly to text work in lesson planning would further strengthen the teaching and learning of writing. ICT is not yet used sufficiently, especially for re-drafting and editing and there is not enough consistency across classes about standards of neatness and accuracy in writing situations. More opportunities to write for 'real reasons' would support the teachers' insistence on this.
66. The school now makes good use of test results, marking and assessment. This has improved well since the last inspection. Teachers set writing targets for groups of pupils and plan tasks and activities that match. Examples of writing are graded each term to check for progress so that teaching teams can make any necessary changes to teaching the groups. This is having a good influence on writing, and reading targets are planned. A further improvement would be a system for the pupils to check and record their own progress towards the targets. Marking contributes to the lift in standards. Most mark in a consistent and encouragingly helpful way. Detailed written comments tell pupils what they have done well, and often pick out points for improvement. At times, a poor standard of handwriting, punctuation or general presentation has been allowed to pass, and this pulls down the standard of work in other subjects as well as English. Time set aside for pupils to read and act upon written feedback could add to the value of marking procedures.
67. The subject leader has a good knowledge of English and English teaching, and evaluates the state of the subject within school regularly, including checking out the pupils' responses and aptitudes and monitoring lessons. Working at first with the headteacher, and now more independently, she is having a very positive impact upon the quality of teaching and learning. She has a clear picture of how the subject should develop, following on from this successful year.

MATHEMATICS

68. The results of the 2002 National Curriculum assessments for 11 year olds were in line with the national average and the percentage of pupils achieving the higher Level 5 was just above average. In comparison with those of similar schools, overall results were average. The performance of boys and girls was broadly similar. Evidence gathered during the inspection showed that by the end of Year 6, about three quarters of the current group of pupils are likely to achieve the nationally expected level, bringing the school close to its target of eighty three per cent.

69. Standards fell after the last inspection, but are now beginning to improve. The new headteacher and new teachers are working hard to improve standards and the impact of that work is beginning to show.
70. On entry to the school, some pupils go directly to a mixed age class while the vast majority stays in a single age class. In the latter, it takes far too long for pupils to start to make progress. Not enough notice is taken of previous assessments as much of the work is similar for all ability groups. At the same time marking does not always help pupils to understand what they must do to improve. Pupils with least ability in this class make best progress as they strive hard to carry out the work, which is often set for "average" ability pupils. The pupils with higher ability in the mixed age class make good progress as their work is well matched to their needs.
71. Throughout the rest of the school, progress in lessons is often good. It is especially good for pupils with special educational needs when they get extra support, then they too make good progress. In general, assessments help teachers match work to the needs of pupils and teachers make very good use of the national strategy for numeracy in order to plan the most suitable activities for their pupils.
72. Although pupils in Year 3 are encouraged to use mathematical terms and describe what they are doing, there is little evidence of them completing investigations in mathematics. In fact, this is the weakest area of the work in mathematics across the whole school, with the exception of the class of the subject coordinator. There is very little evidence of open-ended investigations, of pupils having to make hypotheses, working with formulae or planning how to tackle problems.
73. Numeracy skills are secure throughout the school, especially in Years 5 and 6. By the end of Year 6, pupils show a good knowledge of the relationship between fractions, decimals and percentages, they are capable of recognising and ordering very large numbers and have an improving recall of their tables. They can use calculators to aid their work and some of the higher achieving pupils are able to write in algebraic form.
74. The school is working hard to improve pupils' understanding of shape, space and measure, as this was noted as being slightly weaker than other areas of mathematics at the most recent National Curriculum tests. As a result, pupils are now making good progress in this area. Pupils in Year 4 understand and can calculate area and perimeter whilst pupils in Year 6 understand the various types of angles and can measure them accurately.
75. Pupils' data handling skills are satisfactory and improve as they make more use of information and communication technology skills. The youngest pupils make frequency charts whilst pupils in Year 4 are able to interpret simple graphs and bar charts. Pupils in Year 6 understand terms such as mean, mode and median and interrogate graphs in order to make calculations.
76. The school is beginning to develop its use of ICT alongside numeracy lessons. This can be seen in both numeracy and ICT lessons where ICT skills are used to further pupils' progress in numeracy.
77. Pupils apply their speaking and listening skills well in many mathematics lessons, through a good mix of discussion and written work. Some pupils, even in the classes

of the oldest pupils, still find making explanations difficult, even though the school concentrates well on the use of mathematical vocabulary.

78. The quality of teaching is good. This was equally true at the last inspection. Five lessons were good and one was very good. This included the temporary teacher in Year 3. In nearly all lessons pupils were challenged to think and take part in a brisk mental arithmetic session, to sharpen responses and get them in the mood for mathematics. Teachers have high expectations not only of what pupils should know, but also of how they should explain their answers and behave in lessons. Teachers have a good secure knowledge of their subject and the clarity of explanations and use of relevant terminology contribute to the good progress made. As a result of the good teaching, pupils are motivated to achieve and they behave well in their lessons. Some do not come to school with the best attitudes, but in the lessons seen, this was not apparent. The consistent level of good teaching is a significant factor in the progress the school has made recently in improving standards in this subject. Pupils in Years 5 and 6 are divided into sets by ability for mathematics. This makes it easier for teachers to match work more closely to pupils' particular abilities. This is a significant and positive support to the raising of standards in these two-year groups.
79. The recently appointed coordinator has already made a good contribution to the ethos of improvement in the subject. She is clear about the subject's strengths and areas for development and already in-service training has been used to support teachers. Assessment is now improving teachers' ability to match work to pupils' needs and target setting, albeit of a general nature, is being used to support pupils in coming to terms with how they can help themselves make progress. The use of homework, to consolidate learning and involve parents, makes an increasingly positive contribution to pupils' progress.

SCIENCE

80. In the 2002 national tests the performance of 11 year old pupils was below the national averages and also of similar schools. The school's trend of performance in the tests is below the national trend but rising. Inspection evidence confirms that pupils' attainment in Year 6 is broadly in line with national expectations, with a significant number who will achieve above the national expectation for 11 year olds.
81. There are a number of reasons for this recent improvement in standards.
- The school has adopted an extremely well-structured approach, which demands learning objectives to be shared with pupils at the beginning of lessons.
 - Good quality direct teaching of prescribed topics and investigative skills with an emphasis on the use of precise scientific vocabulary.
 - The effective use of assessment to determine planning, which has had a first rate effect on combating the pupils' limited prior knowledge and experience of scientific enquiry, in matching activities to what they know, understand and can do and to drive their progress forward.
 - Pupils have been encouraged to track their own success in developing their investigative skills.
 - The Headteacher and subject coordinator have monitored teaching and learning, identified areas of weakness and made changes to classroom practice to create improvements.

These weaknesses were previously reported as having an adverse effect on the pupils' understanding and on the quality of their recorded work.

82. Scrutiny of work and discussions with pupils show that they have a sound grasp of how their bodies work. They know about forces and movement, sound and how it travels. They use their knowledge and skills to experiment about dissolving and investigate making spinners. Pupils in Years 4, 5 and 6 build on their knowledge and understanding well. Strengths in the teaching help pupils to acquire good habits in predicting, hypothesising, investigating, recording and checking their findings. By the end of Year 6 pupils have made good progress and understanding and are capable of setting up a “fair test” to satisfy their curiosity. They use what they know to make sensible predictions such as “What causes food to decay?” but they are still less confident in talking in depth about process. However, this is not the scene in the Year 3 class in which the work lacks challenge being mainly focused at too low a level; investigations are too teacher directed with many of the outcomes pre-determined by the format of the task and the resources provided. Methods of recording the investigations carried out and what has been discovered are often copied by the whole class. This teaching strategy presents little or no challenge to the pupils whatever their abilities. As a result, the pupils have made little progress in developing their scientific knowledge and investigative skills since entering the school last September.
83. In the lessons observed, the pupils attained in line with expectations. Years 3 and 4 pupils showed their ability to group organisms according to observational features; Years 5 and 6 pupils were able to identify the conditions that cause food to decay. The overall quality of teaching was good with very good teaching being observed in two of the six lessons. The high quality teaching motivated the pupils well and was creative in finding ways of broadening the pupils’ limited knowledge and understanding of the world around them. For example, in the effective use made of a large, colourful photograph of a decaying dinner presented to the Years 5 and 6 pupils to stimulate their interest and to generate discussion of micro-organisms.
84. The quality of leadership and management of the subject is sound. The coordinator’s input into curriculum and staff development has helped to establish an approach which safeguards continuity, and the developmental levels of the subject throughout the school. However, the main strength in the delivery of the subject is in the whole-school approach and use of the comprehensive assessment procedures and moderation of results, which help teachers to match their work to the needs of individuals. This is regrettably, not a strategy, which the coordinator uses well with the Year 3 pupils. Resources and accommodation are well used, the school grounds providing the pupils and staff with an exciting resource to explore the wonders of nature. Many have discovered its value for themselves in seeking out and finding mini-beasts, and other creatures in their quest for scientific knowledge of the world around them. The subject makes a valuable contribution to the pupils’ personal development particularly their spirituality in the awe and wonder presented to them through the natural and physical phenomena.

ART AND DESIGN

85. Owing to the timetabling during the inspection only two lessons were observed, and although discussions were held with the coordinator and scrutiny of the work displayed around the school overall judgements cannot be made. However, some good quality work was seen and pupils, including those with special educational needs make good progress.
86. There are some good displays of work around the school. These are mostly linked to topics in other subjects. For instance, in the hall there is a collage of an Aboriginal

story and in the cloakroom area some very good ancient Greek designs have been painted on to paper plates. The inspirational work of a former pupil is displayed and celebrated in the school. All pupils have a good quality sketch book which shows progression and the development of skills. Observational drawing is a particular strength. The Year 4 pupils had drawn a variety of chairs viewed from different perspectives. Pupils' sketch books in Years 5 and 6 provided evidence of how well pupils used line, pattern, texture and tone to express their ideas. This was particularly evident in some recent work observing and sketching the landscape from outside the school building, and creating landscape pictures in the style of famous artists. Evaluation sheets in the sketchbooks show the pupils have an awareness of how to improve their work and look critically at their finished pieces.

87. The small amount of teaching observed was very good. Aspects of the very good teaching in Years 4, 5 and 6 included effective intervention with challenging open questions to support the pupils' progress and extend their skills and techniques. The lessons were very well managed and the resources were well planned and prepared. The teachers' explanations were clear so that the pupils understood what they had to do and how they were expected to behave. Through the planning and in discussions it is evident that the teachers have a secure knowledge of the subject.
88. Pupils are enthusiastic about their work and take pride in the finished product. In both of the lessons observed they were very well behaved, shared the resources sensitively and showed appreciation of, and support for, the work of other pupils.
89. The coordinator had identified the need to raise the awareness of Art and Design in the curriculum and had organised a training day for staff to monitor and evaluate the quality of teaching and learning across the school, by looking at a self portrait and a drawing of a sunflower from pupils across the age range. As a result of this training, the school has set targets for development, and this is recognised in the school improvement plans.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

90. During the inspection it was not possible to observe any lessons so no overall judgements are made on standards or teaching in lessons. Teaching plans and school documents were studied and judged to be suitable. Boys and girls show similar interest in the subject and make similar sound progress. Pupils with special educational needs make comparable progress to other pupils due to the help and guidance they receive from staff. This is similar to the findings of the last inspection.
91. Pupils in Years 5 and 6 designed and made hats for a variety of characters from stories such as Mary Poppins, Mr. Twit and Donald Duck. Their written work shows how they have considered the characteristics of the hat's recipient and incorporated these into their designs. The hats were made from a range of materials that are assembled and joined satisfactorily. There was evidence that the materials used were carefully chosen for their suitability and pupils had developed their capability to evaluate their fitness for purpose. The display of hats included photographs of the pupils wearing their designs.
92. Year 4 pupils had made moving models incorporating pneumatics, for instance to make the monster's mouth open. The work displayed showed a high level of enthusiasm and enjoyment. They are happy to help each other and work comfortably in small groups. The display showed all aspects of the model making from the early design stage, through storyboards detailing progression, to the finished model.

Pupils' written evaluations demonstrated their ability to consider how the model might be improved.

93. The coordinator, since taking on the role last September, has a very clear idea about the way forward. She has amended the policy and written an action plan for Design and Technology. An audit of the centrally stored resources has highlighted where the needs lie and this is identified as a priority.

GEOGRAPHY

94. Only one lesson was observed during the inspection, and the work in the books of Year 6 pupils shows only the final, recorded outcomes of the practical work on skills, and of discussion and exploration of environmental issues. As a result, it is not possible to make an overall statement on standards.

95. The picture is of a subject that is gaining strength and influence in the school's curriculum, but also of gaps in the geographical knowledge and skills of the current Year 6 pupils.

96. There are a number of reasons for the improvements during the current academic year:

- the subject leader, newly appointed to the school in September 2002, is giving an intelligent, active lead;
- a lively team of teachers is beginning to appreciate the subject's potential for enlivening the curriculum and for making meaningful links to ICT, history, art, English and mathematics;
- the nationally approved guidance is acting as a scheme of work that gives good quality coverage of the key aspects of geography for seven to eleven year olds; and evidence shows that teachers now plan well for geography lessons;
- resources have been audited and new ones ordered;
- a 'geography week' awakened interest and raised the profile of geography across the school for pupils and teachers alike;
- monitoring of lessons and book scans across year groups have begun; and feedback on these is giving confidence and raising teachers' expectations.

97. The single lesson observed was taught very well, as was a history lesson that introduced the location of the Indus Valley civilisation to Year 5 and 6 pupils and involved geographical skill learning and practice. The lessons were well structured, and pupils were clear throughout exactly what the lesson was aiming at, and why, so that they could see its use in the rest of the topic. Resources for the teacher were good, and added to the clarity of explanations, although those for the pupils were restricted by what is as yet available. Very good subject knowledge, challenging questioning and the application of mapping skills already learned, at different levels for different levels of ability, meant that pupils made good progress in the geography and also the geographically oriented history lesson.

98. Currently, assessment in geography is very limited. The school does not track skill development, or understandings in geography, across the four years of schooling. This makes it more difficult to ensure that children make steady progress in the underlying skills and geographical processes as they encounter each unit.

HISTORY

99. Standards in history by the end of Year 6 are average for eleven year olds. Only one of the four lessons observed during the inspection was with Year 5/6 pupils. However, scrutiny of books, wall displays, teachers' planning and discussion provides good quality evidence for the judgement of satisfactory standards.
100. The school has a two-yearly plan that sets out the historical period to be covered in each term. Each study lasts a full term, so that by the time pupils complete a unit, they have a reasonable knowledge of the key historical events of the period and understand some of the reasons for these. For instance, they examine why Henry VIII married six times and make comparisons between the lives of rich and poor people in Tudor times. A survey of Years 5 and 6 books shows that pupils build up a very comprehensive picture of the ancient Greeks, and there is a good link to citizenship through a unit that explores how the ideas of the Greeks influence our present day systems of government. The selection of the Indus civilisation for a 'World Study' does something to add a multicultural dimension and to challenge stereotypes. It is a good choice for a school in an all-white locality to have made.
101. The quality of pupils' work in their books is sound with some good features. Tasks are completed, often at some length, and usually neatly, especially in Years 5 and 6. Older pupils can annotate diagrams and maps, draw up comparison charts and display information using 'mind maps' and grids. So far, they do not appear to make many independent decisions about *how* to record, or work collaboratively to produce, for instance, group displays or presentations. This does not present enough of a challenge for the highest attaining pupils.
102. Because the pupils are well motivated, they have made good progress in developing the skills of historical enquiry, and these are slightly better than those found in most schools. A recently introduced local study of Rugeley is currently fascinating the pupils and a number have produced folders and leaflets as a holiday project. They have used a variety of sources of evidence: local history booklets, the local library, family memories and information drawn from the Internet. One pupil produced a 'treasure chest' of precious photographs and mementos from the past that the teacher has displayed in the classroom. Topics like this generate genuine research and also help the school to circumvent the lack of secondary resource material available to the children in the school library. Years 3 and 4 pupils showed persistence and enthusiasm for interrogating a seven-page photocopied document of 'White's Directory' of 1851 for Rugeley. Most pupils were eventually able to find their way about the document and make lists of occupations found within it. A missing element is that pupils – especially the higher attaining, older pupils - are not challenged to reflect on the nature of the first-hand evidence and evaluate its reliability.
103. A key reason for sustaining an appropriate standard of attainment in history has been the enthusiasm of the teachers and the pupils for the subject. Visits to museums and heritage centres bring the subject to life. Teaching in the lessons seen was good, with some very good teaching. Teachers have adopted the three-part lesson format of the literacy strategy to good effect. They share objectives, so that pupils know what it is they should learn during the lesson, and often help the lower attaining pupils by re-designing the task to match what they know they can and cannot do. They mark work carefully, giving good feedback on the literacy aspect, but not consistently the historical objectives. As yet, there is not a school system for recording and tracking in history.
104. The coordinator, who also leads English, has limited time for the role, but has begun work on auditing resources, checking planning and developing the local studies.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

105. Standards achieved by the oldest pupils are in line with national expectations, with the exception of one small area of study, control technology. Whilst standards were noted as being good at the last inspection, the world of technology has moved forward considerably during the intervening period and it is difficult, therefore, to compare standards directly.
106. Since the last inspection, the school has installed a computer suite, which now gives pupils more access to practising their ICT skills, noted as a weakness previously. The suite and the stand alone classroom computers mean that the ratio of computers to pupils is now good.
107. Pupils in Year 4 use different fonts to enliven their work on fantasy stories. The oldest pupils demonstrate and can discuss how to change fonts, highlight and move text and make good use of cut and paste techniques. They can illustrate their work by finding graphics to import from software and the Internet and have achieved good quality multi-media presentations; these have been carried out by pupils, linked with a topic on the ancient Greeks. Some pupils created and presented a slide show, of good quality, to a group of new parents.
108. A fair proportion of pupils' show good control of data. They are able to create graphs and pie-charts from information they enter into a data program. They have carried out tasks related to these skills in their numeracy lessons. They carry out work on perimeter and area with the support of their computers. They have searched databases on the Internet, by using search engines. In a Year 6 lesson pupils made general searches of tourist sites in England, then narrowed their search, noting that there were then fewer web sites for them to visit. Evidence was seen of searches made in connection with work on Islam for religious education and for bread in relation to work in design and technology. Some have created their own small databases, collecting and entering information from their class mates.
109. Pupils have used paint programs to paint pictures using different brush effects and different colour applications. They have also had experience of using a music based program which allowed them to experiment with sounds, tempo and rhythm. In connection with work in history, pupils have used programs to help them understand life in Roman times, for example. They have also used data display programs in order to experiment with imaginary situations such as planning for a party or planning which souvenirs to buy on their residential visit. This required them to enter a good deal of data, make on-screen calculations and arrive at decisions on expenditure.
110. It is in the area of control technology that the school has not yet achieved the nationally expected level in all aspects of the work. Pupils through the school have had access to floor robots. These are used to help pupils gain an understanding of how they can give commands in order that machines respond to their wishes. Many older pupils have then had good opportunities to give similar instructions to on-screen robots or turtles. They have been able to produce patterns and particular shapes giving quite complex instructions. What they have not yet been able to accomplish is the use of their computers to log data or measure such things as heat and light. This is largely due to the school's lack of specialist software and hardware for these activities.

111. Teaching is good overall when all evidence is considered including planning and assessments. In lessons it was very good in two lessons seen and good in a third. Teachers have confidence in their abilities and their work is very well planned. Basic skills and techniques are taught well and in some lessons pupils are given opportunities to put their newfound skills into practice in other areas of the school's curriculum. As a result of good teaching, pupils are motivated to pay attention, behave well and they learn quickly. Progress was good in all lessons seen. Pupils with special educational needs also made good progress, especially when they received additional support as in the Year 6 lesson on the use of search engines.
112. The experienced and well qualified subject coordinator realises that there still remain one or two issues to tackle. There is yet no assessment program for ICT. Although pupils save their work in their own computer based folders, this is currently not being assessed against the level descriptors of the National Curriculum and therefore is not being used sufficiently to support planning for the particular needs of individual pupils. At the same time, there is little evidence of the use made of ICT across the curriculum, in class displays or in general corridor areas.

MUSIC

113. Although only singing was directly observed during the inspection, evidence from planning, school photograph albums and displays suggest that standards in singing have remained good since the last inspection and that other aspects of music are provided, in line with the detail of the National Curriculum.
114. At the last inspection specialist teachers were used to teach music throughout the school. Whilst this gave pupils the benefit of good teaching, it meant that class teachers did not have any experience of teaching music. Since the new coordinator took over the coordination of the subject in September 2002, it has been an important part of her work to enable teachers to feel confident in their abilities to teach music. A new scheme has been adopted and with her support all teachers now teach their own classes.
115. Only one lesson was seen during the inspection. Whilst the teaching was satisfactory, the content of the lesson did not really inspire the pupils, who responded slowly to the teacher's efforts. By the end of the lesson they were able to use their voices in three parts and follow the teacher conducting their singing. Pupils with special educational needs made the same sound progress as other pupils in this lesson.
116. Planning confirms that pupils have good opportunities to listen to music from a variety of sources and cultural traditions. In an assembly, pupils listened to Jewish and Greek music as a background to their worship. Although there is no official school choir, pupils regularly group together and take on the mantle of a choir for a number of special events. Many pupils, therefore, have experience of performances outside of their own classes. Pupils sang at Christmas in a local theatre for a large group of parents and elderly local people. Year 4 pupils performed at an Easter production featuring singing, acting and dance. Year 6 pupils perform at the 'Leavers concert'.
117. There are good opportunities for pupils to learn to play a range of instruments through instrumental tuition, which complements their lesson time music. At the same time, the school band rehearses each week. This is a free activity and many pupils take part on a wide range of instruments. Once again this leads to

performances, sometimes with a choir of pupils. Pupils in Years 5 and 6 have further opportunities to play recorders and tuned percussion in their regular lessons.

118. There is some evidence of music being linked with other subjects. Displays show that younger pupils have listened to “Air on a G String” and have painted pictures of what they heard. At another time they have made music to accompany pictures they have painted in response to looking at paintings by Van Gogh. Otherwise, music does not appear to have a high profile in displays throughout the school.
119. Resources for the subject are good and they include multicultural instruments and recordings, which support pupils’ multicultural development.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

120. Although only gymnastics and dance were observed during the inspection, evidence from planning, school photographs, trophies, displays and discussions with pupils confirm that all aspects of the subject are provided, in line with National Curriculum requirements, and that pupils across the age and ability groups attain standards which are at least in line with national expectations. For example, all classes go swimming; Years 3 and 4 in the autumn and Years 5 and 6 in the spring and summer term, resulting in most pupils being able to swim at least 25 metres. Residential visits provide pupils with opportunities to experience orienteering, canoeing and other adventurous sports. There are no gender issues, all pupils having equal access to the range of activities offered. The girls were delighted to share details of their sporting activities, and to show off their many awards and trophies in testimony to their skills in such sports as; football, indoor cricket, tag rugby and cross-country running.
121. Teaching is good overall and ranged from satisfactory to excellent in the three lessons observed during the inspection. Teachers have a good knowledge of the subject and good use is made of specialist input for example, in the excellent teaching of dance by the subject coordinator to Years 5 and 6 pupils. Teachers plan, prepare and deliver their lessons well, they are aware of what pupils can do and extend their skills through good teaching of basic skills. Appropriate emphasis is given to how apparatus is moved, set up and checked for safety. Pupils have a good awareness of health and safety issues and respond to commands very quickly. They are keen and eager to participate in the physical activities. They listen attentively to what is required, concentrate on the given tasks and persevere in developing their skills and quality of movements.
122. Documentation gives effective guidance to teachers, who are well supported by the coordinator. Resources and accommodation are generally well used. The well equipped hall and outdoor areas being valuable assets, providing effective facilities and space for the wide range of activities offered to the pupils. School teams are entered into league and inter school fixtures. The school has a record of high achievement and performs well in matches, individuals doing themselves and the school proud by their efforts. The subject makes a valuable contribution to the personal development of pupils throughout the school and for many has a high profile in their life at school.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

123. Standards reported in the previous inspection have been maintained and by the end of Year 6 are in line with locally Agreed Syllabus. All the pupils, including those with

special educational needs make good progress. Boys and girls attain similar standards.

124. Although lessons in religious education are broadly Christian in nature, pupils study other faiths, such as Islam and Judaism. The Five Pillars of Islam and the Ten Commandments had been sensitively incorporated into some work looking at rules for living. Religious artefacts had been studied and pupils' books showed evidence of some thoughtful work, which lead the pupils to design their own religious artefact and state what it would be used for.
125. During the inspection two lessons in religious education were observed. Additional evidence was gained through discussion with the coordinator and scrutiny of planning and pupils' work.
126. The quality of teaching is good overall and combined with the good planning ensures that pupils achieve the required standard. Teachers have good relationships with pupils and value their contributions.
127. Pupils' spiritual development is a particular strength, with the pupils having time to reflect on some difficult issues such as bereavement. By using the story of Badger's Parting Gift with the pupils in Years 5 and 6 this was very sensitively dealt with. The classroom had been rearranged so that an informal seating arrangement meant that a candle could be the focal point. Pupils responded with interest on the issues raised and made some perceptive comments that revealed an inner awareness.
128. The subject coordinator has a good knowledge and has worked hard in providing the school with clear guidelines which link well with the locally Agreed Syllabus and the Lichfield Diocesan Syllabus. There is a satisfactory range of resources for the subject, which are accessible and stored centrally. They consist of religious artefacts and books. The effective use of visits and visitors support and enhance the pupils' learning.