

INSPECTION REPORT

HAZEL OAK SCHOOL

Shirley

LEA area: Solihull

Unique reference number: 104130

Headteacher: Mr P. Wright

Lead inspector: Mrs F.D.Gander

Dates of inspection: 14th- 17th June 2004

Inspection number: 260408

Inspection carried out under section 10 of the School Inspections Act 1996

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Special
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	4-16
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
Number on roll:	89
School address:	Hazel Oak Rd Shirley Solihull West Midlands
Postcode:	B90 2AZ
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Appropriate authority:	The Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr K. Meeson
Date of previous inspection:	12 October 1998

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

Hazel Oak School provides education for up to 100 pupils with moderate learning difficulties. At present there are 89 pupils attending. There are no pupils in the Foundation Stage and only a small number in Years 1 and 2. All pupils in these year groups have started their education in mainstream schools and after a short time have transferred to Hazel Oak. Their attainment on entry is well below that expected from pupils of a similar age. The school also admits a number of pupils into the top end of the primary department and the early years of the secondary department. Consequently, there are a higher number of pupils in the secondary phase of the school than in the primary, with the greatest numbers in Years 9 and 10.

The pupil population has changed since the last inspection in 1998 and now almost half of the pupils in the school have autism. There are also a small number of lower attaining pupils who attend the school, because of parental choice. The range of learning needs in the school is therefore wide. The majority of pupils are placed in the school by Solihull Education Authority but seven pupils come from neighbouring authorities. Pupils are from a wide range of socio-economic backgrounds, with a fifth of pupils entitled to free school meals. At present, there more boys than girls on roll, and almost all pupils are from a white British or Irish background. There are no pupils from Traveller or refugee families, and a very small number are looked after children.

The school has the following awards:

School Achievement Award 2000/01
Solihull Careers Library Award 2000
Solihull Work Experience Award 2000

Tesco Community Award 2000
Sportsmark 1999-02, 2002-05.
Activemark 2001-04. and Artsmark Gold 2003.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
21265	Mrs F. D. Gander	Lead inspector	Information and communication technology, design and technology, personal, social and health education, including citizenship.
19692	Mr R. Folks	Lay inspector	
2244	Mr A Eastwood	Team inspector	History, geography, modern foreign language, religious education.
22821	Ms L. Wolstencroft	Team inspector	English, art and design, special educational needs.
10678	Ms M. Paull	Team inspector	Mathematics, music.
15051	Ms L. Kauffman	Team inspector	Science, physical education, English as an additional language.

The inspection contractor was:

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

OVERALL EVALUATION

This is a very effective school because pupils achieve well. The excellent vision of the headteacher has ensured that the school has improved, and continues to meet the changes and challenges it faces. Pupils have a relevant curriculum and many experiences, which prepares them for their next stage of education and future life within the community. There are many examples of very good teaching across the school, and this, along with the high level of care, support, and guidance ensures that all pupils have maximum opportunities to make good progress. The school provides very good value for money.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- There is an excellent ethos for pupils achieving their best, stemming from the excellent leadership of the headteacher.
- Senior managers and governors manage the school very effectively and this has resulted in a very much improved school.
- Teaching is consistently good and ensures that pupils achieve well, both academically and in personal development.
- The links the school has developed with the community are excellent and are used very effectively to support pupils' personal and social development.
- The advice, guidance and care provided by all staff ensure that pupils have very positive attitudes to school and behave very well.
- The curriculum is enriched by the school's emphasis on the creative arts.
- Lesson planning needs to be improved so that learning outcomes for pupils meet the widening range of attainment levels in the school.

Improvement is very good. All key issues identified in the last inspection in 1998 have been addressed, including the provision of good quality and spacious new classrooms, and specialist rooms. However, more improvement of the science and the design and technology room is needed, as well as to the classroom for the youngest children. The school has tackled the challenge of meeting the needs of an increasing number of pupils with autism well, as well as those with more severe learning difficulties. This has been achieved with the recent additional funding support from the local education authority (LEA). Very good improvements have been made to the provision in physical education (PE), information and communication technology (ICT), and French.

STANDARDS ACHIEVED

In relation to their prior learning, pupils achieve well. By the time they leave school in Year 11, pupils achieve very well in English, mathematics, art and design, music, and physical education. This is because of very good teaching and the use of accredited courses. Pupils make good progress against the appropriate targets set in their Individual Education Plans (IEPS). The few pupils whose home language is not English achieve well and there are no differences between pupils of different gender, or of ethnic background. The school identifies pupils with special aptitudes and staff work hard to promote these. These pupils achieve very well, especially in sport. Pupils have very good attitudes to school, to learning and to one another. **Pupils' spiritual, social, moral and cultural development is good, overall.** Attendance is very good.

Pupils' achievement at the end of:	in relation to individual targets in:	
	Subjects of the curriculum	personal and social education

Year 2	Good	Very good
Year 6	Good	Very good
Year 9	Good	Very good
Year 11	Good	Very good

Inspectors make judgements in the range: excellent; very good; good; satisfactory; unsatisfactory; poor; very poor.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION

The quality of the educational provision is very good. Teaching is good overall, and there are examples of very good teaching. It is particularly good in subjects that are taught by specialist subject teachers, such as music, ICT, PE, and art and design. The curriculum is good and meets all statutory requirements. Further refinement of planning to help teachers plan learning outcomes for pupils with different levels of attainment has started in some subjects, but needs developing. A very good range of additional opportunities enriches the curriculum, and is supported by the excellent links the school has with the community. The staff provide very good care, support, and guidance. The amount of accommodation and resources is good.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Leadership and management are very good overall. The leadership by the headteacher is excellent. He relentlessly supports his school, its pupils, parents and staff. The governance of the school is very good and their knowledge of the school's strengths and weaknesses is excellent. They meet all their statutory obligations. There is a strong team of senior managers, who support the dedicated teachers in their work.

PARENTS' AND PUPILS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

The pupils are proud of their school and respect their teachers. Parents are very supportive, with an overwhelming majority stating they were very satisfied with the school. The two main areas of concern from the questionnaires were considered. Behaviour and attitudes were considered very good. Homework is an area on which people have very different opinions but the inspection team considered the provision for this satisfactory.

IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

The most important things the school should do to improve are to address:

- The planning of differing learning outcomes for pupils of different abilities and the use of these to assess pupils' learning.
- The opportunities for development of multi-cultural awareness.
- The opportunities for pupils to be involved in running the school.

PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS

STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

Standards achieved in areas of learning, subjects and courses

All pupils achieve **well**, in relation to the previous levels they were attaining when they entered the school. They make **good** progress against the targets set in their Individual Education Plans (IEPS).

Main strengths and weaknesses

- By the end of Year 11 pupils have made very good progress in speaking and listening, music, art and design, and physical education.
- The appropriateness of the targets in the IEPs helps pupils overcome their difficulties well.
- Pupils who demonstrate a specific talent are nurtured, and consequently they achieve very well.
- Pupils' achievement in food technology is satisfactory but not as high as it could be.

Commentary

1. Throughout the school, pupils achieve well. This can be seen by the amount of progress they make as they move through the school. By the end of Year 11 the majority of pupils achieve entry level accreditation, or have made significant progress in their knowledge and understanding. Most interact in personal and social situations in an appropriate and acceptable way.
2. By the end of Year 11, pupils achieve well in most subjects, except religious education and food technology, where it is satisfactory. They achieve particularly well in speaking and listening, music, physical education and art and design, and in some of these subjects they gain either awards for achievement, accreditation, or regional and national recognition. Their very good achievement in communication is due to teachers planning lessons that balance the teaching of literacy skills with opportunities for pupils to gain confidence in speaking in front of their peers. They overcome their reluctance to speak in front of people they do not know and are able to put forward ideas. This was obvious from the way a group Year 10 pupils readily discussed their ideas for improving the school if they were to have a school council. Throughout the school adults provide good role models for pupils, who learn by example to speak and to listen to others. Discussion is encouraged in most lessons and pupils' contributions to these discussions are valued. The drama activities are used well to develop pupils' confidence in speaking in front of others. This confidence is well supported by the contribution of well organised speech and language therapy. Pupils' ability improves as they move through the school, so that by Year 11 most are confident communicators.
3. Achievement is also very good in music. This is because the expectations of pupils' attainment by the music co-ordinator are very high. The school has been developing and adapting the National Curriculum for music and evaluating various approaches, so there are good opportunities for all pupils to achieve their best. This stems from the co-ordinator's enthusiasm for the teaching and learning in the subject, as well as the level of subject expertise. This is also the situation in art and design and in ICT. This enthusiasm communicates itself to the pupils, which motivates them to achieve well. In PE, all pupils also achieve high levels because the teachers set realistic different learning outcomes, so that pupils achieve their best. This is very good improvement from the last inspection. The many non-specialists who teach the subject are guided well by a very clear scheme of work. Because of the dedication and positive guidance provided by teachers and support staff, some

pupils exceed expectations. Older pupils achieve local and national awards, such as the Special Olympics.

4. The school has given a great deal of thought to the appropriateness and function of the targets they set in the IEPs. The targets are not always related to curriculum areas but focus on those areas which are barriers to learning for each pupil. For some pupils, who are autistic, the targets centre on socialisation and communication, whereas for others they may be concerned with behaviour. These targets are wide ranging and permeate the whole of the school day, and other goals that pupils and teachers are aware of. Because of this approach to target setting, pupils with additional special educational needs, such as autism or severe learning difficulties, achieve well.

5. Pupils who have a talent or special aptitude, especially for sport, are encouraged by the school staff to pursue this talent, and as a result they achieve very well. The school provides extensive extra curricular work in PE. Pupils and staff practice for long hours, often outside school time and at weekends to improve techniques, stamina and self-awareness. The involvement of many older pupils in community sports further enhances the achievements of these pupils. For example, pupils learn to play golf at the local golf course, as well as working intensively with Aston Villa's community coach. This develops pupils' football skills and attitude to rules and fair play.

6. Although pupils achieve accreditation in food technology studies by the time they reach Year 11, their level of basic skills in food preparation and the use of equipment is generally low. This is because they do not have enough opportunities during years 7, 8 and 9 to gain skills in procedures such as opening tins or preparing vegetables, to apply them confidently and independently. Part of this underachievement has resulted from the lack of development in this aspect, due to the long-term absence of the co-ordinator.

Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities

Pupils' attitudes, personal development and behaviour are **very good**. Attendance is **very good**. The provision for the pupil's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Attendance is very good because pupils are keen to do well and take an active part in school life.
- The behaviour of pupils is very good and promoted by the very effective systems which encourage and support it.
- Pupils help each other and are happy to celebrate each other's success.
- Pupils have very strong moral values and have a very clear notion of right and wrong.
- The multi-cultural dimension of the school is recognised as requiring further development.
- Pupils do not have a school council to represent their views.

Commentary

7. Pupils clearly enjoy their time at school, are keen to learn and work very hard to achieve as well as they can. Many pupils have had very poor experiences and little success in other educational settings. The outstanding ethos of the school and the very high expectations of staff soon feeds through to them and they usually settle quickly and well. Their attitudes to work and to each other are consistently very good. The many enriching opportunities they are given are accepted with great enthusiasm. Attendance is well above the national average for similar schools. This is due to very good monitoring systems and the very close co-operation of the education welfare officer. Punctuality is good. All statutory requirements are met.

8. The behaviour of pupils in the classrooms, around school and in the playground is very good and represents a strength of the school. During the inspection, no incidents of poor behaviour were seen. Because of the high level of expectation and the inclusion of all pupils, those who have a degree of autism do not stand out as behaving in a significantly different way from their peers. Good behaviour is consistently modelled by the staff, whose example is exemplary. When pupils go outside the school, the very good quality of their behaviour never varies, whether on short shopping trips, the 25-mile sponsored walk along the Stratford-upon-Avon Canal, or when joining in the varied sports and arts activities which are on offer.

9. The ability of pupils to form constructive relationships with each other, with staff and with pupils from other schools is outstanding. During the inspection, a small group primary-aged pupils visited the infant school, whose site is adjacent to their own. Their getting ready, the short journey along the newly-constructed path and through the gate, the welcome they gave to their ‘new friends’ and the way in which they all worked collaboratively with mainstream peers and staff on the story of ‘Mr Gumpy’, belied the fact that it was only their second such visit. Pupils help and encourage each other to become independent and achieve success. “Don’t give up before you start – you can do it” said one boy to another who had questioned his own ability, during the football activity day held on the last day of the inspection – and he did. Younger pupils are helped by older ones, who take the responsibility of being their positive role models very seriously. More able pupils support the less able and do not belittle their attempts at things which they themselves find easy.

10. Bullying rarely occurs, say the pupils. In discussion, Year 10 pupils said they recently saw a newer boy behaving inappropriately to another smaller boy. “We dealt with it”, said one. “Yeah, but we didn’t kick him in – we just said ‘You don’t do that sort of thing here’” said another, in a most matter-of-fact manner! The pupils have clear, confident views about what they want to achieve in school and afterwards. They are very keen to engage in meaningful conversations with each other and with staff in lessons, and at social times. During the inspection, they did so equally well with the inspectors. They are not afraid to speak out about things that concern or excite them. They know very clearly what is fair and unfair, both in their own lives and in history. They are keen to know what adults feel about the very same things. They are pleasant, polite and most especially, very confident with visitors. They have a sense of humour. They speak and listen to each other very well. Most significantly of all - their respect for each other is born out of an absolute knowledge and assurance that their teachers respect them in return.

Ethnic background of pupils

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

Exclusions in the last school year

No of pupils on roll	Number of fixed period exclusions	Number of permanent exclusions
75	0	0
4	0	0
1	0	0
3	0	0
1	0	0
1	0	0
3	0	0

The table gives the number of exclusions, which may be different from the number of pupils excluded.

Attendance in the latest complete reporting year (%)

Authorised absence

Unauthorised absence

School data	5.1
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School data	0.1
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The table gives the percentage of half days (sessions) missed through absence for the latest complete reporting year.

11. The school promotes very effectively pupils’ personal development, which is very good throughout the school. This is strongly underpinned by the consistent way in which pupils behave very well towards each other, show respect and value each other’s opinions. Moral and social values are deeply embedded in the school’s excellent ethos and pervade every aspect of school life. However, the pupils do not have any means, such as a school council, to have a say in the day to day running of the school. This they are very able to do, as was tested out on the inspection. Year 10 pupils, in discussion with an inspector suggested some very sensible improvements to the school, such as having a cold drinking water available. Assemblies provide effective moments of quiet, personal, spiritual reflection and encouragement of pupils to seek self-knowledge. The wide range of cultural activities strongly contributes to the enrichment of pupils’ lives and is a real strength of the school. The lack of a multi-ethnic diversity of both the pupils and staff contributes to the acknowledged fact that the multi-cultural aspect of the school is something which needs further development.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

The quality of the educational provision is **very good**. Teaching is **good** overall, and there are examples of very good teaching in most subjects. The curriculum is **good** and meets all statutory requirements. A **very good** range of addition opportunities enriches the curriculum, and these are supported by the **excellent** links the school has with the community. The staff provide very good care, support, advice and guidance. The quality and quantity of the accommodation are **good**.

Teaching and learning

Teaching and learning are **good** overall, and there are examples of very good or excellent teaching that result in pupils achieving very well. Assessment is **good** overall.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Where lessons are taught by subject specialists or by teachers with a high level of subject expertise, the quality of learning is very good. This leads to pupils achieving well.
- Good relationships underpin teachers’ high expectations of pupils’ attitudes to work.
- The establishment of smaller teaching groups for pupils with the greatest learning needs is enabling them achieve realistic learning outcomes.
- Not all lesson planning shows the different learning outcomes for pupils.

Commentary

12. There were many examples of very good or excellent teaching seen during the inspection. In these lessons teachers had very high expectations, both of achievement and of attitudes to learning and behaviour. Teaching and learning are often very effective when taught by the subject specialist or the co-ordinator, such as in art and design, physical education, French, ICT and music. Co-ordinators, who teach their subject across the school, are confident about the subject matter, so they are able to set out their objectives with detailed explanations and demonstrations. They ensure that pupils enjoy learning in the subject area, so that it leads to successfully accredited work, and recognition through national awards, such as the Artsmark Gold, the Activemark and the Sportsmark.

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 45 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
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3(7%)	16 (35%)	17(37%)	9(20 %)	0	0	0
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The table gives the number of lessons observed in each of the seven categories used to make judgements about lessons; figures in brackets show percentages where 30 or more lessons are seen.

13. Pupils learn effectively, because staff know them well and there are good relationships between pupils and adults. This is an area that parents feel is a strength of the school. Pupils appreciate these relationships and are comfortable in school, knowing that staff understand their difficulties. This is especially so for pupils who have a degree of autism. As they progress through the school they overcome and manage their difficulties and fully engage with their learning. Invariably, pupils arrive at lessons in a very good frame of mind, ready to learn, and are confident in making contributions. They do not shrink from answering questions, even if they only know part of the answer. This self-assurance is because they are aware that all efforts are valued. This particularly helps with the development of their confidence and self esteem.

14. Teachers and learning support assistants are well prepared. The timing of different parts of lessons is usually managed well and at the end of each lesson the class comes together to sum up what has been learnt. Teachers capture pupils' interest early on in the lessons, either by getting them quickly involved in activities, or posing them well-focused questions that allow them to show what they have already learnt. More frequent use of the interactive whiteboard by teachers is beginning, so that their explanations are made clear. For example, in a business studies lesson, this equipment was used to show pupils how they would use ICT in the second half of the lesson. As a result, pupils went on to work independently at computers and learned to utilise the program's facilities.

15. All teachers work closely with learning support assistants, so that pupils who need the greatest help and who cannot complete work on their own are provided with good support. This is especially obvious in the classes where the range of attainment is very wide and the numbers in the class are large. This has been particularly helped by recent additional funding provided by the LEA, so that the school could provide extra support for pupils with the greatest learning difficulties. The school has used this effectively to provide a smaller teaching group for these pupils, in subjects such as English and mathematics. Learning is beginning to be much more effective for these pupils, because the objectives and outcomes can be more finely tuned to meet their needs.

16. Lesson planning has been a focus for development, but there are some variations in the detail of these plans. In the best examples, such as in physical education, science, and design and technology, the planning for each lesson shows what pupils of different abilities are expected to have learnt by the end of the lesson. This is achieved because these are incorporated into the medium term planning of the subject. This helps teachers assess pupils' achievements, and know what to plan for the next stage of learning.

The curriculum

The curriculum is **good** overall. Opportunities for enrichment are **very good**. The new and improved specialist accommodation for secondary pupils is **good**. The resources for teaching are **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- There is a good range of curriculum opportunities throughout the school.
- The extra-curricular opportunities are particularly strong.
- There is a need to increase the detail in the planning so it can be used to assess pupils more accurately.
- Accommodation has greatly improved but there are still a few deficiencies.

Commentary

17. The curriculum provides pupils with a good range of learning opportunities including the National Curriculum and religious education. It offers a curriculum which is meeting the changing needs of pupils attending the school. Curriculum planning has been constantly under review, and while being modified and changed, it has retained the breadth and balance. Pupils are benefiting from experiences that are interesting and relevant to them and they enjoy their learning experiences. Teaching is inclusive in that all pupils in a class, regardless of any particular special educational needs, are involved fully in the various activities. Pupils appreciate their teachers and the efforts that are made in helping them to make the most of their capabilities.

18. There are very good cross-curricular links, which strengthen learning in the various subjects. Extra-curricular opportunities are especially strong, as far as sports activities are concerned and participation in the arts. The school has built up commendable links in this respect. It is a centre for Solihull Special Olympics and other sporting opportunities that pupils to enjoy and participate in. There are a number of initiatives to develop the impact of the arts across the curriculum. There are also increasingly well developed and monitored opportunities for school leavers to pursue their choices in further study, work training or employment/careers.

19. Overall, curriculum planning throughout the school is well advanced and provides a good basis for teaching and learning. The religious education curriculum is satisfactory, despite the long-term absence of the co-ordinator. They are successfully addressing the needs of pupils as they progress from Year 1 to Year 11, taking account of their assessment requirements. There is currently a need for increased detail in the organisation of subjects, so that teachers can plan and assess more accurately and precisely. Staff are well aware of this and have made a start in some subjects.

20. Accommodation is now generally good, but with some deficiencies that are being addressed. These currently include unsuitable toilet facilities for the youngest pupils in the school. There are also disadvantages in accommodating science and design and technology together in one room. The only shortage that the school now has is a room for the teaching of music. The classroom for the youngest children is not large enough or suitable for those in the Foundation Stage. At present this is not a problem, as the school has not been required to take children of this age. Learning resources are generally good, are carefully chosen and well looked after across the subject areas.

Care, guidance and support

The care, welfare, health and safety of pupils are **very good**. **Very good** support, advice and guidance are provided for the pupils, based on monitoring. Pupils are **well** involved in the life of the school.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The school provides an environment in which pupils have access to a large range and number of adults, with which they form excellent relationships.
- The school has very good child protection procedures.
- Risk assessments for trips and visits are very good.
- There is very good support from outside agencies.

Commentary

21. The staff know the pupils very well and pupils' needs are considered as of the utmost importance. Staff are very caring and provide extremely good support for the pupils, who are able to approach a number of very helpful adults if they have any problems. Careful listening assesses pupils' views, and although they are involved in the life of the school, they do not have school council through which they can voice their ideas and preferences. The pupils indicate that they feel

happy and secure in school and this is reflected in their eagerness to attend school. Parents are very happy with the way that the school looks after their children. The school has maintained its previously high standards of care, guidance and support since the last inspection

22. The school has very good procedures for child protection and these are sensitively and effectively applied. Risk assessments for trips and visits are very good with the necessary procedures for assessing risk and recording accidents to both staff and pupils in place. There are very effective procedures for first aid. The good communication between staff, along with the very good ethos of care that pervades the school contributes to a record of relatively few accidents.

23. The school receives a wide range of outside specialist support, including speech and language therapy. The level and provision of this is very good and meets the range of needs of the pupils. The school has ensured that it supports the work and advice from this service so that pupils continue their therapies throughout the school day. There is excellent support from the Educational Welfare Officer on a wide range of social welfare matters, including child protection. This has had a considerable effect on improving the attendance figures in the school.

Partnership with parents, other schools and the community

The school has developed **very good** links with parents who are very supportive of the school. There are **excellent** links with the community. Liaison with other schools and colleges is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The school has excellent links with the community.
- There are very good links with other schools and colleges.
- The school has very good links with parents, who are very supportive of the school
- Parents are provided with lots of information about life and events in the school and about their children's progress.

Commentary

24. There are excellent links with the community. These are too numerous to list but include St. James Church, Aston Villa Football Club and a number of local celebrities. They include lots of sporting organisations, local businesses, museums, art galleries, leisure and field centres, and golf clubs. The careers service Connexions provides valuable support and assistance with careers training, work experience placements, while helping the pupils to prepare for life after school. Lots of trips and visits further extend the pupils' knowledge and these include residential trips for the older pupils. Llanrug Outdoor Centre is one of these and a wide range of outdoor activities are covered, such as canoeing, and abseiling.

25. Links, and integration arrangements, with other schools and colleges are very good. Liaison with other special schools is very well established. For example, during the inspection, four of them, including Hazel Oak (who were hosting the event) were involved in a football competition organised by Aston Villa F.C. on the school grounds. Learning throughout the school is strengthened and enhanced, where possible through links with other schools. There is shared planning and learning in this respect, with a number of local schools and with local authority subject advisers. This has helped to alleviate disadvantages in terms of resources or facilities for some subjects, for example the lack of a separate science room for teaching senior pupils science. The school organises many outside trips and visits during the year.

26. The parents are very satisfied with the school. They receive very good information about the life and events in the school through lots of letters and newsletters prepared by Year 11 pupils. The school prospectus and annual governors' report to parents are well presented and informative. There is parents' notice board in the school and parents attend termly meetings. Annual pupil reports are good. The school has an active and flourishing parent teacher association, which organises many events each year. The funds raised help to provide additional equipment and resources.

27. Parents are very happy with this aspect of the school. The school has maintained its high standards in this area since the last inspection.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

The leadership by the head teacher is **excellent**. The leadership of other staff and the governance of the school are **very good**. **Management is very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The leadership of the school is outstanding.
- The governors work closely with the staff to determine the direction of the school.
- Self evaluation and monitoring are used very well to identify future needs.
- Prudent financial management has ensured that the school provides a highly effective learning environment.

Commentary

28. The head teacher has a sustained, relentless passion for supporting his school, its pupils, parents, and staff. His style is innovative and analytical - it inspires confidence in teachers and parents. Clear thinking and excellent relationships guide the systems and procedures of the school. Teaching, learning, and personal development are being shaped ambitiously. The wide range of awards and the involvement of the community bear testament to the excellent leadership of the headteacher. Teachers are dedicated to their work. Recruitment and retention are good, because the staff are valued and their strengths celebrated

29. The management and governance of the school are very good. The head has gathered around him a strong team of senior managers and governors, who work closely with the staff to determine the direction of the school. Over the years, they have championed Hazel Oak through some difficult situations. Governors make regular visits to the school and receive presentations from curriculum co-ordinators, enabling them to monitor the school's response to legislation. Because they have probing strategies when monitoring the work of the school, their knowledge of its strengths and weaknesses is excellent. For example, a governor's meeting is specifically planned annually for lunchtime, so that positive contact with the staff and pupils takes place at a relaxed social time. Governors bring a wide range of professional skills, such as finance, employment law, education and construction to help them plan strategically and build on the successes of the school. Committees are small and effective. They use national requirements, as well as the school's priorities, to make judgements. These include the school's response to ICT, which was highlighted for improvement in the previous report. They guide the school's actions with empathy, yet rigorously and use their role of 'critical friend' very effectively.

30. Self-evaluation is a strength of leadership. The headteacher's clear and tactical management is well known much wider than the school and well respected in the community. Strength of management and shared vision within the school ensure that all staff take an active part in the

evaluation and mapping of the school improvement plan. Recently a pre-inspection evaluation form was developed through discussion and debate, until a whole staff view of the strengths and areas for improvement was agreed. There are robust systems for checking teaching, learning, planning and reviewing pupils' work. The process of monitoring and review leads to the identification of priorities for improvement. This is supported by very good financial planning, and a wide programme of professional development. Support staff and the site manager are integral to systems of reviews. This illustrates a productive use of the National Workforce Reform initiative to refine and develop the roles of all staff; job descriptions are clear. Management uses data efficiently to diagnose where action needs to be taken to improve teaching and learning. However, as pupils' complex needs have intensified, subject leaders are not all yet fully involved in monitoring, to ensure learning objectives are targeted at the level of pupils' individual need.

31. The school's finances are very well managed by the part-time finance officer working closely with the finance committee. There is a healthy budget, with provision made for the problems that often arise where external funding does not meet the urgency of pupils' special needs. Prudent financial management has enabled the school to make major contributions to building development needed in order to maintain the high quality ethos of the school, including its environment and resources. The school makes very good use of available resources and specific grants to support learning. The school spends its money wisely. The cost per pupil is average, which indicates that the school adds significant value to pupils' learning, enabling them to fulfil their personal potential. Hazel Oak is a highly effective school and gives very good value for the money spent.

Financial information for the year April 2003 to March 2004

Income and expenditure (£)		Balances (£)	
Total income	767000	Balance from previous year	37988
Total expenditure	779000	Balance carried forward to the next	25988
Expenditure per pupil	8376		

*As the number of pupils in the school dropped significantly between 2003 and 2004 (103 to 89), the expenditure is based on an average number of 93 pupils.

PART C: THE QUALITY OF EDUCATION IN SUBJECTS

SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 1, 2, 3 and 4

ENGLISH AND MODERN FOREIGN LANGUAGE

English

The provision in English is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching and learning are good.
- Pupils' speaking and listening skills are developed well.
- A wide range of activities makes learning interesting so that pupils enjoy lessons.
- The analysis of assessment information and tracking of progress is insufficient but is an area which the school is developing.

Commentary

32. Pupils achieve well in English. This is because teachers plan lessons that balance basic skills teaching with an appreciation of novels, plays and poetry. This approach results in pupils making good progress overall. In Years 10 and 11, pupils achieve very well, as a result of very good teaching and a positive approach to external accreditation. The very good relationships between adults and pupils and the good teamwork of teachers and support assistants mean that pupils are well managed, resulting in good learning.

33. Achievement in speaking and listening is very good. Throughout the school adults provide good role models in the way they speak to one another and to pupils. Discussion is encouraged through questioning by teachers and all adults treat pupils' contributions to these discussions with respect. Drama activities develop pupils' confidence in speaking in front of others and the imaginative way in which this is developed ensures that pupils work together enthusiastically. In a Year 6 class, pupils studying pantomime examined why female characters played by men made people laugh. This resulted in serious discussion, but accompanied by lots of laughter. Older pupils in Year 11 considered the best way to make complaints, by enthusiastically acting scenes from a visit to a restaurant and considering the effect that styles of speech had on others. Pupils' confidence in speaking and listening is well supported by the range of activities planned by teachers and by the contribution to this area by well organised speech and language therapy. Pupils' ability improves through the school, so that by Year 11 most are confident communicators.

34. Pupils make good progress in reading. Activities to promote reading are varied and interest pupils. A love of stories is encouraged through regular story times. Younger pupils join with those from a nearby school to work on activities based on the story of 'Mr Gumpy'. Pupils read together in groups. Reading is not limited to stories. Pupils use non-fiction materials to select and sort information they have found into different categories. Pupils are encouraged to use books and the Internet for research. During the inspection a group of pupils in Year 9 used the library resources to find out information about football teams. In Year 10, pupils studied Shakespeare's play 'Twelfth Night', reading with feeling their parts from their scripts.

35. Progress in writing is good. Pupils are encouraged to consider the presentation of their work and good use is made of ICT to support and motivate pupils. Lower attaining pupils learn to form

letters, moving on to writing sentences. As they mature, pupils develop clear, legible writing. Older pupils draft and redraft their writing and develop their understanding of poetry by writing story poems of their own. By year 11, pupils consider the strengths and weaknesses of characters in novels and plays such as *Pride and Prejudice* and *Macbeth*.

36. Pupils learn well in lessons because teachers have high expectations of them and plan interesting, lively activities. The National Strategies have been adapted well and incorporated in teachers' planning. Where learning is very good, this is because the teaching is lively, the pace of lessons brisk and the planned learning outcomes relate clearly to the needs of all pupils in the group.

37. The co-ordinator has a clear vision for the development of the subject. Management is good and the co-ordinator has a good overview of the strengths and areas for development of the subject across the school. However, monitoring of teaching across the school is not undertaken regularly. The curriculum is broad and balanced and introduces pupils to a wide range of styles of literature, in addition to developing the skills needed to access books and the Internet. Good use is made of ICT in encouraging and motivating pupils. Teachers have welcomed the recent introduction of interactive whiteboards and the effective use of these is developing well. Improvement since the last inspection is good, and the school is developing a more analytical approach to the use of assessment, to improve teaching and learning further.

Language and literacy across the curriculum

38. This is good. There are good opportunities for pupils to use and develop their skills in all classes. Teachers encourage pupils to contribute to discussions, by asking well-focused questions and planning well-structured review sessions at the end of lessons. The library is well used for study and for research into a range of topics. Pupils can participate in after-school activities such as drama club, which provide wide-ranging opportunities to develop speaking and listening skills.

FRENCH

It was only possible to observe one lesson in this subject; therefore there is insufficient evidence of the provision in the subject. However, since the last inspection, very good improvements have been made to this area of learning.

39. At the time of the last inspection, the provision of European studies in place of a modern foreign language was judged to be unsatisfactory. This situation no longer exists. French is now taught by a talented, enthusiastic and committed co-ordinator, who has had the excellent support of one particular equally committed learning support assistant. Very good records and thorough and detailed assessments have added to the effectiveness of this co-ordination.

40. In the one lesson seen, the teaching and learning were very good and the pupils achieved well. A quick pace kept pupils on their toes, answering questions and giving information about themselves, their friends and their likes and dislikes. Many spoke with a good French accent. Everyone contributed something. The more able helped the less able. The approach of having the pupils in teams, each being rewarded with tokens for the quality of their responses, contributed effectively to their excitement.

41. French has now become an integral part of the school curriculum – very good display and the thoughtful use of topics which are interesting to the pupils have added to the impact around the school. These include sport and *Euro2004*. The French café during Arts Weeks in March 2003 and

2004 effectively allowed a wide variety of pupils and visitors to sample the atmosphere of a street café, almost on the banks of the Seine!

MATHEMATICS

Provision in mathematics is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils achieve well throughout the school.
- Teaching is generally good or very good, and even satisfactory lessons contain no significant weaknesses.
- The lesson planning could further extend individual pupils' learning through the inclusion of differing learning outcomes.
- Mathematics is applied well across the curriculum.

Commentary

42. The school has improved its mathematics curriculum since the last inspection and has worked hard on the development of the subject in the intervening years. This hard work is reflected in the secure position mathematics has within the school, the amount of accreditation achieved in Year 11, and its being a subject that pupils enjoy and are prepared to use in other aspects of their learning. Evidence of the good progress made is clear, from the youngest pupils learning mathematical concepts or counting through play to the oldest, whose work files show their very good levels of achievement in the subject.

43. Pupils are always fully included and supported in the lessons, even when there is a wide diversity of learning needs. It is clear that pupils generally respond well in their mathematics lessons, and that they are confident in tackling work, even when it is new or difficult. Pupils take pleasure in their achievements, as much for each other as for themselves and this shows on their faces. This is because the teachers are confident about teaching the subject and, in the very good lessons; they present it in ways that are varied and stimulating for all the pupils. The most effective lessons are also characterised by a brisk pace of delivery, which transfers to a good work rate and increased interest among pupils.

44. The co-ordinator is confident in the subject and is in the process of further developing the planning, so it can be used to inform the teaching of pupils with differing learning needs. In some lessons, a lack of variety means that best use of time is not made for all the pupils. At these times some pupils are at risk of losing their concentration or interest, if the level of the task is not quite right for them. More meaningful or imaginative ways of presenting material could be used in some lessons, especially where the more mechanical aspects of mathematics are being learnt.

Mathematics across the curriculum

45. Mathematics is used very well to support work across other subjects. Further learning opportunities are exploited in the carefully planned and well displayed mathematics material or work by pupils that can be seen in the classrooms and around the school. Data handling is especially well applied to other subjects, and to outdoor pursuits such as route finding. Very good use is made of calculators and mathematical ICT applications in science.

SCIENCE

Provision in science is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The use of external accreditation as a curriculum framework helps pupils to achieve well.
- The vocational work in Years 10 and 11 has a positive impact on learning.

- The innovative and lively teaching inspires pupils to learn.
- The leadership of the co-ordinator has boosted pupils' and teachers' interest in science.
- Accommodation constrains teaching style, access to resources and storage.

Commentary

46. The improved learning opportunities for science throughout the school provide pupils with knowledge and skills and enhance their scientific understanding, and achievement is good. The school has taken an innovative approach to the delivery of the subject in order to ensure that pupils achieve well. For example, the Year 9 pupils have already moved on to the first module of their Entry Level accreditation, in order to give more time for investigation during the course. The 'healthy living' module has been an exciting development for Year 9. Their feedback from the group work done illustrated their understanding of technical terms such as 'carbohydrate' and 'protein'. The results were well planned and interesting diets. In Years 10 and 11, learning is given a boost, because external accreditation adds structure to the curriculum, provides a goal for pupils to work towards and gives pupils very good targets to aim for. This results in them making very good progress. The school is very aware that some lower attaining pupils will not gain the certificate and are looking towards alternative accreditation for the future. The module booklets give good guidance to pupils' record keeping and help them develop their communication and thinking skills.

47. Pupils find the vocational – horticulture dimension of Year 11's work real fun. They learn to maintain spaces, prune trees and shrubs, as well as preparing a pitch for a team game. These activities strengthen teamwork and contribute to a maturity that is recognised by parents. Some pupils explained that they would like to develop this subject as a career.

48. The quality of teaching and learning are good, and many lessons in the week of the inspection were very good. The lively, challenging teaching helps pupils to build confidence and enthusiasm for science. Behaviour and personal development are very good and purposeful teaching styles promote these two qualities very well. This is a good improvement on the previous inspection report. Staff work very effectively as teams, with learning support assistants providing positive help, both in teaching and learning and ensuring that pupils' individual targets are being supported. For example, a Year 9 pupil glowed with pride when he asked his teacher to assess his personal targets in his planner. Taking personal responsibility ensures that pupils know what to do to improve. Through self evaluation, the school has identified that there is a lack of subject expertise, particularly at secondary level. In addressing this shortcoming, the co-ordinator and teachers have benefited from the advice and support of the LEA science adviser, in the creation of revised schemes of work. This has boosted teachers' command of the subject and pupils' achievement. Teachers use resources well and are beginning to be very inventive in their use of investigations and different methods of recording their learning.

49. Leadership and management are good overall. They are much stronger than at the time of the last inspection, because the co-ordinator seizes all opportunities, in collaboration with colleagues, to refine and develop the science curriculum to meet pupils' differing needs. For example, individual assessment is beginning to be used as a key feature in planning. However, there is a lack of time available to co-ordinate the consistency of science across the school.

50. Although the school has improved facilities for science, the accommodation does impose some limitations to learning opportunities. Dual use of the science room shared with design and technology makes additional problems for timetabling. In addition, the lack of space in the room reduces the ability of the school to store an adequate range of resources and have complete access to

them. This has a negative impact on teachers' planning, which is compounded by there being no official technical support for preparing experiments.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

Provision in information and communication technology (ICT) is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The curriculum is very relevant and delivered through a good range of resources.
- The provision has improved since the last inspection and is led by a very knowledgeable, enthusiastic co-ordinator.
- Pupils' achieve well because teachers are confident users of ICT for teaching and learning.

Commentary

51. ICT has improved well since the last inspection. The school has kept pace with the growth of the subject and new initiatives. The school is now well resourced, with computers in the library area as well as in each classroom. These are networked and Internet linked. A very effective use of funds has been to purchase interactive whiteboards for some classrooms, and more are planned for the coming year. Teachers are especially enthusiastic about these and use them effectively in their teaching or to support pupils' learning. Pupils respond very well to sessions that take place around the board, as they all can see, or take turns to demonstrate their learning to the rest of the class.

52. The subject is very well and enthusiastically managed by a co-ordinator who, although not a specialist, has developed a high level of subject expertise. Subject development plans show that resources and training have been based on the needs of pupils and staff. The development of the curriculum has been a priority and has improved through the use of a nationally recognised scheme of work. Units of work from the scheme have been selected to provide a good rolling programme of experiences and opportunities.

53. Pupils throughout the school achieve well. By the end of Year 11, they show a range of skills and understanding that they use to support their learning in other subjects such as business studies. This achievement can be seen in the quality of the work they produce on their link course at the local college of further education, where they work towards OCR National Skills Profile accreditation. Here, Year 11 pupils produce the school's newsletter, to a very high standard. Although they are not working towards an external accreditation in school, they develop skills that will prepare them well for the next stage of education for life after school. That the subject co-ordinator teaches all pupils in the secondary classes helps them to achieve well. It also leads to consistency in planning and assessment and provides a complete overview of the standards achieved across the school. The majority of the other teachers in the school have developed a good level of expertise in using ICT for teaching and learning.

Information and communication technology across the curriculum

54. Having developed skills in the discrete ICT lessons, pupils use them well across the curriculum. For example, word processing is used in English, data handling and graphs in mathematics, a digital microscope in science, and use of graphics for creating patterns in art and design. There is insufficient input into some other subjects such as food technology.

HUMANITIES

A total of two lessons were observed in this area of learning. There were two in religious education, and none in geography or history.

55. It is not possible to make overall judgements about the overall provision in history and geography. Planning and co-ordination of the subjects has improved since the last inspection. Pupils continue to undertake activities in modules in Years 1 to 9. Pupils in the primary years learn

effectively about topics which they can easily associate with themselves such as 'Me and My Family', 'Our School' and 'Toys'. Older pupils are able to appreciate the impact of natural disasters and the way in which man effects the environment, as well as appreciating how aspects of life in Britain, such as fashion and music, changed during the twentieth century. Very good displays around the school, particularly one about life during the Second World War, effectively bring together an interesting variety of historical sources. These enable pupils to appreciate and understand better what life was like in the past. Pupils in Year 9 have been particularly excited about life in the trenches during the First World War and have written creatively about this. A good selection of resources for humanities exists around the school and these are well maintained. The humanities curriculum is effectively supported by a variety of trips into the local community, for example to Warwick Castle and Cadbury's World.

Religious education

Provision in religious education is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The co-ordination of the subject has been adversely affected by the absence of staff.
- The teaching is often very good, with sensitive use of religious artefacts that contribute to effective learning.

Commentary

56. The long-term absence of a subject co-ordinator has meant that the co-ordination of this subject has suffered and is regarded by the management to be unsatisfactory. As a result, the curriculum, whilst based on the Locally Agreed Syllabus, is disjointed and lacks cohesion and direction. Despite this, however, the quality of teaching and learning in those lessons seen was usually good or better.

57. In the primary classes, the pupils were clearly very excited to learn about Muslims and prayer, for the first time. Very good teaching was characterised by the very effective use of religious artefacts, which the pupils handled with the greatest of respect. Their keenness was illustrated, too, by the wealth of difficult and almost philosophical questions about the nature of God and the reason for prayer. Older pupils in the secondary classes showed a great level of empathy with Corrie Ten Boom, who was sent to the Nazi concentration camp at Ravensbruck. The teacher's very sensitive reflections and questions about pupils' views were matched by their very eager, but nevertheless thoughtful responses. These brought out not only their mature attitudes about right and wrong but also a feeling of spirituality, which was quite moving. The school makes effective use of visits to outside religious places such as the mosque, temple and local churches and has welcomed visitors from some of these into school. There are good resources throughout the school for RE, particularly collections of religious artefacts. These help bring the subject to life and enhance the pupils' understanding of how various religions have different approaches to the Divine.

CREATIVE, AESTHETIC, PRACTICAL AND PHYSICAL SUBJECTS

A total of twelve lessons were observed in this area of learning, but too few to make reliable judgements about the provision in music. Evidence from other sources, including pupils' work and discussions with them, was also gathered.

MUSIC

58. As only two lessons were seen during the inspection, it is not possible to provide an overall evaluation of provision in music. However, from the evidence available and from general observations during the inspection, including singing in assembly, it is clear that music is a strength within the school. The lessons seen were both of a very high standard and some excellent work in music is being achieved by the pupils. They are learning the discipline of the technique and language of music, as well as the enjoyment of singing and music making. There are good cross-curricular links with history and geography in the study of music such as that of South American and Caribbean origin. The music co-ordinator is well qualified for the role. She has been developing and adapting the music National Curriculum, while evaluating various approaches to optimising the response to pupils' learning needs. There is a regular guitar club, and music plays a large part in other art's activities, as well as in whole-school festivals and assemblies. Storage facilities are not good, however, and there is no designated room for music learning or resources.

Art

Provision in art is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- There is good teaching and learning, with very good teaching by the co-ordinator.
- There is a stimulating emphasis for younger pupils on practical and creative activities.
- The detailed assessment procedures for pupils in Years 7 to 11 are not yet established for younger pupils.

Commentary

59. Pupils achieve well in this area of the curriculum and by Year 11 achievement is very good. Teachers' enthusiasm communicates itself to the pupils, which motivates them to focus on their work. Pupils receive guidance and support in lessons, but are encouraged to interpret the task individually. Both teachers and support staff have high expectations of the pupils and this creates an effective team.

60. The emphasis for pupils in Years 3 to 6 is on practical, creative learning and this approach encourages them to develop a range of skills, whilst learning about colour and shape. During the week of the inspection, pupils were studying and gaining inspiration from the work of Andy Goldsworthy, using natural and discarded materials to create a picture. They understood that in order to capture a work of art based on these materials, it was necessary to preserve it using such means as photography. Older pupils make good use of sketchbooks to try out ideas and to develop particular skills. The high quality displays of pupils' work around the school demonstrate daily how much the work of individuals is valued. By Year 11, pupils achieve very well and gain high levels of accreditation external assessment. Work is of a high standard, as is reflected in the Artsmark Gold awards to the school, and pupils are clearly proud of their achievement.

61. The subject is well led, by an enthusiastic and knowledgeable co-ordinator, who teaches the subject to secondary-age pupils. Planning across the school is good. Assessment in the secondary department is well developed and provides information allowing pupils to build effectively on the skills they have developed. However, assessment in the primary department is less well established. The co-ordinator has a good overview of work across the school, but has limited opportunities to monitor the teaching of other staff. Improvement since the last inspection is very good. At that time,

the accommodation for art was highlighted as unsatisfactory. The school now has a designated well-equipped room providing a stimulating environment, in which the older pupils work.

Design and technology

Provision in design and technology is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The provision for the aspect dealing with resistant materials is good.
- The provision for food technology is not as good as the other aspects of the subject.
- The specialist accommodation for teaching both aspects of the subject is good, but the sharing of the design technology room with science limits its use.

Commentary

62. The quality of the provision within in the different aspects of the subject varies greatly and has been identified by the school as an area for development. It varies because the school has historically had two co-ordinators for the subject: one for resistant materials and textiles; and one for food technology. A newly appointed co-ordinator now oversees the aspect of the subject which deals with resistant materials, and also teaches this aspect across the school. Provision for this aspect of the subject is good. Although not a design and technology specialist, the co-ordinator has rewritten the curriculum so that it is more relevant to the aptitudes of the pupils. Assessment has been developed alongside the curriculum, and units of work have different outcomes for pupils of different abilities. It provides pupils with good opportunities to reinforce their literacy and numeracy skills, such as reading instructions and measurement and also provides them with success. The impact of all this is beginning to be seen in the high quality of the artefacts that they produce. They have also been given good opportunities to make connections between the skills they have acquired and their use in the wider world. For example, secondary-age pupils have visited the museum of building and have completed building and joinery tasks.

63. Food technology has suffered from a lack of leadership, due to the long term absence of the co-ordinator. Although a temporary teacher has successfully overseen the Year 10 and 11 entry level examination work, there has been a lack of development and setting of high standards. There has been little emphasis placed on this aspect in Years 7 to 9. The effect of this shows up in older pupils' lack of skills in using basic kitchen equipment, and insufficient understanding of how to organise their work. Reorganisation within the school for the next academic year will alleviate this deficiency.

64. The facilities for design and technology as a whole have improved considerably since the last inspection. There is now a new technology room, which has been reorganised by the co-ordinator to provide a more effective teaching and learning space. New resources have been purchased and these have helped pupils to achieve good quality projects. However, the dual facility of the room means that its use is limited. For example, if teachers from the primary classes want to use the facilities for design technology, they can only do so if it is not being used for science by other staff. The school is in the fortunate position of having a very large food technology room. However, the lack of leadership of the subject is evident in the limited range of the resources in the room, and the general air of neglect. It is a room that appears to serve a purpose, but is not the vibrant learning environment seen in the rest of the school. There are very few books or school-produced resources in the room, and although supplemented by some newer books in the library, many are out of date and do not motivate or inspire pupils.

Physical education

Provision in physical education is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The subject's high profile and the 'can-do' attitude to PE raise aspirations.
- Very effective assessment ensures that all pupils' needs are met and their standards rose
- Stimulating teaching and learning drive pupils to want to succeed and are inspired by very good leadership.
- Outstanding extra-curricular enrichment challenges all levels of attainment.
- Unsatisfactory changing facilities and opportunities for field sports restrict learning.
- A trail-blazing pilot scheme addressing the more complex needs of many pupils is having a positive impact on learning.

Commentary

65. Comparison with pupils' own last best effort across the age range from Year 1 to Year 9 illustrates how pupils are achieving well. Through the modified curriculum, they are given confidence to achieve their best. Pupils from all backgrounds flourish in this positive environment. Some pupils exceed expectations, because of the dedication and positive guidance of teachers and learning support staff, who strive for independence in all pupils. In Years 10 and 11, the confidence encouraged in the previous years comes to fruition, with many older pupils achieving local and national awards for their part in the Special Olympics.

66. Primary-age pupils love PE, because they can demonstrate their independence and personal control. The school provides good opportunities for pupils to learn how to assess themselves. For example, in the warm-up session they keep a rough check on how their heartbeat increases, meeting the teachers' aim of introducing concepts of healthy living. The focus on assessment is very strong, with teachers planning targets for all pupils, but with different outcomes of learning for individuals. A group of pupils with perceptual motor needs has been identified out of this assessment. As a result, the school is addressing the specific needs of this group of pupils across the whole age range.

67. Teaching and learning in PE is spirited and full of enthusiasm, because of the very good leadership. Many non-specialists teach the subject and are guided well by a very clear scheme of work based on national guidance. Teachers use probing questions during their demonstrations, to help pupils cope with the concept of a new skill and raise their aspirations as they succeed. Teachers ensure that all pupils understand the need to warm up and cool down, as well as having a practical approach to good, safe practice in sport. Teachers' expectations are high, resulting in impeccable behaviour, pupils having appropriate kit and preparing themselves well for PE.

68. Extensive extra-curricular work in PE has established a fever-pitch interest across the school. Interest in Special Olympics grows rapidly in the secondary school. Pupils, with many hours' support from staff, often outside school time and at weekends, practice for long hours to improve techniques, stamina and self-awareness. In Years 10 and 11, the involvement of many community sports further enhances learning. This is a very good improvement since the last inspection. Pupils learn to play golf at the local golf course, as well as working intensively with Aston Villa's community coach to develop football skills and positive attitudes to rules and fair play. Pupils show very good progress in group work, athletic skills and team games. They respond very well to evaluating each other's performance. They confidently demonstrate the skills they have learned, which are invariably rewarded with hearty applause from the group, building their confidence and self-esteem.

Example of outstanding practice

The close working partnership between the physical education department and the occupational therapist (OT) has devised and implemented a flexible team teaching programme for pupils.

A base-line assessment is used to identify pupils with complex learning needs who would benefit from a programme to support their motor co-ordination needs. The co-ordinator, working closely with the occupational therapist (OT), uses a flexible team teaching programme to strengthen pupils' tactile experiences. The Year 10 pupils were first in the hall and took guided responsibility for setting out the tactile trail. Younger pupils arrived excited at the prospect of the session. A fun warm up with the OT soon had pupils stretching and moving to 'the cat' and 'superman' exercise. Lots of praise brought even better responses to the warm up. Demonstration on the tactile trail, the tunnel and parachute, gave pupils a target. There were squeals of delight as pupils succeeded on the trail. Through continual assessment, the teacher, OT and LSAs injected challenge, especially when pupils had to get through the parachute tunnel. A series of short term stimulating activities kept pupils engaged with their learning. For example, the 'Angels in the snow' activity, pupils used foam to experiment with patterns and letters, as well as the texture of a very different material; while the ball and bucket task helped co-ordination and touch. The lesson concluded with a guessing game that had pupils racking their brains for solutions, and then a final relaxation.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP

Insufficient lessons were observed to make an overall judgement on the provision of the subject but the main strengths are that:

Main strengths and weaknesses

- It contributes well to pupils' overall personal development;
- There is very good provision for developing an awareness of the world of work;
- The co-ordinator is knowledgeable, enthusiastic, and has developed the subject very well.

Commentary

69. Personal, social and health education (PSHE) has developed very well since the last inspection. It is seen as having high priority in school. Its emphasis is on building self-esteem, confidence, and developing relationships, as well as preparing pupils to enter the adult world of leisure, training and work. A very relevant curriculum for both PSHE and citizenship has been developed and pays attention to all the recommended and statutory requirements. All pupils receive very good opportunities in discrete lessons, tutorial times, and assemblies, for advice, guidance and support. This makes a significant contribution to their personal development and provides a central focus for all activities in the school. Lunchtime arrangements effectively promote pupils' self-help skills, while providing opportunities for developing relationships and social skills, and healthy eating. In Years 1 to 6, the teaching of PSHE is integrated into the whole curriculum. The school has developed a good policy and curriculum plans for citizenship, which meet statutory requirements. Pupils show a growing knowledge about local communities, people's jobs and roles in society, community issues, the world of work and their role as citizens.

70. PSHE contains elements of careers education. The school uses the Connexions service very well to deliver and support this aspect of the curriculum. Work experience is very well established within the local community, with most pupils accessing this up to three times during their final two

years in school. With the changing needs and abilities of pupils, the school has risen to the challenge of providing equal opportunities for pupils to access work experience. It has rightly introduced a risk assessment procedure. Because of this the school is certain that pupils are not at risk from being placed in a work situation, such as in a responsible caring position, for which they have no concept of safety requirements. The school has recently devised an alternative, appropriate curriculum experience centring on daily living and social skills for pupils who are not ready to access the world of work. Careers education is well supported by link courses in the local college of education. These provide pupils with experience of the next stage of education. It also provides the school with a valuable insight into pupils' suitability for this placement when they leave school.

71. The subject leader is experienced, methodical and enthusiastic. Since this co-ordinator also has responsibility for the upper school and is a senior manager, the subject has a high profile in the school. As the Year 11 teacher, he is able to establish links between this subject and others in the curriculum, so there is good awareness of which aspects of the PSHE curriculum are also covered in other subjects. Discrete lessons are not always taught by the co-ordinator, but by class teachers. The school has recognised that there is a need to monitor the quality of teaching and learning, and this has taken place, both through performance management and by focusing on the subject directly.

PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

<i>Inspection judgement</i>	<i>Grade</i>
The overall effectiveness of the school	2
How inclusive the school is	2
How the school's effectiveness has changed since its last inspection	2
Value for money provided by the school	2
Overall standards achieved	3
Pupils' achievement	3
Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities	2
Attendance	2
Attitudes	2
Behaviour, including the extent of exclusions	2
Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	3
The quality of education provided by the school	2
The quality of teaching	3
How well pupils learn	3
The quality of assessment	3
How well the curriculum meets pupils needs	3
Enrichment of the curriculum, including out-of-school activities	2
Accommodation and resources	3
Pupils' care, welfare, health and safety	2
Support, advice and guidance for pupils	2
How well the school seeks and acts on pupils' views	3
The effectiveness of the school's links with parents	2
The quality of the school's links with the community	1
The school's links with other schools and colleges	2
The leadership and management of the school	2
The governance of the school	2
The leadership of the headteacher	1
The leadership of other key staff	2
The effectiveness of management	2

Inspectors make judgements on a scale: excellent (grade 1); very good (2); good (3); satisfactory (4); unsatisfactory (5); poor (6); very poor (7).

Overall standards achieved are judged against individual targets and not in relation to national expectations.

