

INSPECTION REPORT

WHITCHURCH CofE JUNIOR SCHOOL

Whitchurch, Shropshire

LEA area: Shropshire

Unique reference number: 123514

Headteacher: Mr David Swift

Lead inspector: John Williams

Dates of inspection: 4th – 6th July 2005

Inspection number: 268245

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Junior
School category:	Voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils:	7 to 11 years
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
Number on roll;	369
School address:	Salisbury Road Whitchurch Shropshire
Postcode:	SY13 1RX
Telephone number:	01948 662255
Fax number:	01948 666380
Appropriate authority:	The governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr J Bates
Date of previous inspection:	25 January 1999

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

The school is located east of the town centre and is the only junior school in the market town of Whitchurch in North Shropshire. It has pupils aged from seven to 11, some of whom come from nearby villages. Pupils come from a variety of home backgrounds and the proportion of pupils who claim free school meals is broadly in line with the national average. Currently there are 369 pupils on roll, which is much larger than most primary schools. The school has no pupil for whom English is not their first language. There are no asylum seekers in the school. Some 17 per cent of pupils are identified as having special educational needs, which is about the national average. These range from specific learning difficulties, such as dyslexia, to physical problems. A large proportion of these pupils have moderate learning difficulties. Six pupils (1.9 per cent) have statements of special educational need, which is broadly in line with the national average. Pupils' attainment on entry to the school is well below average.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
22516	John Williams	Lead inspector	Geography History Music Physical education Personal, social and health education and citizenship
19366	Bill Walker	Lay inspector	
22452	Mary Farman	Team inspector	English
22291	Keith Saltfleet	Team inspector	Special educational needs Mathematics Information and communication technology Art and design Design and technology
23196	Sue Chesters	Team inspector	English as an additional language Science Religious education

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

OVERALL EVALUATION

This is a good effective school, which gives good value for money. Standards are rising and it is well placed for further improvement.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- Pupils achieve well and reach average standards in English and mathematics. They reach above average standards in science. Writing standards need improving.
- The leadership of the headteacher is excellent. The deputy headteacher and other staff with leadership responsibilities support him very effectively.
- The quality of teaching is good and this results in good learning.
- The curriculum is good and is enriched very successfully. Links between subjects require further development and the school has identified that pupils could use their literacy, numeracy and information and technology skills better in all subjects.
- The school provides very well for pupils' personal development, which results in pupils having very good attitudes to school.
- Very good relationships are a strength of the school, as is the high quality of teamwork among the staff.
- Assessment is good and is used very well to track and monitor pupils' achievements, particularly in the core subjects of English, mathematics and science.

The school has made good improvement since the last inspection. It has successfully addressed the issues raised then and continued to improve all aspects of its work. It has reviewed and restated its aims. It has developed the monitoring of teaching successfully with a consequent rise in the number of very good lessons taught. There are now very good systems for tracking pupils' progress through the school and pupils now have targets to help them improve. Teachers have worked hard to develop pupils' spiritual awareness.

STANDARDS ACHIEVED

Results in National Curriculum tests at the end of Year 6, compared with:	all schools			similar schools
	2002	2003	2004	2004
English	C	D	D	D
Mathematics	D	D	B	A
Science	D	D	C	B

*Key: A - well above average; B - above average; C - average; D - below average; E - well below average.
Similar schools are those whose pupils attained similarly at the end of Year 6.*

Pupils achieve well. The table above shows that in the 2004 national tests and tasks for Year 6 pupils, results were below average in English, above average in mathematics and average in science. When these results are compared with schools in similar contexts, they are below average in English, well above average in mathematics and above average in science. Indications are that this year's results have improved overall and are likely to be average in English and mathematics and above average in science. At the start of Year 3, pupils have a wide range of abilities but overall their skills are well below average. They achieve well throughout the school. Inspection evidence indicates that, for pupils in the current Year 6, standards are average in English and mathematics and above average in science. It has to be noted that about one quarter of this year's Year 6 is identified as having special educational needs. This impacts negatively on overall standards. Standards in writing are below average and the school has identified this as its main focus for development. Standards are average in information and communication technology (ICT). Standards in religious education meet the expectations of the locally agreed syllabus.

Pupils' attendance is satisfactory and they arrive punctually. Pupils' behaviour is good and their attitudes are very good. **Pupils' personal development and their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development are very good overall.**

QUALITY OF EDUCATION

The quality of education provided by the school is good.

The quality of teaching, and of learning, is good. Assessment systems are good overall. Staff plan very well and provide challenging activities which interest the pupils. They manage pupils' behaviour very well. This enhances the calm and purposeful ethos of the school. There are good examples of teachers assessing pupils' work very successfully, particularly in the core subjects. They use the information that they gather very effectively to track and monitor pupils' achievements.

The school provides its pupils with a good curriculum. Teachers have begun to strengthen the links between subjects and to offer wider opportunities for pupils to develop their writing skills. The curriculum is enriched by a very good range of out of school activities. Accommodation is very good and resources are good. The school takes good care of all of its pupils and gives them very good support, advice and guidance. Links with parents are very good. Links with the community, and with other schools and colleges, are very good.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

The leadership and management of the school are very good. Governance is good.

The clarity of vision, sense of purpose and aspirations of the headteacher are excellent. His deputy and other key staff very successfully support him. They give clear and purposeful guidance to all staff and pupils. All aspects of the school's work are monitored and evaluated very effectively and any issues arising from these reviews are resolved. The school's self-evaluation systems are very good. Staff work together as a very strong team and are very good role models. The governors understand well the strengths of the school and fully support its development. They meet all of their statutory duties and act as good critical friends of the school.

PARENTS' AND PUPILS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

Parents support the school very well. They say that their children are happy and learn well. Pupils like their school very much and say that they feel trusted and valued and that staff listen to their opinions.

IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

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

- improve standards in writing
- place more emphasis on pupils using their literacy, numeracy and ICT skills in other subjects
- strengthen links between subjects.

PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS

STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

Standards achieved in subjects

Pupils achieve well. Overall standards are average.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards are rising. They are average in most subjects.
- Pupils throughout the school achieve well.
- Standards in science are above average.
- Standards in writing are below average.

Commentary

1. Pupils have a wide range of abilities when they begin Year 3. In the past four to five years, overall attainment levels, as pupils start in Year 3, have declined and been well below average. Writing skills have been particularly low. The school has identified this and has implemented a number of strategies aimed at raising standards. These are beginning successfully to raise the level of pupils' attainment. Standards are gradually rising. They have risen or been maintained in all subjects since the last inspection. Standards in mathematics and information and communication technology are average. They are also average in English overall. However, standards in writing are below average. Standards in religious education meet the expectations of the locally agreed syllabus. Science standards are above average.

Standards in national tests at the end of Year 6 – average point scores in 2004

Standards in:	School results	National results
English	25.9 (25.5)	26.9 (26.8)
mathematics	28.1 (26.3)	27.0 (26.8)
science	29.3 (28.3)	28.6 (28.6)

There were 97 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year.

2. The table above shows that, for Year 6 pupils in the national tests in 2004, results were below average in English, above average in mathematics and average in science. These results, when compared with similar schools, are below average in English, well above average in mathematics and above average in science. In English, although the number of pupils gaining the expected level for the age group, (Level 4), was approaching the average level, too few pupils gained the higher Level 5 to reach that average. Indications are that results for the current Year 6, of whom nearly a quarter are identified as having special educational needs, will be average in English and mathematics and above average in science.
3. All pupils now achieve well, including pupils identified as having special educational needs and those who have specific gifts or talents. Pupils achieve well because of
 - the good quality teaching which enables them to learn successfully
 - the way in which teachers plan for pupils to have practical experiences in subjects such as science which enthuses pupils
 - the very good attitudes, that pupils have to school, which make them eager to learn.
4. Standards in science are above average because pupils achieve very well. The school places great emphasis on pupils being actively involved in their own scientific investigations. This means that they learn more rapidly and as a consequence achieve very successfully. Writing

skills remain below average. However, pupils' achievement is good when the very low starting point for most is taken into account. The school has rightly focused on writing as a main area for development. It has introduced a good range of strategies to encourage pupils to take more interest in their writing. This includes planning better links between subjects so that pupils can use their writing skills more effectively across the curriculum. Standards in other subjects were not a major focus of the inspection.

Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities

Pupils' behaviour is good and their attitudes are very good. Pupils' personal, spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is very good overall. Pupils' attendance and punctuality are satisfactory.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils have very positive attitudes towards learning and each other.
- Behaviour is good in lessons, around the school and at lunch and play times.
- The very strong emphasis on personal development leads to very good relationships.
- The very good provision for pupils' spiritual, moral and social development is evident across all activities.
- Good provision for pupils' cultural development prepares them well for life in an ethnically diverse country.

Commentary

5. Pupils' very good attitudes are an improvement since the last inspection. They make a very positive contribution to their learning. Their enthusiasm for work is evident in lessons and pupils respond very well to challenges. All try very hard to do their best. Pupils are supportive of each other and work very well in groups and pairs. They encourage each other to persevere within a very positive and productive context for learning. Teachers frequently give praise in lessons and pupils respond very positively.
6. Behaviour in and around the school is good, overall. Pupils enter the school in an orderly manner and are warmly welcomed by the staff. They walk sensibly around the school, up and down the stairs and show good manners to each other and adults. Good behaviour in and out of lessons is a strong feature of the considerate way in which pupils work and play together. This good level of behaviour is consistent even when constant rain prevents pupils from going out to play.
7. The school makes very good provision for pupils' personal development. All staff work very hard to promote high quality relationships among all pupils, including those with special educational needs. This ensures that pupils respect each other's values and feelings. Pupils of all abilities are integrated very well into the life of the school. This gives all pupils a clear sense of being part of a community. The school works hard to provide work that helps pupils to understand about rights and responsibilities, fair trade issues and poverty. This raises pupils' awareness of these issues and helps them to identify racial, economic and cultural stereotypes.
8. Spiritual, moral and social development is very good. Assemblies provide very good opportunities for pupils to develop spirituality. Pupils respond sensitively to the opportunities to reflect on achievement. For example, they use the Japanese style garden regularly for quiet contemplation. Opportunities are planned into lessons and other school activities. This helps pupils realise that reflection is an integral part of achievement. Teachers use every opportunity to explain right and wrong to pupils. This ensures that pupils have a good understanding of school rules and expectations. Staff provide a good range of opportunities to develop social skills. Pupils relate well to each other and work well in a variety of different situations from pairs to small group as well as the whole class. Cultural development is good. The school celebrates a suitably wide range of festivals from cultures other than Christian. It

encourages pupils' participation in art and music from a wide range of cultures. This increases pupils' understanding of the diverse nature of life in Britain. Improvement since the last inspection is very good.

Attendance

Attendance in the latest complete reporting year (%)

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
School data:	4.7	School data :	0.2
National data:	5.1	National data:	0.4

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

- The school's efforts to encourage regular attendance have resulted in an improvement over the last year. The overall rate is in line with the national average for primary schools. Most pupils are punctual and a prompt start is made to the day.

Exclusions

There were no exclusions in the previous academic year.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

The school provides good quality education. Teaching and learning are good. The curriculum is good. The school takes very good care of its pupils and they feel valued and secure. It provides them with very good support, advice and guidance. There are very good links with parents and very good links with the community and with other schools and colleges.

Teaching and learning

The quality of teaching and of learning is good. Assessment systems are good overall.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teachers are beginning to plan good links between subjects.
- Teachers have high expectations that pupils will behave well and work hard.
- Staff include all pupils in all activities and value their contributions.
- Provision for pupils with special educational needs is good.
- Pupils are very well supported by teaching assistants.
- Overall, assessment systems are good.

Commentary

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 30 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
0	10 (33%)	16 (54%)	4 (13%)	0	0	0

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.

- Teachers' planning is very good. Teachers plan a wide range of activities that successfully challenges pupils of all abilities. They are beginning to make links between subjects wherever possible. The school has identified that such links can be extended across more subjects. This means that pupils learn in a 'joined up way' and their studies make sense.

11. Teachers have high expectations that pupils will behave well and work hard. They make clear what they expect pupils to achieve in each lesson and have good guidelines and rules that they expect pupils to follow. Thus, pupils are in no doubt about what they have to do and how best to achieve the targets set for them. They behave well, because they are fully occupied and work hard and because they are eager to learn new things.
12. Relationships between staff and pupils are very good. Staff have a good rapport with their pupils and, so, pupils are secure and happy in their learning. They are not afraid to ask questions if they are not sure. All pupils are very well included in all activities, whatever their background or ability. Hence, they will join in lessons knowing that their contributions will be listened to and valued by staff and fellow pupils. Very well qualified teaching assistants are deployed very efficiently. They give very good support to pupils and greatly enhance their learning.
13. Provision for pupils with special educational needs is good throughout the school. Teachers write good quality individual education plans for these pupils, which have clear learning targets. They are reviewed regularly each term and enable such pupils to make good progress.
14. Assessment procedures are good, particularly in the core subjects of English, mathematics and science. Data gathered is very well used to ensure that all pupils receive appropriately challenging work which enables them to achieve well. The school has developed very good systems of tracking and monitoring how well pupils achieve. These display valuable information very clearly and are easily accessible and simple to manage. Staff use a good range of self-assessment systems with pupils. For example, pupils work in pairs and assess each other's work. They do this honestly and accurately, acting as very good critical friends. Thus, pupils have good understanding of how well they achieve and what they have to do next, in order to improve. The school has identified that, once the curriculum is fully interlinked, assessment in the non-core subjects will need further development.

The curriculum

The school provides its pupils with a good curriculum. Enrichment and out of school activities are very good. Accommodation is very good and resources are good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- There is a good balance between all subjects.
- There is good provision for pupils with special educational needs and those with particular gifts or talents.
- There is not enough emphasis on pupils using their literacy, numeracy and ICT skills in other subjects. The links between subjects need to be strengthened.
- The school's very good provision for curriculum enrichment and extra-curricular activities increases pupils' personal development very well.
- The very good quality classrooms, library, outdoor play areas and school grounds make a very positive contribution to pupils' learning.

Commentary

15. The school provides all pupils with an interesting and rich curriculum. This stimulates pupils to learn and work hard. They enjoy their work in all areas of the National Curriculum and in religious education. This reflects the findings of the last inspection. The school gives its more able pupils good quality opportunities to increase their skills across all aspects of school life. This is an improvement since the last inspection.
16. The school makes good provision for pupils with special educational needs. This happens mostly in lessons. Occasionally pupils are withdrawn from lessons to meet their specific needs. Pupils' needs are taken fully into account. They have full access to the National

Curriculum, religious education and out of school activities. This ensures that they make good progress and are fully included in all school activities. The school gives its more able pupils good quality opportunities to increase their skills across all aspects of school life.

17. The school's provision for pupils to use their literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology skills in other subject areas is inconsistent. Pupils do not have enough opportunities to use their knowledge to link learning across subjects. The school already has plans to address this issue.
18. The school's very good provision for enriching the curriculum increases pupils' confidence and self-esteem very effectively. Pupils make regular visits to the theatre, museums and other places of interest. This makes them more aware of life outside school and makes a very positive contribution to their social skills. Visitors speak regularly to pupils about current issues such as health matters and drugs misuse. Pupils learn to appreciate the need to care for themselves and others. The very good range of sporting and creative clubs make learning fun and increase pupils' enjoyment of school.
19. The school has a good number of well-qualified teaching and support staff to enable the effective delivery of the curriculum. Accommodation is very good. The development of a dedicated information and communication technology area is an improvement since the last inspection. Pupils use this for class sessions and for independent research. Good quality displays of pupils' work and photographs of different activities enliven the good-sized classrooms. These, the pleasant play areas, the attractively landscaped gardens and grounds and good quality learning resources make pupils want to come to school and learn. The hardworking site manager and his team ensure that high levels of cleanliness are maintained, throughout the building and grounds.

Care, guidance and support

There is good provision for the care, welfare, health and safety of pupils. The school monitors the achievement and personal development of pupils very effectively resulting in well-focused support and guidance. Pupils' views are sought and valued.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils work in a healthy and safe environment.
- Relationships between staff and pupils are very good.
- Teachers provide very good support and guidance.
- The school involves pupils in its work and development.

Commentary

20. Governors have a responsible attitude to health and safety. They take professional advice and work effectively with members of staff and with parents to create and maintain a secure and safe environment for those in their charge. Risk assessments are carried out and monitored in the buildings and in all areas of school activity. Proper advice and guidance on child protection issues are given to all members of staff. Teachers make good use of the curriculum to promote a healthy and safe lifestyle.
21. Pupils have a high regard for their teachers. Relationships in great part are warm and friendly. There are very good systems for tracking pupils' progress through the school and as a result teachers have a very good understanding of the needs of each pupil. They make very effective use of the systematic assessment procedures to ensure that they provide advice and guidance, which is carefully considered, to promote pupils' academic progress and personal development. The school has very good social and curricular links with the infant school and parents appreciate this, speaking very highly of the arrangements for their children to settle in when they first start.

22. The school council is proving to be an effective medium through which pupils can participate in the work and development of the school. The weekly discussions in class ensure that the council's deliberations feature prominently in pupils' consciousness. Many pupils are thoughtful and articulate and well equipped to contribute constructively to discussions on school initiatives and routines. They know that they will be listened to and their ideas on, for example, outdoor games and indoor supervision, and the choice and quality of food provided at lunchtimes, have led to changes. A recent general survey on pupils' views of the school showed a largely positive response from pupils who clearly have the confidence to make their views known. At a personal level pupils are becoming more involved in evaluating their own progress and setting their own targets, for personal and academic development. This is good practice which is proving to be very effective.

Partnership with parents, other schools and the community

The school has developed a very close partnership with parents. It also has very fruitful links with other schools and with the wider community.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The school provides parents with very good information about the school and about their children's standards and progress.
- Parents support the school very well and make a valuable contribution to their children's learning at school and in the home.
- The school seeks and values the views of parents.
- Constructive links with the secondary school prepare pupils very well for the next stage of their education.
- The school works very effectively with other schools and within the wider community to share good practice, enrich the curriculum and stimulate learning.

Commentary

23. The school continues to enjoy the confidence of parents, who have expressed overwhelmingly positive views about most aspects of their children's education. They are clearly proud of their school and many devote much time and energy in fund-raising and providing practical support, in the classroom or on visits. This generous response bears testimony to the continuing efforts made by the school to build a relationship of trust and confidence based on sharing information and pursuing the best interests of the child. Parents are made to feel welcome in the school and teachers are very approachable. The school's documentation informs parents well about their children's progress and the work of the school. The procedural and curricular detail provided for each year group, at the beginning of the year, and the additional guidance sent each term by letter, enable parents to support their children's learning at school and in the home. Good assessment procedures result in end-of-year reports that are well focused and give a clear idea of attainment and progress. The partnership with parents is very fruitful and contributes much to the educational provision in school.
24. The school makes very effective use of resources in the community to enrich its curriculum and broaden the educational opportunities for pupils. There are educational visits to local churches, museums, parks and places of entertainment, whilst visitors come to talk about religious faiths, foreign cultures, sporting activity and safe lifestyles. All of this contributes much to pupils' enjoyment and achievement. It also helps them to be outward looking, thinking of others and raising funds for those less fortunate than themselves. Sport is a focus for much contact with local schools and pupils are able to take part in many competitive events. Educationally the links with other schools in the area are highly productive. This is most immediately apparent in the mutually supportive partnership with the infant and secondary schools. Information is shared and trusted by all parties, facilitating the effective and stress-free induction and transfer of pupils between the schools. Some areas of training

are common and there is a growing number of curricular projects which enhance the learning opportunities for pupils and provide very good professional development for the staff involved. Further afield, the consultation and sharing of expertise with similar schools lead to constant reappraisal of practice and is beneficial to all concerned. For example, the school is anxious to extend the community use of its facilities and is looking at examples of good practice elsewhere for this purpose. Links with colleges of further education are good and the school makes an effective contribution to the initial training of teachers. This is valuable for the school as it reinforces professional development and keeps teachers abreast of current trends in their profession.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

The quality of leadership and management is very good. The leadership of the headteacher is excellent. The management of the school is very good. Governance is good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The inspirational leadership of the headteacher is a major influence on the success of the school.
- The headteacher is very effectively supported by his able deputy and other senior members of his staff.
- The school undertakes rigorous self-evaluation and makes effective use of the findings.
- Performance management procedures are thorough and effective.
- There is very good teamwork and all staff are committed to their ongoing professional development, creating a learning culture within the school.
- The school is well supported by enthusiastic and knowledgeable governors.

Commentary

25. The clarity of vision, sense of purpose and aspirations shown by the headteacher are excellent. He provides clear focus and calm assurance for the whole school community. By his industry and exemplary commitment, he generates enthusiasm among his colleagues and loyal support among all who are in any way involved with the school. Rightly he is held in high esteem by his colleagues and peers. He is ably supported by his deputy, who has been particularly influential in developing the school's planning systems. The senior management team are highly motivated, with great pride in their school and a shared vision for the future. All members of staff have a strong sense of corporate responsibility and their mutually supportive approach to their work, helps to ensure consistency in teaching and practice throughout the school.
26. Management is very effective in all areas. The headteacher delegates in a constructive and coherent way, giving all those with management responsibilities the training to fully understand their role, the freedom to explore good practice and the confidence to innovate. This has led, for example, to increased status and responsibilities for teaching assistants whose co-ordinator has had the authority to oversee their career development and establish a network among local schools to share training and expertise. A key factor in the school's success has been the drive for continual improvement. All aspects of the school's work are rigorously evaluated to identify areas for improvement and to analyse why some strategies are more effective than others so that best practice can be spread. The whole school is a learning community and pupils benefit greatly from the increasingly skilled staff and from the culture of achievement that these procedures engender. Performance management is an area of strength. Annual reviews are held for all classroom staff, training needs are considered and opportunities for professional development are agreed. All have job descriptions and targets for achievement. Induction procedures for newly qualified teachers are very good. The mentoring process is very supportive and programmes are tailored to individual needs.
27. The co-ordination of special educational needs is very good. The co-ordinator is released from her class for a limited time each week to liaise with other teachers and to ensure that

good quality provision is maintained. The governors have nominated a governor to report back to the full committee on the quality of this provision. There is very good involvement with outside services such as speech therapy and occupational therapy, where needed.

28. The school has made good use of its resources to further its educational aims. Financial procedures are efficient and the budget is managed with care to ensure that the money is used to best effect. All the recommendations in the most recent audit report have been implemented. The governing body is effective in supporting the work of the school. Governors have a good understanding of the strengths and weaknesses and are very conscious of the need for prudence in the face of falling numbers. Relationships are warm and trusting, but this does not inhibit the governing body from taking a critical and challenging approach to school developments. Governors also review their own performance and are aware of the need to develop a longer-term strategic plan, explicitly linking the use of resources to the achievements of the school's goals. All statutory duties are fulfilled. The school gives good value for money.

Financial information

Financial information for the year April 2004 to March 2005

Income and expenditure (£)		Balances (£)	
Total income	863,190	Balance from previous year	9,192
Total expenditure	867,300	Balance carried forward to the next	5,082
Expenditure per pupil	2,389		

29. There are no obvious barriers to further improvement.

PART C: THE QUALITY OF EDUCATION SUBJECTS

SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGE 2

ENGLISH

Provision in English is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils, including those with special educational needs, achieve well throughout the school.
- Standards in writing are below those expected.
- Pupils develop very positive attitudes to learning because of the interesting and stimulating work.
- The school uses assessment findings effectively to give pupils a clear understanding of how to improve.
- Very good subject leadership provides a lively curriculum.
- There is not enough use of information and communication technology to support learning in lessons.

Commentary

30. Pupils of all abilities achieve well across the school. This represents considerable success because there has been a decline in standards on entry since the last inspection. Standards meet those expected for most 11 year old pupils. This reflects the findings of the last inspection. The school is placing a strong focus on increasing pupils' understanding of the use of English in other subjects. This is a recent innovation and is already proving successful in Year 6. The school makes good provision for pupils with special educational needs. They receive good quality support and make good progress towards the targets on their individual education plans.
31. Not enough pupils achieve the higher levels expected by Year 6. This has a negative effect on standards and achievement. The school is aware of this. It is in the process of providing systematically planned opportunities to move more able pupils forward. This is already having a positive effect on standards in reading. Discussions with the co-ordinator show that plans include strengthening the use of English across and between subjects. This aims to increase pupils' understanding of the importance of using their writing skills in subjects other than English.
32. Pupils throughout the school listen and respond very well in lessons. They have very positive attitudes to work and learning. This is because teachers make the work interesting and relevant to pupils' needs. Teachers make effective use of drama to increase pupils' speaking skills and encourage them to speak clearly. This ensures that, by Year 6, most pupils reach the expected standards in speaking to an audience and using debating skills. All teachers use questions well to explore pupils' understanding and to move their learning forward. They target different abilities skilfully and ensure that all pupils join in class discussions. This includes all abilities and ensures high levels of motivation to learn. Pupils' enjoyment is clear in their attitudes to reading and their interest in books. They are enthusiastic when they talk about books and enjoy using the school library. Pupils clearly take much pride in presenting their work carefully. Their handwriting is neat and easy to read. All adults model good handwriting well. This makes a strong impact on pupils' progress and achievement.
33. Teaching and learning throughout the school are good, overall. This makes a positive contribution to pupils' achievement and attitudes. Teachers are consistent in their use of assessment to increase pupils' understanding of their achievement. This is evident in the use of marking to help pupils realise what they need to do to improve their work. Another contributory factor is the thoughtful self-evaluation pupils undertake. This enables them to work out for themselves where improvement is needed. It makes a very positive contribution

to their spiritual development by giving them time to reflect on their achievements. Teachers understand the subject well and use this to good effect in lessons. They encourage pupils to learn and ensure that they behave well. The very good teamwork between teachers and teaching assistants enables all pupils to receive equally good support in their learning.

34. Very good leadership gives clear guidance to teachers and support assistants. The co-ordinator has a very clear understanding of the strengths and areas of need in English throughout the school. She is committed to raising standards and increasing pupils' interest in English. For example, lively books and writing tasks ensure that the curriculum is interesting and relevant to pupils' needs. Her systematic and thorough tracking systems give a clear picture of the achievement and progress of individual pupils across the school. These are used effectively to make pupils aware of what they need to do to improve their learning.
35. There is inconsistent use of information and communication technology in English. This limits pupils' understanding of the usefulness of computers in other subjects.
36. Improvement since the last inspection is good.

Language and literacy across the curriculum

37. Pupils use their literacy skills satisfactorily in other subjects. There is some good promotion of speaking, listening and writing in mathematics, science and history. This, however, is not consistent across the school. There is a clear focus on developing pupils' technical vocabulary in subjects such as mathematics. This helps pupils understand the need to use language precisely. Pupils use books well to research information across a range of subjects.

MATHEMATICS

Provision in mathematics is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils in Year 6 attain standards in line with the national average and achieve well.
- The quality of teaching and learning is good.
- Mathematics is very well led with a focus on raising standards.
- Further development of the planned opportunities for pupils to use and apply their mathematical skills is needed.

Commentary

38. Standards in mathematics are rising as shown in the school achieving the Basic Skills Quality Mark in mathematics this year. In the 2004 national tests and tasks for Year 6 pupils, results were above average in mathematics and when these results are compared with schools in similar contexts, they are well above average. Inspection evidence indicates that, for pupils in the current Year 6, standards are average in mathematics, a dip when compared to last year's results. This serves to highlight the differences in ability of successive cohorts of pupils and it has to be noted that an above average percentage of pupils of this year's group is identified as having special educational needs. Naturally, this impacts negatively on standards. Pupils start the school in Year 3 with skills which are generally well below average. When these factors are taken into account all pupils, including those with special educational needs, achieve well.
39. Teaching and learning are consistently good. Pupils are taught in groups of like ability and this makes it easier for teachers to plan lessons with clear learning objectives focused on pupils' individual needs. Probing questioning is used well to make pupils think and teachers direct them well so they understand what is to be done. The good use of modelling shows them how to do it. Teaching assistants are well briefed and often effectively lead groups on

specific tasks, particularly those with those pupils who have special educational needs. Pupils are given good opportunities to consolidate and reinforce their learning. The school puts down its improvement in standards to identifying and focusing on key areas such as mental mathematics and problem solving. Although there were some good examples of problem solving seen, it is too often limited to word problems. The school recognises that there is a need to build on this and ensure that teachers plan to cover all types of problem solving and investigative mathematics.

40. Co-ordination is very good. By regularly monitoring lessons, checking teachers' planning and pupils' work the subject leader has a good understanding of the strengths and areas for further development. In addition to raising the profile of using and applying mathematics, her priorities also include:
- making greater use of information and communication technology
 - developing a coherent system to assess in lessons what pupils have understood.

Mathematics across the curriculum

41. Mathematics is used satisfactorily across the curriculum. For example, in science, plotting detailed graphs to show how their heart rate quickens and slows during and after exercise and accurate measurements on their scale plans of the school hall in preparation for their concert.

SCIENCE

Provision in science is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils achieve very well and reach above average standards by Year 6.
- Teachers plan a wide range of practical activities.
- The subject is very well led and managed.

Commentary

42. Pupils achieve very well throughout the school. This is good improvement since the last inspection when progress was satisfactory. They achieve very well because of
- the good quality teaching which results in pupils learning successfully
 - the importance that teachers place on pupils learning and using correct scientific vocabulary
 - the ingenious ways in which teachers plan for pupils to record their work which focuses on the scientific concept without it becoming a writing lesson.

As a result, they reach above average standards by Year 6. Results in national tests have risen steadily over the past four years. It is likely that this year's results, which are as yet unvalidated, will be above the national average and well above average when compared with similar schools.

43. Teachers plan good activities, which allow pupils to investigate and learn through practical experiences. Pupils learn how to set up experiments and how to hypothesise and predict outcomes, before carrying out their investigations. Pupils take an active part in lessons. For example, Year 4 pupils dressed up as aliens, each having different features, to demonstrate how to use branching keys when identifying plants or animals. The practical nature of this role play intrigued the pupils and greatly enhanced their learning. How well they achieved was ably demonstrated at the end of the lesson when pupils used branching keys to identify different types of biscuits. There was an increased pace to the lesson because, once the biscuits were sorted correctly, the pupils could eat them! This meant that learning was good and pupils achieved well.
44. The subject is very well led and managed. The co-ordinators have very good subject knowledge and support and guide their colleagues very effectively. They make a very

successful team and have a clear vision for the future of the subject. They have worked hard to raise standards and to capture pupils' enthusiasm for the subject, by encouraging teachers to plan practical activities. This enables pupils to be actively involved in their learning.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

45. Insufficient direct teaching of information and communication technology skills was seen to make overall judgements about provision or the quality of teaching and learning, throughout the school. However, from talking to pupils, their teachers and looking at pupils' work it is clear that by the end of Year 6, they attain standards broadly in line with those expected nationally and achieve well. Pupils in Year 3 show good word processing skills and confidently change the font, colour and size to ensure that their work is presented in an eye-catching way. In Year 4 they use an art package and draw Tudor houses using geometrical shapes. By the end of Year 6, pupils produce multimedia presentations about their school to help pupils transferring from the infant school to settle in. They add photographs, text and sound clips. All pupils clearly enjoy working with computers and are not put off when things go wrong.
46. The quality of the accommodation and resources has improved since the last inspection and the ratio of computers to pupils is about the same as in most schools. Computers are linked to the Internet and mainly situated in the computer suite and the adjacent library. The school's access to the Internet has been disrupted for a significant time, owing to a computer virus infecting the Local Education Authority network. This has limited opportunities for pupils to research information on line and send e-mails.
47. The scheme of work is based on national guidance, which ensures that the full programmes of study are taught. However, pupils are not yet given sufficient opportunities to use control and spreadsheets. Pupils are assessed at the end of each unit of work and in due course this should be linked to National Curriculum levels of attainment to give a true picture of pupils' achievements against national criteria. The co-ordinator works hard, although his monitoring role is quite limited. He is currently developing a useful portfolio of exemplars of pupils' work.

Information and communication technology across the curriculum

48. This is identified as an area for development, although there are some encouraging examples of information and communication technology making useful contributions in other subjects. For example, in history, Year 3 pupils use CD-ROMs to research information about the Ancient Egyptians and Year 6 pupils use a word processor to write about the Victorians.

HUMANITIES

49. Too few lessons were observed to form overall judgements about standards or teaching in **geography** and **history**. However, from sampling pupils' work in books and around school, the indications are that pupils' achievement is at least satisfactory. Schemes of work, based on national guidelines, but tailored to the school's needs, are in place. This ensures that pupils' knowledge, skills and understanding are built on steadily, as they move through the school. Visitors to school, such as a visiting 'Professor of Egyptology', and educational visits, such as to the Black Country Museum or a local Tudor Manor House, successfully enhance the history curriculum. Special days such as a Victorian school day, with staff and pupils role playing throughout the day, stimulate interest and enthusiasm for the subject. Similarly in geography, carefully thought out trips to the Stiperstones, the River Dee and to Chester add to pupils' experience and understanding. The school is planning to further the links between the two subjects and with other subjects such as English, ICT and art and design. The subject co-ordinators, who are very enthusiastic, have identified areas for improvement, for example assessment, and are keen to raise the status of both subjects.

Religious education

Provision in religious education (RE) is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils achieve well.
- RE successfully enhances learning in other subjects.
- The curriculum, which is undergoing change, is well led.

Commentary

50. Pupils throughout the school achieve well and reach standards which are in line with the expectations of the locally agreed syllabus. Standards have been maintained since the last inspection. Pupils achieve well because they are
- well taught, which enables them to learn effectively
 - given good opportunities to discuss their views and opinions, which builds up their respect for other people's beliefs
 - able to make links between subjects, so that they learn about life in a 'joined up way'.
51. Religious education is very well linked to personal, social and health education and citizenship (PSHCE). When working on topics, such as 'what makes an enemy' or reflecting on and expressing 'expectations from our school, our teachers and our friends', pupils use the knowledge gained in RE to develop their personal understanding of how to live their lives and how to become good citizens. The reflective nature of many lessons and the opportunities which teachers give pupils to think about and discuss a wide range of issues contributes very successfully to pupils' spiritual development.
52. Currently the curriculum is undergoing change. The school follows the new locally agreed syllabus, which the co-ordinator has tailored to the needs of the school. She is now reviewing how effective the new scheme of work is, as it comes to the end of the first cycle. She has a clear vision for the future of the subject and has successfully guided colleagues through the recent changes.

CREATIVE, AESTHETIC, PRACTICAL AND PHYSICAL SUBJECTS

53. It was not possible to see **art and design** taught during the inspection, therefore no judgements on standards or provision can be made. The displays in classrooms and corridors add colour to the school environment and show examples of the range of activities offered to the pupils.
54. There were too few opportunities to see **design and technology** taught during the inspection to make overall judgements about provision and standards. However, in a lesson in Year 4, the quality of teaching and learning was good and pupils achieved well. As part of the design process pupils are given good opportunities to look at different containers such as purses, wallets and pencil cases to evaluate the materials, see how they are made and if they are fit for the purpose.
55. Too few opportunities for inspectors to observe **music** lessons mean that judgements cannot be made about standards, teaching and learning. However, it is evident from listening to pupils singing in assemblies and observing the use of music in other areas, that music plays an important part in the life of the school. The school is without a music leader at the moment, but has purchased the services of a peripatetic music specialist. This means that extra activities such as the choir, school orchestra and recorder groups can continue to flourish. Analysis of documentation shows that the school delivers a good curriculum and pupils are offered extra opportunities to learn to play a wide range of musical instruments and

to co-operate in the production of concerts and other musical performances. The school has adopted a new published scheme to support the teaching of music. The implementation of this scheme is at an early stage and is under constant review.

56. No **physical education** lessons were observed during the week of the inspection so it is not possible to make a judgement on provision or standards, except in swimming. Most pupils are able to swim 25 metres, unaided, by the time they leave the school. It is evident from teachers' planning, however, and from the number of after school activities the school provides, that the subject continues to play an important part in the life of the school. The subject will have two new co-ordinators in September, who have very good subject knowledge, and they are very keen to further the status of the subject. All National Curriculum requirements are met. The school provides a very good range of out of school activities including many major sports, together with coaching in cricket, soccer, golf, rugby and hockey, to enable pupils to pursue their interests and develop their talents. Swimming lessons are provided for pupils in all year groups at the local pool.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP

57. The good emphasis placed upon **personal, social, health and citizenship education** enhances pupils' learning and their attitudes to school considerably. Very good links are made with other subjects, especially science and religious education. Pupils of all ages have very good opportunities to develop their roles as informed citizens through a wide range of initiatives. Staff encourage pupils to talk about issues personal to them in PSHCE sessions. Relationships in school are very good and this enables pupils to have informal discussions about personal problems with staff. All pupils are valued. This is because the school is fully inclusive and believes strongly that each member of its community has something special to offer.
58. PSHCE gives good support to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Pupils contribute to the life of the class and school. Older pupils can be seen taking care of younger pupils in and around school. This sense of responsibility is enhanced by the work of the school council. Pupils are encouraged to respect the culture of others and have respect for adults and for each other. As part of the citizenship programme, pupils fund-raise for specific events. Pupils understand the difference between right and wrong. The whole PSHCE programme helps pupils develop their very good attitudes to school and a responsible way in which to behave in and around school.

PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

<i>Inspection judgement</i>	<i>Grade</i>
The overall effectiveness of the school	3
How inclusive the school is	2
How the school's effectiveness has changed since its last inspection	3
Value for money provided by the school	3
Overall standards achieved	4
Pupils' achievement	3
Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities	2
Attendance	4
Attitudes	2
Behaviour, including the extent of exclusions	3
Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2
The quality of education provided by the school	3
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	3
Support, advice and guidance for pupils	2
How well the school seeks and acts on pupils' views	2
The effectiveness of the school's links with parents	2
The quality of the school's links with the community	2
The school's links with other schools and colleges	2
The leadership and management of the school	2
The governance of the school	3
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).