

INSPECTION REPORT

STAFFORD JUNIOR SCHOOL

Eastbourne

LEA area: East Sussex

Unique reference number: 114469

Headteacher: Mr A Jones

Reporting inspector: Mr D Penney
23039

Dates of inspection: 15th – 17th January 2001

Inspection number: 118914

Short inspection carried out under Section 10 of the School Inspections Act 1996

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Junior
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	7 – 11 years
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Ringwood Road Eastbourne East Sussex
Postcode:	BN22 8UA
Telephone number:	01323 733434
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Appropriate authority:	The governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mrs C Cosham
Date of previous inspection:	July 1996

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REPORT CONTENTS

	Page
PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT	5
Information about the school	
How good the school is	
What the school does well	
What could be improved	
How the school has improved since its last inspection	
Standards	
Pupils' attitudes and values	
Teaching and learning	
Other aspects of the school	
How well the school is led and managed	
Parents' and carers' views of the school	
PART B: COMMENTARY	
WHAT THE SCHOOL DOES WELL	9
WHAT COULD BE IMPROVED	12
WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?	13
PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS	14

PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Stafford Junior School is a community school that is bigger than average. The numbers in the school are rising; currently, there are 314 boys and girls on roll. It serves a mixed residential area close to the centre of Eastbourne, on the south coast of England. Pupils are of a predominately white background; there are no pupils with English as an additional language. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs (18.8 per cent) is in line with national averages, as is the proportion of these – one per cent – who have statements of special educational needs. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals (9.2 per cent) is in line with the national average. Pupils' attainment on entry is above average in reading and writing, although proportionally fewer pupils achieve higher levels than is the case nationally. Their attainment in mathematics on entry is above average, with the proportion of pupils achieving higher levels being close to the national averages. Pupils' levels of attainment on entry have risen slowly, but perceptibly, in recent years.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

Stafford Junior School is a very good school that gives very good value for money. Standards have been rising and, at the end of the key stage, are now well above the average for all schools nationally and for similar schools in English and mathematics and above them in science. The quality of teaching is good overall, with a high proportion of very good teaching, particularly in the upper part of the school. The leadership and management by the headteacher and key staff are very good. The headteacher provides an excellent vision for the school's development that is shared and supported by all his colleagues, who form a very good, cohesive team with a strong commitment to the pursuit of excellence. The school's systems and procedures for monitoring and evaluating standards and provision, in which the governing body plays a full and active part, are outstanding.

What the school does well

- Standards in the core subjects of English, mathematics and science have risen over the last three years at a rate that is greater than the national trend and remain high with many pupils achieving levels well above those expected for their age.
- The curriculum is well planned and taught; the information gained about pupils' progress is used well.
- The leadership of the headteacher and key staff is very good; the headteacher directs the work of the school outstandingly well and fosters a very good team ethic.
- The school's systems and procedures for monitoring and evaluating standards and provision, in which the governing body plays a full and active part, are outstanding.

What could be improved

- The use of information and communication technology in other subjects is not developed fully enough because of limitations in hardware and training that are beyond the school's immediate control.

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

The school was previously inspected in July 1996. Since then very good progress has been made. Pupils' standards in the National Curriculum tests in English, mathematics and science at the end of the key stage have improved at a rate that is faster than the national trend. A greater proportion of pupils achieve the higher levels than is the case nationally and results in English and mathematics at the end of Key Stage 2 in the national tests in 2000 were well above the average for all schools nationally and for schools in similar contexts; for science, they were above these averages. Improvements have been made to curriculum planning and assessment procedures and the quality of teaching has improved with a greater proportion of lessons being well or very well taught. Many key leadership and management features have been significantly strengthened and a very good team ethic pervades and supports the work of the school. All the key issues identified in the previous report have been addressed fully.

STANDARDS

The table shows the standards achieved by 11-year-olds based on average point scores in National Curriculum tests.

Performance in:	compared with			
	all schools			similar schools
	1998	1999	2000	2000
English	C	C	A	A
Mathematics	C	B	A	A
Science	C	B	B	B

Key

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

In comparison with all schools nationally and with similar schools, pupils achieved standards in the National Curriculum tests at the end of Key Stage 2 in 2000 that were well above average in English and mathematics and were above average for science. Inspection findings show that standards at the end of the key stage in these core subjects remain high with many pupils achieving standards that are well above those expected for pupils of their age. Overall, pupils make good progress. There are particular strengths in pupils' vocabulary, phraseology and punctuation, in their comprehension skills in reading and in their understanding and use of number and their handling of data in mathematics. Standards in information and communication technology at the age of eleven match those expected in the aspects seen but there are gaps in pupils' knowledge and skills. The school's targets in English and mathematics for the end of the key stage were greatly exceeded in 2000; targets for 2001 are realistically higher and seem likely to be met.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Good. They are interested in their tasks, particularly when the teaching is of good or very good quality.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Good. Pupils are polite and thoughtful in class and around the school.
Personal development and relationships	Relationships are strong throughout the school. Pupils' personal development is good; there are a growing number of planned opportunities for them to develop initiative and responsibility.
Attendance	Satisfactory and in line with the national average.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils:	aged 7-11 years
Lessons seen overall	Good

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

The quality of teaching is good. No teaching is unsatisfactory. Teaching is good in 42 per cent of lessons and a further 29 per cent of lessons are taught very well. The teaching of English, including literacy, and of mathematics, including numeracy, is good. Particular strengths in teaching are:

- thorough planning and clear objectives so the lesson builds logically on pupils' prior knowledge;
- good subject knowledge and high expectations so that all pupils are challenged to make good progress;
- good relationships so pupils feel confident to 'have a go';
- enthusiasm that is often communicated to the pupils and which motivates them to try hard and
- skilful and sensitive questioning that probes their understanding, requires them to give the reasons for their answers and extends their knowledge.

As a result of these strengths, pupils make good progress throughout the school.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Good. The range and extent of extra-curricular activities are good. The school has maintained a good breadth of provision and the national strategies for literacy and numeracy have been implemented well. Further developments are necessary in information and communication technology.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Good. Pupils are well supported in English and mathematics and through the system of setting. Skilful teaching assistants work effectively with teachers and make a good contribution to pupils' progress.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Good. Pupils are taught to be responsible. Their involvement in school and class councils encourages mature and sensible behaviour and is treated very seriously by the school and the pupils themselves.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Good overall. The links between assessment and planning are excellent and the school uses the information gained from annual testing very well. There are good procedures for ensuring the welfare and safety of all pupils. The school is aware of the need to develop systems to track the progress of individuals so that they can devise further work that meets their emerging needs closely.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Very good. The headteacher provides excellent leadership. The deputy headteacher, the senior management team and all staff support him very well and form a very effective team. Subject co-ordinators are hardworking and enthusiastic leaders and managers.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Excellent. They play a very full part in strategic development. Their monitoring of the curriculum and expenditure is outstanding. They evaluate the work of the school very effectively.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Outstanding and a vital factor in the school's continued improvement. The school gives very good attention to the principles of best value.
The strategic use of	Excellent. Resources are firmly targeted at raising the standards pupils

resources	attain.
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PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• They feel comfortable approaching the school with questions or problems.• Their children like school.• The quality of teaching is good.• Their children are expected to work hard and achieve their best.• Behaviour is good.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The quality of information about their child's progress.• The range of extra-curricular activities.• The amount of homework.• Closer co-operation with parents.

Only three parents attended the meeting with the lead inspector before the inspection but 63 parents' questionnaires (20.2 per cent) were returned. The inspection team agrees with the positive views expressed but judges that the range of extra-curricular activities is good and that the standard of each of the aspects of the school's work that parents would like to see improved is satisfactory, overall. However, the annual report sent to parents by teachers, while giving good information about the standards their children have achieved, does not routinely comment on the extent of their progress.

PART B: COMMENTARY

WHAT THE SCHOOL DOES WELL

Standards in the core subjects of English, mathematics and science have risen over the last three years at a rate that is greater than the national trend and remain high with many pupils achieving levels well above those expected for their age.

1. In the National Curriculum tests at the end of Key Stage 2 in the year 2000, pupils' standards were well above the average for all schools nationally and for schools with similar intakes of pupils in English and mathematics and, in science, were above average. This continued a trend of improvement that has been faster than the national one in recent years. In particular, there has been a significant improvement in average scores in mathematics and science in the period 1998–2000 and in English since 1999. A greater proportion of pupils achieved higher levels in each of these tests than is the case nationally. In both English and mathematics, the school greatly exceeded its targets for performance at the end of the key stage because of its success in implementing national initiatives to do with reading and numeracy. The targets for end of key stage performance for 2001 are realistically higher and seem likely to be met.
2. Standards at the end of the key stage currently remain high in each of the core subjects of English, mathematics and science and many pupils achieve standards in each of the subjects that are well above those expected for their age. They make good progress in lessons and as they move through the school.
3. By the time pupils leave the school the majority are confident speakers and listeners who readily take part in discussions. Pupils read fluently and expressively, gaining a good understanding of the texts they read and this helps them to easily acquire new information. Pupils' writing in a range of styles and formats including poetry, stories and newspaper reports is well organised and interesting. There are particular strengths throughout the school in the way pupils punctuate their written work and in the maturity of vocabulary and phraseology they use. Examples of striking imagery include: '...clouds throwing snow...' and '...lightning striking like hawks...'. Their above average communication skills are effectively used to help their learning in other subjects.
4. In mathematics, they recall basic number facts swiftly and confidently, which helps them make accurate written and oral calculations. As they get older, they use an increasing range of strategies very well to solve problems, which develop in complexity and fully challenge their understanding of the number system. They have a good grasp of shapes and measure, accurately using a suitable variety of scales and tools, for example in scientific experiments. They collect, collate, represent and interpret information well; higher attaining pupils in Year 6, for example, interpret line graphs of temperatures accurately and swiftly.
5. In science, they have good scientific skills and conduct practical tests carefully and with due rigour. They have a very good understanding of what constitutes a fair test. A good proportion of pupils have very good knowledge and some use this very well to explain clearly, for example, how an aeroplane takes off and remains in the air or the effect of a combination of forces on an object.

6. Standards in information and communication technology are broadly satisfactory in those elements of the subject seen, as they were at the time of the previous inspection. There are, notwithstanding, acknowledged gaps in pupils' knowledge, skills and understanding that the school has been eager to address for some time. However, there have been delays in the provision of suitable training for teachers which have been outside the school's control. In addition, the upgrade of computers in the computer suite to the standard of those in the classrooms has not yet taken place and so teachers and pupils have had to try to cope with different operating systems. These factors have delayed the implementation of the developments that have been planned for some time.
7. Pupils' standards in the art, geography, music, physical education and religious education lessons seen match those expected of their respective ages nationally and broadly replicate the standards found during the previous inspection. However, in Year 5, standards in geography are now better than at the time of the last inspection and are above those expected nationally for pupils of this age. There is additional good evidence that the school has achieved good standards in music, the performing arts and physical education. It recently held a successful arts week involving visiting performers and artists, culminating in all pupils working co-operatively on the production of artwork using various media. In addition, it has recently become the first school in East Sussex to be awarded the Activemark Gold Award by Sport England in recognition of its commitment to high standards in the teaching of physical education and sport to all pupils.

The curriculum is well planned and taught; the information gained about pupils' progress is used well.

8. The school has implemented the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies well and pupils' standards in English and mathematics have risen as a result. In addition to this, the curriculum has retained a good breadth and pupils have continued to enjoy a full range of suitable activities within lessons, during lunchtimes and after school. For example, Year 4 pupils have recently been successful in winning the town's 'Millennium in Bloom' competition. There is a full programme of sports fixtures, French is taught regularly to all Year 6 pupils and music and drama are taken very seriously by the school and the pupils. Full and well balanced coverage of all National Curriculum requirements and those of the locally agreed syllabus for religious education, is assured over time. Good provision is made for pupils' personal development. They are taught to be responsible and sensible young citizens; the school and the pupils themselves treat their involvement in school and class councils very seriously.
9. Teachers' planning is detailed and makes good use of the information gained from a range of assessment procedures. The results of annual and more frequent testing are used very well to track the progress of year groups and of groups of pupils within each class, to amend groupings as necessary and to inform teachers' planning. This is effective in helping to raise standards and to improve the rate of progress pupils make. The recently implemented system of target setting for individual pupils and well focused marking are helping to raise standards further. Staff have a very good understanding of the purposes and consequences of assessment; its integration with the school's planning systems is deeply embedded and is an example of excellent practice.
10. Partly because teachers' planning is so detailed, the quality of their teaching has improved and is good. No teaching is unsatisfactory. In 71 per cent of lessons, teaching is of good or better quality; 29 per cent of lessons are very well taught. Teaching is very good in Years 5 and 6 and is good in Years 3 and 4. The teaching of English and mathematics, including the skills of literacy and numeracy, is good.

11. Throughout the school, teachers set clear learning objectives and have good subject knowledge and high expectations. As a result, lessons build logically on pupils' prior knowledge and all pupils are challenged to make good progress. Relationships are good and so pupils feel confident to 'have a go'. Generally speaking, pupils are managed well and lessons are conducted at a good pace. Teachers have high expectations of pupils' application and standards, providing work that is challenging for all levels of attainment. As a result, pupils have good attitudes to learning and concentrate and behave well. However, in a very few isolated lessons, where expectations and management are not firm enough, some pupils play to the gallery and behave less than appropriately. Where teaching is most effective, for example in Year 5 geography lessons or a Year 6 science lesson, teachers' enthusiasm is successfully communicated to the pupils, which motivates them to try hard and skilful and sensitive questioning probes pupils' understanding and extends their knowledge swiftly. In these lessons, relationships are very good and the pupils themselves have high expectations of their own performance.

The leadership of the headteacher and key staff is very good; the headteacher directs the work of the school outstandingly well and fosters a very good team ethic.

12. The headteacher provides excellent leadership. He has set a clear and challenging direction for the school's development that is shared by all staff and governors. An astute manager of people, he has established an effective management structure in which roles and responsibilities have been clearly and effectively delegated. All members of staff are very well supported so that they achieve the best results possible.
13. The deputy headteacher and other members of the senior management team have a very good grasp of the school's strengths and areas for development and support the headteacher very well. Subject co-ordinators are hardworking and enthusiastic leaders and managers. Their subject development plans set a good agenda for further improvement and make a good contribution to the overall school development plan.
14. The headteacher has established a very good team ethic that ensures that all those involved in the school have a real say in the school's development and are totally committed to the pursuit of excellence. They succeed in ensuring that the school's aims are fully reflected in all its work.

The school's systems and procedures for monitoring and evaluating standards and provision, in which the governing body plays a full and active part, are outstanding.

15. At all levels, the monitoring and evaluation of the school's work is of the highest quality and this is a significant factor in its effectiveness. An excellent programme for monitoring the curriculum and teaching is very regularly and effectively undertaken by the senior management team, subject co-ordinators and governors. Feedback, often in written form, is given to staff, as appropriate, and is fully linked to appropriate further training and professional development. It is a measure of the excellent team ethic that all members of staff receive the monitoring and evaluation of their teaching with a strong professionalism and an enthusiastic desire to learn how they could improve the quality of their work for the benefit of the pupils in their care. The information gained from these visits is also analysed well at a whole-school level and used to help improve provision so that the good rate of progress pupils make and the above average standards they reach can be maintained and improved.

16. The governors fulfil their responsibilities in excellent fashion. They play a very full part in establishing the priorities for improvement, as contained in the very good school development plan, and in ensuring that all available resources are clearly targeted at the core objective of raising pupils' standards. For example, they have kept a suitable reserve to enable improvements to be made to the school's provision for information and communication technology. They have also chosen to allocate available funds to employ a part-time teacher from the school's own budget rather than wait on the possibility that finance would be made available at the last minute from central government sources. This has assured a continuity of provision that might otherwise not have been possible. They monitor and evaluate the results of their spending decisions outstandingly well. They are fully aware of the strengths of the school because many visit while it is in session, subsequently making detailed and useful reports to the whole governing body. They have each assumed responsibility for subjects of the curriculum and have formed close partnerships with subject co-ordinators, which enables them to monitor teachers' planning knowledgeably.

WHAT COULD BE IMPROVED

The use of information and communication technology (ICT) in other subjects is not developed fully enough because of limitations in hardware and training that are beyond the school's immediate control.

17. For reasons beyond the school's control, teachers have not enjoyed the training necessary for them to deliver the full required curriculum because it has repeatedly been postponed. It is now due to be given in the summer of 2001, which will be some 18 months after it was first planned; this delay has adversely affected the levels of personal expertise that teachers have and the provision they can make for the pupils in their care. In addition, while there are modern PCs in each classroom, the computers in the ICT suite are not as modern and use different software. This means that pupils have to use different programs when practising their skills in the classroom from those that they used in class sessions in the suite. This, too, adversely affects the rate at which they progress and the standards they attain. The school has, prudently, kept sufficient funds in reserve to enable enough hardware and software to be purchased and has very recently had notification that they will soon receive sufficient PCs to be able to improve provision in this area satisfactorily.
18. The co-ordinators for information and communication technology are knowledgeable and enthusiastic teachers. Both their current and their previous subject development plans identify good ways of improving both the provision the school makes for the pupils and the standards that they attain. All members of staff are eager to improve their own practice. It is greatly to the credit of the teachers that the standards of pupils' work seen at the end of the key stage broadly match those expected of pupils of their age in the elements of the curriculum covered so far. However, gaps remain in pupils' knowledge, skills and understanding that are the legacy of the deficiencies described above and, because of circumstances outside the school's immediate control, it has not yet been possible to realise the full potential of ICT to help pupils learn in other subjects as fully as the school had planned.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

19. The headteacher, governors and staff should now:
- implement fully the planned developments in information and communication technology.

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	31
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	11

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
0	29	42	29	0	0	0

The table gives the percentage of teaching observed in each of the seven categories used to make judgements about lessons.

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll	Y3 – Y6
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	314
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	29

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs	Y3 – Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	3
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	59

English as an additional language	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	0

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	11
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	11

Attendance

Authorised absence	%
School data	5.5
National comparative data	5.2

Unauthorised absence	%
School data	0.1
National comparative data	0.5

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

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 2

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2000	31	37	68

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	27	27	27
	Girls	34	29	36
	Total	61	56	63
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	90 (75)	82 (69)	93 (88)
	National	75 (70)	72 (69)	85 (78)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	20	24	26
	Girls	23	28	35
	Total	43	52	61
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	63 (67)	76 (69)	90 (75)
	National	70 (68)	72 (69)	80 (75)

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

Ethnic background of pupils

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	1
Black – African heritage	2
Black – other	0
Indian	2
Pakistani	0
Bangladeshi	1
Chinese	1
White	304
Any other minority ethnic group	3

This table refers to pupils of compulsory school age only.

Exclusions in the last school year

	Fixed period	Permanent
Black – Caribbean heritage	0	0
Black – African heritage	0	0
Black – other	0	0
Indian	0	0
Pakistani	0	0
Bangladeshi	0	0
Chinese	0	0
White	2	0
Other minority ethnic groups	0	0

This table gives the number of exclusions of pupils of compulsory school age, which may be different from the number of pupils excluded.

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers and classes: Y3 – Y6

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	12.4
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	25.3
Average class size	34.9

Education support staff: Y3 – Y6

Total number of education support staff	9
Total aggregate hours worked per week	197

Financial information

Financial year	1999/2000
	£
Total income	525,636
Total expenditure	486,531
Expenditure per pupil	1,550
Balance brought forward from previous year	24,323
Balance carried forward to next year	63,428

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	312
Number of questionnaires returned	63

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	63	33	3	0	0
My child is making good progress in school.	50	39	11	0	0
Behaviour in the school is good.	40	53	5	0	2
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	31	52	13	2	2
The teaching is good.	54	42	2	0	2
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	32	49	16	3	0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	61	37	2	0	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	62	33	3	2	0
The school works closely with parents.	35	49	14	0	2
The school is well led and managed.	48	42	7	0	3
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	55	38	2	0	5
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	31	51	10	3	5