

INSPECTION REPORT

**ST ALPHEGE CHURCH OF ENGLAND JUNIOR
SCHOOL**

Solihull

LEA area: Solihull

Unique reference number: 104092

Headteacher: Mr B Curran

Lead inspector: Mr A Clark

Dates of inspection: 12–14 January 2004

Inspection number: 260725

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
School category:	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils:	7–11
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
Number on roll;	280
School address:	Widney Manor Road Solihull West Midlands
Postcode:	B91 3JG
Telephone number:	0121 7042714
Fax number:	0121 7040522
Appropriate authority:	Local Education Authority
Name of chair of governors:	Mr R Herd
Date of previous inspection:	12 October 1998

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

This is a larger than average junior school in Solihull. There are 280 boys and girls on roll aged between seven and 11. Less than one per cent of pupils are eligible for a free school meal, which is well below average. The majority of pupils are from white British backgrounds. Approximately five per cent of pupils are of ethnic minority heritage including Indian and African. The percentage of pupils for whom the first language is not English is higher than in most schools at five per cent. There are no pupils at an early stage of acquiring English. The percentage of pupils with special educational needs, 15.4 per cent, is broadly average, as is the percentage of pupils with a Statement of Special Educational Needs, at one per cent. The pupils' needs include specific and moderate learning difficulties, social and emotional difficulties and autism. The majority of families are from high social class backgrounds and attainment on entry to the school is well above average. The percentage of pupils who do not start their education at the school at the normal point of entry in Year 3 is about average.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
21596	Andrew Clark	Lead inspector	Science Information and communication technology English as an additional language
32677	Brian Horley	Lay inspector	
27618	Paula Bradley	Team inspector	Mathematics History Geography Music Special educational needs
19935	Graham Rowlands	Team inspector	English Art and design Design and technology Physical education

The inspection contractor was:

Cambridge Education Associates Limited
Demeter House
Station Road
Cambridge
CB1 2RS

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

OVERALL EVALUATION

A highly effective school giving very good value for money. Standards are well above average and pupils achieve very well. The quality of education is very good and pupils are well taught in a strong Christian ethos.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses:

- The headteacher's enthusiasm and clear vision is well matched by the support and very good management of staff and governors.
- Pupils achieve very high standards as a result of high expectations, good teaching and a very good curriculum.
- The Christian ethos has a positive effect on the work of the school.
- There are excellent opportunities to enrich pupils' learning through extra-curricular activities, particularly sport and music.
- There is very good provision for personal development and pupils have very good attitudes.

There has been good improvement since the last inspection. Standards are very high and achievement in information and communication technology (ICT) is now good. Assessment procedures for English are very well used. There are now good opportunities for independent learning and work is matched well to the needs of all abilities.

STANDARDS ACHIEVED

Results in National Curriculum tests at the end of Year 6, compared with:	all schools			similar schools
	2001	2002	2003	2003
English	A*	A	A*	A*
mathematics	A*	A*	A*	A
science	A*	A	A*	A

*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 2.*

Pupils of all abilities achieve very well and standards are very high. The A* shows that the school's results are in the top five per cent in the country. A very high proportion of pupils attain high levels in national tests in all three subjects. Pupils with special educational needs achieve very well. There are very good standards in physical education and good standards in other subjects.

Pupils' personal qualities, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, are very good. The pupils are very enthusiastic and eager and they behave well; attendance and punctuality are very good. The caring, Christian ethos provides a strong framework for personal development.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION

The quality of education is very good.

Teaching and learning are good. Almost half the teaching seen was very good. Teaching in English and science is very good. Teachers expect pupils to work very hard and they rise to the

challenge. Towards the end of the day, some lessons lack pace and a small group of pupils fuss and do not work hard enough. Very good use is made of assessment to challenge pupils. Generally high standards of marking are not consistent. Occasionally, pupils are not clear about what they can do to improve their work.

The curriculum is very good. Accommodation and resources for learning are good. An excellent range of clubs and sporting and musical activities motivate pupils and enrich their lives. There is a very good partnership with parents and links with the local parish community provide many opportunities for enrichment and staff professional development.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Leadership and management are very good. The headteacher takes a strong lead in striving for higher standards. Subject co-ordinators provide very good leadership. The governing body very effectively challenges and supports school improvement. The school fulfils its statutory requirements.

PARENTS' AND PUPILS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

The parents have very positive views of the school. They are particularly impressed by the open nature of the school and the high expectations. The pupils are very pleased with their involvement in the life of the school through the School Council and the many opportunities for taking responsibility.

IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

The school has no significant weaknesses. The following minor issues should be considered for improvement.

- Maintaining pupils' motivation in lessons towards the end of the day.
- Giving pupils more information on how they can improve their work.

PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS

STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

Standards achieved in areas of learning, subjects and courses

Standards in national tests at the end of Year 6 – average point scores in 2003

Standards in:	School results	National results
English	31.3 (29.6)	26.8 (27.0)
Mathematics	30.1 (30.7)	26.8 (26.7)
Science	31.6 (30.8)	28.6 (28.3)

There were 72 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year

Achievement is very good. Standards achieved by Year 6 are well above average.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Results of national tests for English, mathematics and science are in the top five per cent in the country. The school addresses any variations in results quickly.
- Investigative skills in science are very good.
- Pupils write well for different purposes.
- Attainment in mathematics is very good in all aspects of the subject.
- Achievement of pupils with SEN in the core subjects is very good.

Commentary

1. Pupils achieve very well and progress is very good throughout the school. This is a significant improvement from the last inspection as progress was satisfactory and inconsistent. The results of national tests in English, mathematics and science are consistently well above the national average. They are also well above average for similar schools. The achievement of pupils over time is well above average. They enter the school with very good attainment in reading, writing and mathematics and this provides a good springboard for future learning. The school builds on this through good, and often very good, teaching, a very well planned curriculum and strong support from parents. The school uses assessment procedures very well to track pupils' attainment and set targets for improvement. This ensures that pupils of differing ability make the progress expected of them. The school is very quick to react to any variation in attainment. For example, in 2001, English results were not as high as expected. A full review, co-ordinated by the headteacher and subject leader, identified possible weaknesses in planning and addressed the problem. The governing body also provides very good support by close monitoring and asking robust and challenging questions of the subject co-ordinators.
2. A very high proportion of pupils attain high levels in national tests and this was reflected in the work seen. For example, in Year 6, many pupils have a very good understanding in science of how to conduct their own experiments to solve problems on materials. In mathematics, pupils use mathematical theorems for finding area and perimeter with confidence. A high proportion of pupils read with fluency and have a thorough understanding of plot and characterisation. They have a very good understanding of how to use language for different purposes in their written work producing non-fiction and fiction of a good standard.

3. Pupils with special educational needs achieve very well. Many pupils attain the expected levels for their age in the national tests. The reason for this is the carefully structured Individual Education Plans, which guide work in the classroom and in withdrawal work and the quality of teaching matched well to their needs.
4. There is no significant difference between the attainment of boys and girls. The pupils with English as an additional language, none of whom are at an early stage of English acquisition, make similar progress to their peers. The achievement of the increasing percentage of pupils from an ethnic minority heritage is carefully tracked and this helps staff to ensure that they achieve similar standards to other pupils.
5. Standards and progress in ICT have improved well since the last inspection and are now good. This is the result of improved resources, staff training and a thoroughly planned scheme and assessment process. Standards in art and design, design and technology, music and physical education are largely above average. Attainment in geography is in line with expected levels. There was insufficient evidence to evaluate history standards reliably.

Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities

Pupils' attitudes are very good and their behaviour is good. Attendance and punctuality are very good. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is very good, founded in the school's strong Christian ethos.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Attendance and punctuality are very good, with pupils keen to come to school.
- When given responsibility pupils show confidence and enthusiasm.
- Very good pastoral care leads to positive relationships throughout the school.
- Provision for personal development is very good and contributes well to the learning process.
- A small minority of pupils do not apply themselves to their work well enough when the teaching lacks challenge, especially at the end of the day.

Commentary

6. Attendance and punctuality are both very good, with pupils eager to come to school and most parents keen to ensure that they arrive in good time. The method of recording attendance and punctuality is very good and the school has clear procedures to deal with any lapses.
7. Provision for pupils' spiritual, moral and cultural development is very good. The Christian background of the school permeates all aspects of its activities, which is appreciated by parents of all faiths. Acts of worship are clearly separated from assemblies and their significance recognised by pupils. No pupils are withdrawn from collective worship. Before lunch grace is said by a teacher and is observed quietly by the pupils. Respect for the feelings and different cultures of its pupils is well promoted through studies in history, religious education and personal, social and health education.
8. Behaviour around the school and in classes is good. Occasional instances of inappropriate behaviour were seen in classes but these were towards the end of the school day. There is a small but steadily increasing number of pupils from ethnic minorities but there were no recorded instances of racism. At the parents' meeting two ethnic minority parents commented on the positive atmosphere of the school. Pupils are polite and courteous towards each other

and adults. A small number of parents were concerned about control of behaviour at lunch-time but there was no evidence of any cause for concern during the inspection.

9. Pupils show a keen interest in all aspects of school life. There is a broad range of extra-curricular activities, particularly in music and sport where the school has had significant success. There is a well understood system of rewards culminating in the awards assembly, which takes place every two weeks. Pupils from all classes receive certificates for a wide variety of good work and behaviour. These are targeted at all levels of ability and valued by all pupils. New monitors were bursting with pride as they were appointed at the assembly.

Attendance in the latest complete reporting year (%)

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
School data	3.0	School data	0.0
National data	5.4	National data	0.4

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

Exclusions

There have been no exclusions in the last year.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

The quality of education is very good.

Teaching and learning

The quality of teaching and learning is good. The quality and use of assessment is very good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- There are high expectations and positive ethos for learning.
- There is very good use of assessment.
- The pupils work hard and productively. Pupils work well independently and collaboratively.
- Teachers subject knowledge is very good, particularly in the core subjects
- The effective use of marking to set targets and improve the pupils’ knowledge of their own learning is inconsistent.
- The teaching styles in a few lessons do not motivate pupils sufficiently, particularly at the end of the day.

Commentary

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 32 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
0	14 (44%)	13(41%)	4(13%)	1(3%)	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.

10. The quality of teaching and learning was very good in a high proportion of the lessons observed. The one unsatisfactory lesson was the work of a cover teacher taking a class she had not worked with often. The clear strength is that teachers have worked very closely together to develop and implement a teaching and learning policy which has a direct and positive impact. The quality of teaching has improved well.
11. The majority of lessons are conducted at a brisk pace that motivates pupils and drives learning forward. It is very noticeable, therefore, the odd occasion when lessons do not have the same sense of urgency because the teacher talks for too long a period or does not have sufficient subject knowledge to respond to the questions of high achievers. In most lessons teachers demonstrate a good subject knowledge and challenge very intelligent pupils. For example, in a science lesson on reversible and irreversible change the teacher and a very able pupil engaged in an in depth discussion on molecular structure where the pupil was drawing from earlier work and her own learning. The well-structured lesson enabled the pupil to work at a level commensurate with her ability. In English, teachers' very good subject knowledge means that ideas are often exciting and the pupils' written work is engaging.
12. Pupils are very committed to their work. They respect their teachers and aim to please. Teachers give them clear guidance on how to present and organise their work. They also give them scope to work independently and show initiative, as, for example, in finding ways to organise division sums and express the quotient as a fraction or decimals in a Year 6 mathematics lesson.
13. There are some very good examples of marking. In science in Year 6 the teacher constantly asks the pupils how they could improve or develop their investigations. In physical education in Year 5, the teacher involves the pupils in a close scrutiny of each other's work and they respond with very good suggestions for developing and improving their work. The progress made during the lesson was very good as a result. Sometimes, although the pupils have a target to work towards, they are not very clear what it is or how it relates to their current work. However, in some lessons this is done well. In ICT, for example, the teacher encourages the pupils to reflect on what they have learned that lesson and how it fits in with their own targets and assessment. This is a feature the school is focusing on.
14. The work is matched well to the needs of all abilities because teachers make full use of a wide range of available data. Pupils with special educational needs receive good support because teaching assistants are well informed and use initiative. There has been a good improvement to the provision for special educational needs in the classroom and the strengths of the teaching in specialist groups has been maintained.

The curriculum

The curriculum is very good. There are excellent opportunities for enrichment and the school has good accommodation and resources. The curriculum fully meets all statutory requirements.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- There is very good organisation of the curriculum for literacy and numeracy.
- There are very good opportunities for participation in extra-curricular music and sport.
- The provision for pupils with special educational needs is good.

Commentary

15. The provision for personal, social and health education is very good because the co-ordinator consulted widely before creating the policy, and she located excellent resources which enable teachers to have confidence to teach the subject well. All policies reflect the Christian values of the school and the development of the sex and relationships policy has been exemplary.
16. The school has a systematic and inclusive approach to promoting good relationships, tolerance and high academic standards within a strong Christian ethos. It is fully inclusive and there is no sign of discrimination or lack of achievement in any group. The curriculum promotes an understanding of the multicultural nature of modern Britain well.
17. The provision for pupils with special educational needs has improved since the last inspection and is now good. The classteacher, special needs co-ordinator, support teacher and parents are all involved in a termly meeting to discuss progress and set new targets with the pupil. Individual Education Plans are used by teachers in English, maths and science to make sure work is suitable, and that pupils receive appropriate support. Therefore they achieve well. There is still room for further development in some subjects such as geography.
18. The school has invested heavily in training for staff working with pupils with a wide range of special needs. The provision of extra support is well managed, and teachers and teaching assistants know how to help pupils because they have received appropriate training.
19. Every member of staff leads an extra-curricular club. These activities are very well attended. Parents and other adult volunteers make a regular contribution to this provision. A variety of educational and residential visits add to pupils' knowledge and understanding as well as developing their social skills and independence. The school seeks every opportunity to enrich the curriculum, and French is taught in Year 6.
20. The small classrooms and sometimes large classes sizes mean that teachers have to consider organisation of some activities carefully. They do this well, but in practical and active lessons such as science and music this places some inhibitions on pupils' independence.

Care, guidance and support

The care, guidance and support for pupils are very good. Procedures for child protection and health and safety are very good. Pupils' views are sought and valued. There are very good opportunities for them to participate in the life and work of the school.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils feel secure and well cared for in school. They have good relationships with the staff.
- There are very good arrangements for induction and transfer.
- The introduction of a School Council has built on the success of form councils.
- There is very good provision of support, advice and guidance based on the school's Christian ethos.

Commentary

21. There are very good procedures for child protection and health and safety. All teaching and non-teaching staff receive regular training and this is updated appropriately. The headteacher takes a strong lead.

22. The local education authority senior health and safety officer regularly undertakes risk assessments. Pupils are well cared for by the staff. Relationships between pupils and staff are very good. A recent addition has been the nomination of a designated supervisor as “Lunch-time listener”, whom pupils can approach with any issue concerning them. Monitoring procedures for the small but increasing number of pupils from ethnic minorities are very comprehensive and complement the effective tracking of all pupils’ achievement.
23. The school supports its pupils very well. It creates a caring, Christian environment that encourages them to do their best. The school has had form councils for some time but this year has introduced a School Council. The views of all year groups are given due respect and formal procedures are followed. The pupils are taught to appreciate the responsibilities they are given. Members of staff such as the site manager attend to hear comments directly and answer pupils’ questions.

Partnership with parents, other schools and the community

The partnership between the school and parents is very good. There is good involvement with the wider community. The relationship with other schools is very good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The parents hold the school in high regard and the parent-school partnership is very strong.
- Parents receive high quality information about school activities and appreciate the regular newsletters about the curriculum.
- There are very strong links with St Alphege church.
- Links with other schools are very good and these aid the transfer process.

Commentary

24. The partnership between the school and parents is very good. Parents value the academic standards and the Christian ethos that is evident in all aspects of the school. Communication to parents is of a very high standard covering both news of school activities and information on the curriculum. Each term parents receive a Curriculum Newsletter detailing the areas of work to be undertaken. Parents are also invited to attend specific curriculum evenings to enable them to understand and help with the work done by their children. Parents appreciate the easy access to the headteacher and staff, in particular the presence of the headteacher at the school gate every morning and evening. The “Friends of St Alphege Schools” is very active and raised substantial funds for both the junior and infants schools.
25. The links with St Alphege church and the infant school are very strong and there is a clear sense of community with the church. This relationship enhances the school’s work to develop the pupils’ attitudes, values and other personal qualities. A number of pupils are choristers at the church and there has been particular success in encouraging boys to join the church choir. Links with the broader community are good and school premises are used for football and aerobics classes by local groups.
26. The school has very strong links with other local schools and benefits from the exchange of best practice. Links with St Alphege Infant School are extremely strong, sharing both the governing body and the Friends of St Alphege Schools. Local secondary schools visit to ensure a smooth transition; they also provide master classes for pupils with particular aptitudes such as computer skills.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Leadership and management of the school are very good. The headteacher provides very good leadership and is ably supported by his deputy. Management by the headteacher and staff with responsibilities is very good. The governance of the school is very good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The headteacher has built an effective team of teachers and governors, which is raising standards in the curriculum.
- The headteacher is very successful in welcoming pupils of all abilities and backgrounds into a school where the Christian ethos underpins all aspects of school life.
- The governors provide a high level of support and challenge, which has been effective in furthering the school's high aspirations for success.
- School self-evaluation is very well established and has ensured money is appropriately allocated and spent.

Commentary

27. The headteacher is a very good leader. All staff share his clear vision and high aspirations for success and are united in their desire for high standards in the school. The headteacher has developed a very strong team by fully involving the staff in all major decisions and constantly challenging and motivating them. They are inspired by him and he is inspired by their enthusiasm, dedication and innovation. Staff feel valued and fully committed to the very strong Christian ethos and the drive for school improvement. Pupils are at the centre in the desire for raising standards. Pupils feel well supported and enjoy their learning and being at the school. Parents are proud of the school and have a clear picture of the school's aims and values.

28. Management is very good. The very efficient school procedures allow for the smooth running of the school. The school has good systems for gathering information about the progress of the pupils and the quality of teaching. The effective analysis of data enables the school to identify the strengths and weaknesses in the school. Initiatives are in place to address them, which will help raise standards.
29. Subject leaders acquire a good understanding of how well pupils are achieving through their effective monitoring of teaching and learning, and through the school's analysis of test results. This allows subject co-ordinators to identify areas for improvement; for example in English, the expectancy for good handwriting and presentation was not consistently applied. As a result, the issue is being addressed. The school manages the care and support of its staff very well. The quality of arrangements for their performance management is very good. Several newly appointed staff and the newly appointed NQTs are well supported and integrated into the school. They are offered opportunities to improve their own qualifications and expertise through carefully selected in-service training. The school takes pride in the fact that a number of former staff have moved into senior posts in other schools. The school deploys its well-trained support staff very effectively. Their contributions are recognised by the school as a significant contribution in enhancing the quality of teachers' work. The school provision for those pupils with special needs is very well organised. Pupils are identified at the infant school, which allows the right provision to be offered and their progress meticulously tracked.
30. The governing body gives very good support to the school. They have very good systems for critically examining the record of achievement and proposals for the development of the school. They have considerable interest and contact with the school and are extremely knowledgeable of the school, which enables them to make the right decisions to ensure its continued success. For example, in English, the school's new scheme of work was the result of close collaboration between the subject co-ordinator and the designated curriculum governor, which has been effective in raising standards in English in the school.

Financial information for the year April 2002 to March 2003

Income and expenditure (£)		Balances (£)	
Total income	578309	Balance from previous year	46082
Total expenditure	595826	Balance carried forward to the next	37874
Expenditure per pupil	2127		

31. The school's finance committee receives regular reports about the school's financial position and works closely with the headteacher and chair of governors. They ensure that the finances are effectively spent. Financial planning is very good.
32. Governors and staff are closely involved in the preparation of the school's improvement plans with the headteacher. As a result, priorities are realistic and have achievable targets that can be met. For example, the decision to install a computer suite has significantly improved provision, and standards in ICT are rising across the school.
33. The school makes good arrangements for the control, monitoring and review of the school budget. The budget is set in accordance with statutory requirements, and information about it is detailed enough to ensure governors can make responsible decisions about its administration. The school makes very good arrangements for the day-to-day administration of its finances.

PART C: THE QUALITY OF EDUCATION IN SUBJECTS

SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGE 2

ENGLISH AND MODERN FOREIGN LANGUAGE

Only one lesson was observed in French. It is therefore not possible to give an overall judgement on provision. Evidence is drawn from discussion with the pupils and staff, a review of documents and the lesson observed.

ENGLISH

Provision for English is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards are well above average at the end of Year 6.
- Assessment of pupils' work is very detailed, but pupils do not always use their writing target to improve their work.
- The school library is not used effectively as a means of developing pupils' research skills.

Commentary

34. Standards in reading and writing are well above the national expectation at the end of Year 6 and have improved since the last inspection. Pupils are achieving well and make very good progress in relation to their capabilities. This is in the main because pupils enjoy literacy and work hard. Pupils in Year 6 are on course to attain expected standards, with a high proportion of more-able pupils already working above expected levels. This is because the school identifies their levels of competency at an early age and is challenging them well.
35. Standards in reading and writing are well above average. Pupils arrive in the school with the reading habit. As a result, pupils enjoy learning to read. They are heard to read regularly at home and at school, and this consistent monitoring and encouragement helps raise the profile of reading in the school and the individuals' self-confidence. Although pupils are offered many and varied good opportunities to read from a good size of fiction books, they do not read enough non-fiction books to enhance the class projects they are undertaking. The school plans to make greater use of the well-stocked school library to meet this shortcoming.
36. Pupils make very good progress in writing and standards are well above average by the end of Year 6. Pupils are confident to express opinions logically. They correctly demarcate sentences and develop the ability to write persuasively from differing points of view as they get older. Pupils are encouraged to use adjectives in their writing, which helps to bring their writing alive. There is a good procedure for pupils to spell an unknown word and pupils can confidently use a dictionary. Pupils are expected to learn spellings of appropriate difficulty through homework, and this is well supported by parents.
37. Pupils' speaking and listening skills are good and standards are well above those nationally expected by the end of Year 6. Pupils listen carefully to the teacher and show respect to the views of others when working in small groups or in pairs. They are eager to answer and ask questions. Teachers offer them many speaking opportunities, which help to develop their ability to express an opinion and to show a depth of understanding in what they have learned.

38. Teaching and learning in English are good. Teachers have good subject knowledge and are confident enough to adapt the literacy strategy in order to meet a range of abilities in each class. Teachers have high expectations for the achievement of their pupils, and match well the tasks they set to their learning needs. Once tasks are set, teacher and teacher helpers monitor pupils' progress well, so that pupils encountering difficulty do not wait long for assistance. Teaching assistants are well deployed and are effective and professional in their work. They offer good support to pupils with special educational needs and are eager to ensure they have access to every learning activity. The very good relationships that teaching and non-teaching staff establish with the pupils make a significant impact on the quality of work they produce. The teaching staff work to a good system for checking the daily progress of pupils and work is often, although not consistently, marked carefully, including comments to pupils on what they need to do to improve. In some classes, the half-termly targets are not fully understood or used by the pupils on what they have to do to achieve the target.
39. The subject is very well led and managed by the experienced co-ordinator. There has been a good improvement since the last inspection. Careful audits of provision have led to improved guidance to parents, detailed assessment procedures, improved planning and new resources. The school thoroughly analyses test results and monitors the quality of pupils' work, and it uses the information to ensure consistently high quality teaching and learning. The majority of pupils by Year 6 write in a fluent, legible handwriting style, but the school is currently reviewing presentation to remove any inconsistencies.

Language and literacy across the curriculum

40. Literacy is well used in other subjects, particularly in speaking and listening in science, art and design and ICT. It is used effectively to enhance pupils' skills and to provide opportunities to present their work to the class, or to discuss aspects of their work with adults. There are good examples of pupils writing poems of good quality, based on impressions of the paintings of famous artists, and writing good quality comparisons of different artists' work. Pupils use the computer confidently to express their ideas and are becoming skilful in the development of word-processing skills at the expected level. The well-stocked library is well used to extend pupils' reading of fiction books but has limited use for pupils to develop research skills.

FRENCH

Commentary

41. The subject is taught on a weekly basis to Year 6 pupils. An experienced specialist secondary teacher has worked with the school to devise a scheme of work with the aim of giving the pupils experience of conversational and written French and to learn about the culture of a modern European country. Teaching in the one lesson seen was very effective. A native French speaker made a valuable contribution. Most of the lesson was conducted in French. The pupils responded well to questions in French about their age and siblings. They enjoyed writing from dictation and were developing a sound understanding of French pronunciation. The activities were well structured so a good pace was maintained whilst providing support for those who found understanding difficult. The teacher skilfully used a good range of picture and context cues. This is an exciting addition to the curriculum and the school is exploring ways to offer other languages to younger pupils.

MATHEMATICS

Provision for mathematics is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- There is very good use of assessment information.
- Lessons are well planned.
- Standards of work in all year groups are very high.
- Provision for children with special needs is very good.
- More able pupils are effectively challenged.

Commentary

42. The quality of teaching in lessons taught by permanent members of staff is often very good. Teachers have good subject knowledge, they use and expect pupils to use mathematical vocabulary, and their probing questioning techniques encourage pupils to think. The quality of marking in children's books is very good. There is a consistent style throughout the school, which gives praise, and shows the pupils what they need to do to improve. Pupils respond to the marking, with comments, or by doing the work suggested.
43. In general, pupils are very enthusiastic, they work extremely hard and achieve a great deal. Pupils rapidly lose interest in the rare lessons where the pace drops. This is usually because the introductory session is too long and pupils are keen to tackle the independent work. In one Year 5 lesson, with a supply teacher, the pupils were doing easier work with the cover teacher than they had successfully completed the previous day. More effective liaison between teachers is essential to ensure continuity. Good links are being made with other subjects, for example, data handling and interpretation in Year 6 science lessons.
44. Teachers take great care to plan appropriate work for all abilities in their class; therefore all pupils make very good progress. In a large Year 5 class, the whole class was working on division with remainders. The most able children were turning the remainders into fractions and decimals, while the least able were playing a game dividing numbers and working out if there was a remainder. All pupils worked hard because the teacher explained the task clearly and made her high expectations known. The detailed assessment and tracking systems have a real impact on pupils' learning. Pupils have clear targets and standards are very high in all year groups. Homework is set regularly and makes a significant contribution to the high standards achieved.
45. The subject leader, ably supported by the linked governor, leads mathematics very well. She has an excellent understanding of the needs of the school, and how to meet them. She is well informed, and under her guidance the school has made very good progress in mathematics since the last inspection.

Mathematics across the curriculum

46. This is good. There is some very challenging data handling in science and pupils interrogate graphs and charts with intelligence. Understanding of algebra and area and perimeter are promoted well through work in ICT.

SCIENCE

Provision in science is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching is imaginative and practical. Pupils work with independence and a good understanding of how to conduct experiments and investigations.
- There is a well-planned curriculum and assessment makes certain pupils of all abilities progress well.

Commentary

47. By Year 6 standards are well above average and achievement through the school is very good. The school builds upon the pupils' curiosity and eagerness to investigate well. The subject has improved well through extensive reviews of curriculum planning and assessment.

48. The lessons are interesting and very informative. The teachers treat the pupils as potential scientists, expecting them to plan and organise aspects of their own work. For example, in Year 5, the pupils had decided what it was they wanted to find out about electric circuits. They planned their own experiments to find the effect of having different quantities of batteries in a circuit or of varying the length and number of wires. The only inhibiting factor to their learning was that the small size of the classroom meant that teachers had to put resources on the desk rather than allowing free selection from a central point. However, the teachers make very good use of the shared central area for science work. The teacher skilfully led the pupils, through experiment, into a greater understanding of parallel and series circuits.
49. By Year 6, pupils have a very good knowledge of most areas of the science curriculum. The more able show a deep understanding of the nature of materials and processes of change. The less able pupils and the majority of those with special educational needs are working at levels normally expected for their age. Very few are working below this level. This is because the teachers use planned opportunities for assessing ability well. They are successfully working towards simplified methods and make good use of technology for managing assessment.
50. The pupils are well organised in their learning. There is a good emphasis on safe practice and hygiene, especially when working with food products. There are good links made between other subjects such as design and technology and mathematics.
51. Pupils present their work well and are organised and efficient. They understand that diagrams serve a function and should be clear rather than pretty. They develop a good range of sorting and organising skills through, for example, work on classifying food in Year 3. Lessons are enhanced with good resources and there is effective use of ICT in data handling and spreadsheets. The pupils also use technology for measuring temperature and collecting other data. There is still room for further development in this.
52. The quality of teaching is very good. The teachers' subject knowledge is often very good and this challenges the pupils. They generally mark work well, making comments that offer guidance to improvement in scientific skills. This is not consistent throughout the school. The pupils are introduced to targets for their own learning often relating closely to the stages of the National Curriculum. The pupils are not yet familiar enough with their own targets to really benefit in all their learning.
53. The subject is very well led and managed. The co-ordinator is a good role-model for teachers. There is a good programme for monitoring teaching and pupils' work and this provides both challenge and support.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

Provision in information and communication technology is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards are above national expectations.
- There are good resources, which are used well.
- A very well-constructed programme of work ensures progress.
- There are good assessment procedures with some inconsistencies in their use.

Commentary

54. There has been good improvement since the last inspection. The standards of work are higher as a result of good teaching, a well-planned curriculum and the very good resources. Pupils study all aspects of the ICT curriculum. Pupils of all abilities achieve well. There are good opportunities for direct teaching in the ICT suite and learning in the classrooms supports this.
55. By Year 6, pupils have good basic skills. They log on and off computers and have a good understanding of storage systems. They quickly set up programs they require. They build on good skills from Year 3. By Year 6 pupils demonstrate a wide range of techniques for manipulating data. They have a very good understanding of the advantages and disadvantages of using technology in modern life and describe how spreadsheets are used for retail purposes and how they improve efficiency. They have good experiences of using ICT for modelling and simulation purposes from their own experiments. This is a significant improvement since the last inspection. They also use the multimedia capabilities to produce work on modern Europe, creating hyperlinks to different sites.
56. The quality of teaching is good. Teacher's good subject knowledge reflects the training opportunities given. In the best lessons, teachers inject pace and urgency but provide good safety nets for those who are struggling. The specialist teaching assistant provides good support through her own knowledge and technical assistance. The work is structured to build learning systematically. However, there is plenty of scope for pupils to work independently and develop their own ideas. There are assessment procedures directly linked to the scheme. The pupils' are given information on exactly how to identify the level they are working at and what they need to do to achieve the next stage. However, there are significant variations in the pupils understanding of this and in the best practice the teacher talks through what the pupils have learned in the lesson and how that relates to them.

Information and communication technology across the curriculum

57. This is satisfactory. There are good links with mathematics through data handling and the use of spreadsheets. Word processing is used well in several subjects. In some subjects there is little use of ICT as a tool for learning. There are well-planned activities for pupils with special educational needs, which the school is currently introducing.

HUMANITIES

It was not possible during the inspection to observe any lessons for history and it is not possible to give an overall judgement on provision.

Geography

Provision in geography is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- There is good use of interesting classroom displays and resources.
- Effective links are made to ICT and English
- Work is not matched appropriately to the needs of less able pupils.

Commentary

58. The subject leader has successfully addressed the weaknesses identified in the last inspection. Teaching and learning are monitored appropriately. Standards are in line with national expectations and achievement for pupils of all abilities is sound. There is a detailed scheme of work, which makes some links to other subjects, for example information and communication technology and English. The subject leader has identified and provided appropriate resources. Where these are used - for example, the model of the water cycle, and a computer program about rivers in a Year 4 lesson - the pupils learn well. In contrast in a Year 5 lesson pupils struggled to interpret very poor monochrome copies of a map, leading to speculation over the purpose of grey blobs and patches. There are good classroom displays, which help pupils learn appropriate geographical vocabulary.
59. Pupils usually behave well and are interested in geography. The exceptions are towards the end of the school day when pupils have been sitting, listening, reading and writing for too long without a change of learning activity. This particularly impacts on the learning of the less able. There is a lot to cover in the curriculum and this has an impact on the workload of teachers, particularly in Year 6. The curriculum does not fully identify where learning could equally be covered through other subjects, such as history or mathematics.

History

Commentary

60. There is an appropriate scheme of work and resource boxes for each topic. There are attractive displays in classrooms that skilfully combine commercial material and pupils' and teachers' work to both celebrate success and act as a reference point. Pupils discuss their work in history with evident enthusiasm. The curriculum is enlivened with dramatic reconstructions and role play days. Pupils are eager to find out information at home, supplementing their work in school with research from magazines and the Internet.

CREATIVE, AESTHETIC, PRACTICAL AND PHYSICAL SUBJECTS

No overall judgement can be made for provision in Design and technology, because there was no direct observation of any teaching during the period of the inspection.

Art and design

Provision for Art and design is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards are above average and pupils achieve well.
- The school offers a broad range of curriculum opportunities.
- Leadership is very effective.
- Art and design is well used to support other areas of learning.

Commentary

61. Pupils attain standards that are above average and all pupils achieve well. This is an improvement since the last inspection. All groups of pupils in the school state that they enjoy art and design. The quality of their work reflects their drive to improve their skills and the fact

that they take pride in their work. Their individual skill level is high. From entry into the school they learn to mix colour and, as they develop, become increasingly skilful when using water colours in their still-life paintings. Drawing skills are effectively developed and pupils use of sketch books is progressing well; they increasingly use them to set out their ideas and evaluate their finished work.

62. The quality of teaching is good. All lessons are very carefully planned. Resources and teaching assistants are used effectively and this ensures that all pupils are interested and are able to develop their skills very well. The art co-ordinator has an enthusiasm for his subject which is infectious and helps raise the profile of the subject in the school. Teachers work hard to display good quality work in classrooms and corridors, so that pupils can look at each other's work and learn from it. In all lessons observed, pupils concentrated well, spoke enthusiastically about the subject, were self-critical and described ways in which they could improve their work. Pupils working on a still-life of a Chinese lantern, using charcoal and different hardness of pencils, showed an appreciation of light and shade and patterns. Pupils learn about the work of modern artists and make a good attempt to copy their particular style; for example, they imitate the style of Hunderwasser and can compare his work with more traditional artists.
63. The breadth of the opportunities for art work that the school offers ensures that pupils become familiar with using a wide range of media for a variety of purposes. Art is used well to support pupils' learning about other cultures, for example, their study of African culture, stimulated by an outside speaker who brought in an African dress.
64. Art is used very well to support pupils' spiritual, social and cultural development. It is clear from discussion with pupils and observation of them working; that their work in the subject has led them to recognise that valuing art enhances their enjoyment of life.

Design and technology

Commentary

65. Many pupils produce work of a good standard. They finish projects carefully and make good evaluations as to how they could improve their designs. Pupils learn the fundamental principles of food technology and hygiene through, for example, planning and making sandwiches. Pupils are encouraged to write thoughtful evaluations of their work and to be self critical. Those with special educational needs make similar progress to that of other pupils.
66. From discussion with pupils, it is clear that design and technology is an area they enjoy. They are gaining experience of a range of materials and techniques and, through designing and making a variety of products, developing skills in the subject.
67. The school offers a good curriculum and teachers are seeking to make interesting and appropriate links between design and technology and other subjects. The subject is well led and has improved since the last inspection.

MUSIC

Provision for music is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- There is very good provision for extra curricular music.
- A high proportion of children learn to play an instrument.
- Children have very positive attitudes to music and achieve well.
- Class music tuition is constrained by poor accommodation.

Commentary

68. During the inspection two class lessons, orchestra practice, recorder groups and several instrumental lessons were observed. An impressive range of instrumental tuition has a very good impact on standards. 15 per cent of pupils have keyboard lessons in school. Violin, cello, flute, clarinet, trombone and saxophone are all represented in the orchestra. The knowledge and skills gained in these very good instrumental lessons and experiences ensure that in each class a significant proportion of children are working at a high level.

69. The subject leader has good subject knowledge and understands the needs of the school. He has improved the scheme of work and created effective units to study that inspire pupils. For example, Year 6 study a unit of work called *Ship of Dreams*, which uses music from the Titanic film score. The pupils were excited by this use of music, which usually associate with school discos. Pupils are proud that this is a very musical school. They enjoy singing along with the staff band and think music is fun. In response to criticism in the last inspection all pupils now record their music work in books.
70. In lessons teaching is good. Lessons are well planned, there are sensible rules for playing instruments and teachers have good subject knowledge and enthusiasm. Pupils enjoy using correct musical terms, which teachers explain clearly to them. A Year 3 class were having great fun with ostinato, and readily explained what it meant. Pupils work hard, and work is differentiated so that all pupils are actively involved.
71. A classroom doubles as the music room. When a whole class are working in groups playing instruments in this small space, they cannot hear their group's sound and the teacher has to work hard to ensure pupils make enough progress. In contrast, accommodation for instrumental tuition is good, with a small room dedicated to individual and small group use.

Physical education

Provision for physical education is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Games skills are well taught in Year 6.
- The school offers a wide range of extra-curricular activities and makes good use of its facilities.
- Leadership is very effective.
- The school has a successful sporting tradition.
- Assessment and recording of pupils' attainment and progress are not sufficiently developed to enable effective tracking of pupils' progress.

Commentary

72. Lessons in games and dance were observed, but no lessons in swimming or gymnastics. Teachers' plans and the school's timetable indicated that all four areas of PE are covered appropriately. Pupils achieve good standards in dance because they are offered appropriately challenging activities and because pupils carefully follow their teachers' instructions. The high point is the sheer enthusiastic enjoyment shown by girls and boys, and a lack of inhibition. In both lessons, teachers built well on previously acquired skills, setting activities of increasing complexity as the lessons progressed, and interjecting appropriately with words of explanation and praise when needed. Some pupils do not yet appreciate that dance involves artistic qualities, such as poise, posture and accuracy of movement. In games in Year 6, pupils show good ball-handling skills, which are used to good effect in the games they play, for example, rugby, netball and basketball. Girls and boys show a good understanding of attacking and defending skills in the major sports. Pupils enjoy their lessons and teachers are as enthusiastic as the pupils, which creates a very good working atmosphere in which pupils are keen to practise new skills.
73. The lessons are well planned and structured. Teachers show good coaching and intervene, where appropriate, to demonstrate the current techniques. The teaching is often fast paced and provides a good balance between practice and new learning. Occasionally, too long is spent on

practising a task such as passing and catching and this reduces progress made overall. In the best teaching, the teachers expect pupils to be self-critical and evaluate the quality of their work closely.

74. The school offers a broad curriculum that includes regular swimming lessons at a nearby public swimming pool. All pupils have been successful in gaining their 25-metre certificate. An extensive extra-curricular programme for sporting activities is enthusiastically supported by teachers and pupils. The very good subject co-ordinator provides guidance and support for teachers and has built on the school's enviable sporting success at local and national level, for example, in football and cricket. An audit of the subject has shown where improvements need to be made, which include arrangements to assess formally pupils' achievement and progress. The new school scheme of work addresses this issue. Since the last inspection, there has been good improvement.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP

Provision for personal, social and health education and citizenship is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- There is a very well-planned curriculum.
- The school ethos encourages very good levels of personal responsibility and awareness.
- Very good use is made of visitors.

Commentary

75. The pupils' personal and social education is central to the philosophy of the school and a key feature of its success. There are well-planned opportunities to educate pupils about sex and drugs awareness. They discuss issues such as racism or sexism in an open manner. The very good links with the infant school, secondary school and sixth form college all develop the pupils' knowledge of the world of work and citizenship. In the very good lesson observed with a visitor from the local education authority, the Year 5 pupils were challenged to think about behaviour, relationships and the impact on others. The lesson was conducted at a brisk pace and pupils made confident contributions.

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	3
Value for money provided by the school	2
Overall standards achieved	2
Pupils' achievement	2
Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities	2
Attendance	2
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	2
The quality of teaching	3
How well pupils learn	3
The quality of assessment	2
How well the curriculum meets pupils' needs	2
Enrichment of the curriculum, including out-of-school activities	1
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	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	2
The leadership of the headteacher	2
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).