

INSPECTION REPORT

STOWLAWN PRIMARY SCHOOL

Green Park Avenue, Stowlawn, Bilston

LEA area: Wolverhampton City Council

Unique reference number: 104317

Headteacher: Mr Neil Jarman

Reporting inspector: Joan Walker
25461

Dates of inspection: 7th – 9th May 2002

Inspection number: 230366

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Infant and Junior
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	3 - 11
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Green Park Avenue Stowlawn Bilston West Midlands
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Appropriate authority:	Wolverhampton City Council
Name of chair of governors:	Mr J Hill
Date of previous inspection:	03/04/00

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

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11575	Catherine Fish	Lay inspector		How well does the school care for its pupils? How well does the school work in partnership with parents? Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
10782	Henry Moreton	Team inspector	Mathematics, Geography, History	Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development.
11227	John Moles	Team inspector	Science, Information Technology, Religious Education, Equal Opportunities, Special Educational Needs	How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils?
22424	Sandra Bradshaw		English, Music, Physical Education, English as an additional language	The school's results and achievements.

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Stowlawn School is a primary school with a nursery attached. At the time of the inspection, there were 233 pupils from 4 to 11 years of age (YR to Y6) and a further 25 children, who attend mornings only. The school is about the same size as other primary schools nationally. Attainment on entry to the nursery class at the age of three is very low compared with that expected for children of this age. The percentage of pupils identified as having special educational needs – 16 per cent – is below the national average. There are six pupils with statements of special education need and this is below the national average. The percentage of pupils known to be entitled to free school meals is currently over 40 per cent, which is above the national average. Twenty per cent of pupils are from ethnic minority backgrounds and ten per cent have English as an additional language, both of which are above the national average.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

This is an effective school that has very good features. It gives good value for money. Currently standards, by the time pupils leave the school at 11 years of age, in English, mathematics and science in relation to national expectations are below the national average except in reading where they are at the national average. The overall quality of teaching is good. Pupils achieve well in relation to their prior attainment. Pupils with special educational needs, those for whom English is not their first language and pupils from ethnic backgrounds achieve similarly to other pupils. The leadership and management of the school are very good. The school makes effective use of its involvement in the Excellence in Cities Mini Education Action Zone.

What the school does well

- Standards in art and design, at both key stages, are above expectations.
- Throughout the school, there is a high proportion of good and very good teaching. This ensures pupils achieve well by the time they leave the school.
- Overall, teaching in the Year 6 class is very good and occasionally excellent.
- All pupils make good progress in relation to their prior attainment.
- Pupils' attitudes, behaviour and personal development are good. Their relationships with one another and with staff are good. This positively affects pupils' learning.
- Teachers' assessments and pupils' self-assessment and identification of their personal targets are very good.
- The leadership and management of the school by the headteacher and deputy headteacher are very good.

What could be improved

- Standards in music in both key stages.
- The role of the co-ordinators for the non-core foundation subjects and for special educational needs.
- Pupils' attendance.

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 last inspected in April 2000. Since then it has made good improvement. All the key issues have been addressed. The school has maintained its drive to raise pupils' attainment, and standards in information and communication technology are higher. The governing body systematically monitors and evaluates the work of the school. The subject co-ordinators' role has been redefined, but further improvement is required on this issue. The curriculum has been revised to ensure continuity and progression in pupils' learning. The quality of teaching has improved and is now good. The provision for pupils' personal, spiritual, moral and cultural development is now good and very good for their social development.

STANDARDS

The table shows the standards achieved by pupils at the end of Year 6 based on average point scores in National Curriculum tests.

Performance in:	compared with			
	all schools			similar schools
	1999	2000	2001	2001
English	E	C	E*	E
Mathematics	E	D	E	E
Science	E	D	E*	E

Key	
well above average	A
above average	B
average	C
below average	D
well below average	E
very low	E*

The table above shows a decline in standards from the previous year in all subjects. When compared with similar schools, based on the number of free school meals, results are well below average in all subjects. Boys' performance was well below average in English and mathematics and very low in science. While girls performed marginally better than boys in mathematics and science, boys performed better in English. Trends over time show that the school's average points score for all subjects was broadly in line with the national trend. Work seen during this inspection indicates that many of the current Year 6 pupils are attaining standards below the national average in English, mathematics and science. However, in reading, standards are at the national average. In all other subjects, at both key stages, standards are at the expected national level except in music, where they are below in both key stages, and in information and communication technology at Key Stage 1. Standards are above expectations in art and design in both key stages.

The school was very disappointed in the results of national tests in 2001 and these results place the school in the lowest five per cent of all schools in English and science. Of the pupils taking the test there was a higher proportion of pupils with special educational needs than in the previous year. Of the seven pupils who joined this class, three pupils had special needs. The pupils had had many changes in teachers – eight teachers in their last five terms before taking the tests and this adversely affected standards in attainment.

By the age of five, children make good progress. However, the majority do not achieve the nationally expected standards before entering Year 1. In the national tests for seven-year-olds in 2001, standards were well below the national average. Currently, pupils are attaining levels that are below the national average in English and mathematics.

The school's performance targets are suitably ambitious. However, they were not met in the 2001 national tests in either English or mathematics. Targets for pupils aged 11 for the 2002 national tests are appropriately challenging (79% of pupils to attain Level 4 or above in English and 88% in mathematics). The work seen would indicate that the pupils in the current Year 6 will achieve better results than last year's Year 6 pupils, assuming that they achieve as well as they are at present. Across the school, pupils achieve well, including pupils with special educational needs, pupils with English as an additional language and those pupils from ethnic minority backgrounds.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Pupils like school and they have good attitudes to their work.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Pupils' behaviour in and around the school is usually good. There have been six incidents of exclusion.
Personal development	Pupils have good relationships with one another and with adults in the

and relationships	school. Their personal development is good.
Attendance	The attendance rate is below the national average.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils in:	Nursery and Reception	Years 1 – 2	Years 3 – 6
Quality of teaching	Satisfactory	Good	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 across the school is good. Teaching was at least satisfactory or better in most lessons. Teaching was good or better in two out of every three lessons. In the nursery, teaching was always good and in reception, it was satisfactory in all lessons. In Key Stage 1, teaching was good or better in all lessons. In Key Stage 2, teaching ranged from poor to excellent and it was satisfactory or better in almost all lessons. The teaching of literacy and numeracy and also science is overall good in both key stages. Particular strengths of the teaching of pupils are the effectiveness of teachers' lesson planning, the sharing of learning objectives with pupils and teachers' high expectations of pupils' work and their behaviour. The school meets the needs of all pupils well, including those with special educational needs, those with English as an additional language and those from minority ethnic backgrounds. Particular strengths in pupils' learning include their interest in the tasks set for them, extending and building on their knowledge and understanding and in most cases, their powers of concentration.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	The curriculum is broad and balanced and there are good links between core and foundation subjects. The quality and range of learning opportunities in the Foundation Stage are good.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Satisfactory, and pupils make good progress.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	The provision for pupils with English as an additional language is sound.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Provision is good; pupils are taught, through assemblies and in the curriculum, to recognise right from wrong. Spiritual, moral and cultural development is good and pupils' social development is very good.
How well the school cares for its pupils	The school takes good care of its pupils. Members of staff treat the pupils with understanding and respect. Staff know the pupils well and are concerned for their welfare. Procedures for child protection are good. Monitoring of pupils' academic performance and personal development is very good.

Parents have positive views of the school. Good quality information is provided through newsletters, targeted letters and direct discussion when needed. Reports are of good quality overall. The reporting of English, mathematics and science is sometimes very good. The school works hard to involve parents in

the work of the school and their children's learning; it is trying to raise the profile of education with parents.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	The headteacher has a very clear vision of what sort of school it should be and puts pupils and their achievement first. The headteacher, ably supported by all the staff, has a definite commitment to high standards. The leadership given by the co-ordinators for the Foundation Stage, English, mathematics and science is of high calibre. The role of other subject co-ordinators and the co-ordinator for special educational needs is less well developed.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	The governing body is very supportive of the school. Statutory requirements are fulfilled and the governors work hard to ensure the school functions smoothly for the benefit of the pupils and the community. They have a good grasp of the strengths and weaknesses of the school.
The school's evaluation of its performance	The school monitors and evaluates its performance very effectively. It knows its strengths and areas for improvement and takes effective action to secure improvement.
The strategic use of resources	Resources are managed very well and the principles of best value applied effectively. The school is well staffed and the quality of accommodation is good. There are sufficient learning resources in all subjects.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The school expects their children to work hard and achieve their best. • The teaching is good. • The school is helping their children to become mature and responsible. • Their children like school. • The school enables their children to make good progress. • The school is very easy to approach with concerns. • The school is well led and managed. • The school works closely with parents. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A small minority of parents believe their child does not get the right amount of homework. • A few parents feel they are not kept well informed about their child's progress.

Inspectors support the parents' positive views. All teachers fully implement the homework policy. Regular parent-teacher meetings occur and help provide parents with information about their child's progress. There are also regular newsletters sent to parents. Annual reports to parents are very informative and records the progress pupils have made. Therefore, the inspectors do not support the parents' views on what they feel could be improved.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and pupils' achievement

1. The attainment of children when they enter the school is very low. Most have underdeveloped language, social and emotional development and mathematical skills. While children make good progress in the nursery and in reception, their speech and language, social and emotional development and also their mathematical skills are below those that are expected nationally when they enter Year 1. Their attainment remains below average in all other areas of the curriculum. Progress is accelerated in Year 1 and 2 and although at the end of this key stage the attainment of seven-year-olds is still below average in English, mathematics, science and information and communication technology; currently they are attaining average standards in design and technology, geography, history and physical education. Pupils attain above average standards in art and design at this age. Standards in religious education match the expectations of the locally agreed syllabus.

2. Currently, by the time pupils come to leave the school at 11, they have continued to make steady gains in their learning although standards are just slightly below the national average in English and below average in mathematics, science and music. They are attaining average standards in reading, information and communication technology, design and technology, geography, history, and physical education. Eleven-year-old pupils attain above average standards in art and design. In religious education, achievement is good and standards are similar to the expectations of the locally agreed syllabus. Pupils make good progress throughout the key stage, but the best progress is made in Year 6, as a result of much very good teaching. Overall, teacher's planning is of a high standard and ensures that pupils of all ages, abilities and gender are included in and have access to the school curriculum. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress towards the targets in their individual education plans and receive good support within the classroom, as do pupils from ethnic backgrounds and those for whom English is not their first language.

3. In 2001, the end of Key Stage 1 national tests results showed that seven-year-olds attained standards that were well below average in reading, writing and mathematics when compared to schools nationally. Results were also well below average in reading and writing and below average in mathematics when compared to similar schools. The results of tests taken in 2001 by eleven-year-olds show that compared to all schools standards were very low in English and science and well below the national average in mathematics. When compared to similar schools, standards were well below average. While there have been some fluctuations over the last four years, results have been similar to the national trend, with the exception of last year's results that were particularly low. There appears to be little difference in the performance between boys and girls overall. Pupils' standards of reading are higher than their standards of writing.

4. During 2000/2001 there were several staff changes and considerable pupil mobility, which had an impact on the quality of teaching and learning and was reflected in the levels of attainment in the National Curriculum Tests in 2001. School data drawn from analysis of national and school tests and assessment information show that pupils make good progress from their level of attainment on entry to the school. This analysis shows that standards are rising and the school has set challenging targets to help the process.

5. The school is particularly adept at identifying areas for development. From careful analysis of data, writing and speaking and listening have been highlighted for improvement.

Designated time for the specific teaching of speaking and listening throughout the school is already having a positive effect. This is in addition to the development of these skills in other curriculum areas. Writing has been a school focus and will continue to be so. This is beginning to have a good effect in English lessons and other lessons such as science, history and design and technology. Pupils are now more confident and successful when writing for different purposes. Reading in Year 6 has been focussed upon during the past year. This has had a particularly good effect with the majority of pupils now reading at standards expected for their age and with many attaining standards, that are well above. Overall, the standard of handwriting and presentation of work is good throughout the school.

6. By the end of both key stages, standards reached in most other subjects are average for pupils of their age. At age seven, standards are below average in information and communication technology. The low attainment in English and language skills means that pupils aged seven do not reach as high standards as may be expected for pupils of this age. Standards in music are below average, in both key stages, as pupils receive insufficient challenges and breadth of experience in the music curriculum. Standards in art and design are above expectations in both key stages.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

7. Pupils have good attitudes to school. This is an improvement since the last inspection. Most pupils are eager to come to school at the start of the day and move around the school calmly. Pupils are helpful to visitors, are polite and are keen to show them their work. The majority of pupils concentrate well, show interest and involve themselves in the range of curricular and extra-curricular activities that the school provides, including those provided at lunchtimes. Most pupils show the enthusiasm necessary to get as much out of school as possible. Pupils co-operate and work well together, illustrated by the reading partnership between Year 2 and Year 6. Most pupils are keen to answer questions, as was seen in whole-class elements of the literacy and numeracy hours. Good attitudes are promoted by good teaching, interesting lessons, good relationships between adults and pupils, and consistent and clear expectations.

8. Behaviour is good in lessons, around the school, at play and at mealtimes. The school has a behaviour policy, which includes clear guidance on procedures for improving unsatisfactory behaviour, including bullying. Pupils are clear about school rules and are given opportunities to influence them, through the School Council. No oppressive behaviour, such as bullying or racism, was observed during the inspection week. Pupils are courteous to each other and to adults. Inspectors collecting their lunch were inundated with unprompted offers of help from pupils of all ages! As teachers move about the school, they greet pupils and exchange an encouraging word or two. All pupils respond to this very positively. The majority of parents who contributed to the questionnaire or to the Parents' Meeting believed that pupils are well behaved.

9. Pupils have good, constructive relationships with each other and with their teachers. Most pupils are capable of working well together, most play well together and no exclusion from activities was observed during the inspection. The school cares effectively for pupils who have special educational needs. They are identified early, their needs are established, and targets are set.

10. The school's procedures for promoting the personal development of pupils are good. The school has worked hard and successfully to develop the personal attributes of all its pupils. Many show initiative and are willing to take responsibility; for example they set equipment up for lessons, help at mealtimes, distribute books, take registers to the office and tidy resources. Older pupils befriend and help the younger ones, for example in reading.

They are involved in the daily routines of the school and help each other when asked. Pupils gain in confidence as they progress through the key stages.

11. Pupils reflect on, and most understand, the impact of their action on others. Personal, social and health education lessons, and assemblies, all provide opportunities for reflection about behaviour, friendship and respecting differences between individuals.

12. The level of attendance at the school, when compared with national averages, is unsatisfactory. However, when compared with similar schools in Educational Action Zones, the level is broadly average. Furthermore, the level of unauthorised absences is average compared to all primary schools. The level of authorised absences is above average. It is due chiefly to illness and holidays; a small number of pupils make extended holidays to the Indian subcontinent. One pupil who refuses to attend school and one pupil with long standing attendance problems adversely affect the school's attendance figures.

13. The school has reduced the number of pupils with attendance levels below 90% to about a quarter of the school roll, this meets the targets set for them by the Educational Action Zone, but the school is continuing to work to increase attendance levels.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?

14. The quality of teaching across the school is good overall. Teaching was at least satisfactory or better in nearly all lessons observed during the inspection. Teaching was good or better in two out of three lessons. In the nursery, teaching was always good and in reception it was satisfactory in all lessons. In Years 1 and 2, teaching was good or better in all lessons. In Key Stage 2, teaching ranged from unsatisfactory to excellent and it was satisfactory or better in almost all lessons. A good proportion of the very good or better teaching is in Years 1, 5 and 6. In the previous report, teaching was judged to be sound and in several respects good. The present findings show an improvement since then. Parents at the Parents' Meeting commented positively on the level of good teaching.

15. The quality of teaching in the nursery is always good and has a significant impact on children's learning. The quality of teaching in the reception class is satisfactory. In both classes, there is a good balance between teacher directed activities and those that the children can choose for themselves. The teaching is based on very good planning that identifies clear learning targets in all areas. Groups of children are organised very well and have good access to resources, which fosters the purposeful working atmosphere and good behaviour. Children have very short attention spans, especially in the nursery, and the teachers have to work very hard to keep them interested. The teachers provide activities that are interesting and stimulating and encourage all children to take an active part in the lessons. However, there are many occasions when children stay on the edge of the group and do not take part in the speaking and listening sessions. There are very good assessment procedures for tracking children's progress, which the teachers use successfully to plan the next step in children's learning. Nursery nurses and learning support staff are deployed very effectively in lessons and make a very positive contribution to children's learning.

16. The quality of teaching and learning in the five-to-seven year age group is good. Teachers' planning is very good; it sets out clear guidance of what pupils are expected to learn and learning objectives are shared with the pupils. There are good open-ended questions to enable most pupils to learn basic skills and make pupils think hard about their answers. For example, in a good design and technology lesson in a Year 2 class, the teacher, by assessing pupils' responses to her questions, was able to emphasise and recapitulate certain basic facts. This helped most pupils reinforce their learning of bearers

and axles and how they could be joined to make a moving mechanism. Lessons are paced well ensuring most pupils are suitably challenged and their interest held.

17. In the seven-to-eleven year age group teaching is good. When teaching is very good it is characterised by high expectations, the teachers have a good knowledge of the subjects they are teaching; appropriate activities are set that meet the needs of all the pupils and the lesson moves at a good pace. The very good and occasionally excellent teaching, has an effective impact and pupils' learning is very good. In less effective lessons, although satisfactory, group work did not always meet the needs of all pupils.

18. The quality of teaching for pupils with special educational needs, for pupils with English as an additional language and for those from ethnic backgrounds is good. Teachers take great pains to ensure that all pupils are included in all activities, irrespective of their prior attainment. As a consequence, pupils with specific needs make good progress in their learning. Teaching for all these pupils is fit for the purpose.

19. Teachers' subject knowledge is good. Technical competence in the teaching of basic skills is good, and consequently the literacy and numeracy strategies are being taught well. This was demonstrated in a very good numeracy lesson for Year 5 pupils on division. The teacher gave good consolidation of methods of division and consequently the pupils learnt the concept well. Individual teachers also display specialised expertise in literacy, science and design and technology.

20. Planning is very good throughout the school and learning objectives are clearly identified. These are effectively shared with the pupils at the beginning of the lessons. This ensures pupils are fully aware of their own learning. For example, in a very good science lesson, pupils were told that by the end of the lesson they should be able to name the parts of a flower and their functions and that flowering plants produce flowers that have male and female functions. This was a very practical lesson where pupils used magnifying glasses to explore and learn the names of the plants well and this ensured that work is well matched to their individual needs.

21. Overall, teachers have high expectations of what pupils can achieve and the level of challenge is high in most lessons. In the very best lessons, it is very high and pupils are clearly motivated to learn new skills, as seen in a design and technology lesson in Year 6. The pupils had previously designed and made a circuit to power a motor. In this lesson, they had to work as a team to design and make a suitable vehicle that would use the motor. The teacher reinforced that she wanted only finished vehicles of good quality. Her enthusiasm and inspirational teaching was very good, consequently the levels of achievement for pupils of all abilities in this lesson was high.

22. Teaching methods are effective across the school. A strong feature is the use of practical activity to ensure lessons are made interesting, promoting effective learning. For instance, in an art and design lesson for pupils in one of the Year 5 classes, the pupils practised their cutting skills before attempting to cut out intricate paper patterns to make a collage. Pupils are grouped according to ability in many lessons and this enables all pupils to make good progress. Information and communication technology is used effectively to support learning throughout the school.

23. Teachers manage pupils well in lessons and their expectations of behaviour are high. On the odd occasion when there is a lapse in pupils' behaviour it is dealt with in a caring but firm way. Staff have established a positive rapport with the pupils and this results in a good atmosphere for learning across the school. The majority of pupils respond positively to this and, as a result, behaviour in lessons is good.

24. Teachers use time effectively in most lessons. Some teachers use white boards to demonstrate teaching points and to assist pupils in their understanding of new concepts.

25. The school's procedures for assessing pupils' progress are outstanding in mathematics and English. They are good in science and sound in all other subjects. Overall, the quality of marking is good, and as a result, pupils are appropriately informed about their own learning. The setting of individual targets and pupils' self-assessment is a strong feature throughout the school. Teachers provide appropriate opportunities for homework and it is often used well to support learning in class.

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

26. The school provides a full Foundation Stage curriculum for pupils from when they first enter the school until they leave the reception class. This means that children make good progress towards the Early Learning Goals by the time they leave the reception class. The curriculum in Key Stages 1 and 2 is good. The school provides a broad curriculum that is balanced over each key stage and meets statutory requirements to implement the Programmes of Study of the National Curriculum and the locally agreed syllabus for religious education. The National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies have been implemented well and have had a positive impact on raising standards. The provision for extra-curricular activities and personal and social education is good. There are appropriate arrangements for sex, health and drugs education. All pupils have good access to the curriculum and equal opportunities to benefit from it. The community makes a good contribution to the pupils' learning and the school benefits well from its contacts with local schools and colleges. The arrangements for collective acts of worship meet requirements.

27. The curriculum and learning opportunities for the children in the reception and nursery classes are good and provide a very well balanced range of learning opportunities, which encompasses the Early Learning Goals (ELGs). Strong features include successful strategies for teaching literacy and numeracy and very good planning for the needs of all the children. Time is appropriately allocated to the different areas of learning. Children enter the nursery with very poor attainment in all areas of learning. The majority of children will not achieve the ELGs by the time they enter Year 1.

28. The curriculum for pupils in Key Stages 1 and 2 is good. The curriculum for the core subjects of English, mathematics and science is very good. Pupils are taught the programmes of study relevant to their age, which considering their prior level of attainment is a high challenge for most pupils. However, this strategy is successful and results in a good level of achievement and improved results in these subjects. Pupils in Year 5 are taught in sets for English and mathematics; this is preparing pupils well for their time in Year 6. Opportunities to practise learning in the core subjects of English and mathematics across the curriculum are developing and this is helping pupils to consolidate their learning through practical activities. For example, pupils practise editing text in information and communication technology lessons and research skills in religious education. Satisfactory use is now being made of information and communication technology to promote learning in other subjects, for example the use of sensors to collect data in science and food technology.

29. The provision of support for pupils for whom English is an additional language (EAL) is good. The most recent EAL pupil arrived in the school in September 2001. She received additional support from teaching staff and learning support assistants. This pupil (previously speaking only Italian and Punjabi) is now speaking very good English and understands well.

Clearly, the school has a good understanding how to support EAL pupils and implements well-trying and successful procedures. Throughout the school, the provision for pupils with special educational needs is good. Statutory requirements are met. Pupils are identified early and they are appropriately assessed. Proper procedures are followed in order to gain support from outside agencies. An appropriate register of special educational needs is kept and assessment of pupils' progress is monitored.

30. The school makes good use of visitors to the school to support curricular provision. Visitors have included such people as the local fire service, theatre groups, history groups and football coaches. Pupils make visits out to places such as a local Tudor manor house, a museum and art gallery and rivers and waterways as part of their geography work. Young pupils take part in residential visits. This is exceptional provision and makes a very good contribution to these young pupils' social development. Teachers report that pupils show increased independence and improve their ability to work together as a result of this residential visit. Provision for extra-curricular activities is good and include for example choir, football, information and communication technology, construction and recorder clubs who meet at various times during the week. The information and communication technology club is open to parents and many of them work with their children in this club. The number of extra-curricular activities was a matter of concern to parents, but taking into account the range of clubs, the times they meet and the residential and school visits the inspection team do not agree with the parents' views.

31. The school makes good provision to ensure equality of access and opportunity for all pupils. Teachers provide an appropriate range of activities set to a high level of challenge compared to pupils' prior attainment. They support all pupils well through targeting particular groups of pupils for additional support and learning support assistants work closely with individual pupils or groups of pupils to ensure all achieve as well as possible. All pupils are thus fully included in learning in lessons. The school identified areas of underachievement by gender and boys have received well-targeted support for writing and girls for mathematics, as a consequence.

32. Provision for personal, social, health and citizenship education is good and although the school is currently working on a scheme of work to ensure better progression throughout the school, the quality of this provision is already good because teaching staff are mindful of the needs of both individuals and collectively of the pupils in their care and are skilled at providing support through class discussion and debate and individual reflection. Such activities as "What am I good at?" in which classmates contribute to a written record for each pupil does much to raise self-esteem. Citizenship is well promoted through the school's work in the community, the visits to local places of worship that represent the main faiths of the community and the sponsorship of a Kenyan child to enable her to attend school.

33. Links with the local secondary schools and colleges are good. The school benefits well from links in information and communication technology that provide both teachers and pupils with support and training. Teachers' knowledge has improved rapidly over recent times and the pupils have had the opportunity to use a range of specialist equipment. Standards in this subject have risen. Much work has also been carried out in relation to pupils' personal development through the Excellence in Cities Mini Education Action Zone project.

34. The school makes good overall provision for the pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. The provision for cultural development has improved since the previous report and is now good. Other provision has also improved, with provision for social development being very good.

35. The spiritual development of pupils is good. All staff provide good role models and evidence of concern and compassion are part of this. The pupils are both valued and respected and their achievements celebrated. In lessons, pupils' views and answers to questions are valued; teachers insist that everyone is given the time to think and to express their ideas. All members of the community are encouraged to treat each other with respect and dignity. Good provision is made within religious education for pupils to learn about the values and beliefs of others. Pupils make visits to places of worship of different faiths. Occasionally, opportunities to develop pupils' spirituality are missed, such as the inconsistent use of music as pupils enter the hall for assembly. More consistent use of music would help to both focus pupils' attention and create an appropriate atmosphere. The consistent use of reflection during assemblies is very good; it gives pupils very good opportunities to think about a particular theme, such as the beauty around them. In one assembly during the inspection, the deputy headteacher talked about pupils appreciating the beauty of nature in a tree suddenly covered in blossom. Good provision is made in the school's personal, social and health education policy for pupils to look at, for example, the difficulties that other people experience. In a Year 2 lesson, pupils thought about the difficulties that different groups of people had in using transport, including the blind, the elderly and a mother with a pushchair.

36. Good provision is also made for moral development. The school places great emphasis on the promotion of self-discipline and taking responsibility for one's own actions. Teachers set clear expectations of what is right and wrong from an early age. In lessons, teachers ensure pupils understand the morals in stories. In one such lesson, pupils were clear that you should not judge people by what they look like, but what is inside them is what matters. Certificates presented during the weekly celebration assembly acknowledge effort as well as good work. Pupils are encouraged to consider and discuss moral issues, for example by taking part in the School Council at which issues such as bullying and bad language are discussed. They think of others less well off than themselves by giving to charities such as Children in Need.

37. The social development of pupils is very good. Teachers encourage pupils to work together during lessons, such as in a physical education lesson where mixed pairs of pupils worked happily together to produce balances. Pupils play in teams and in musical groups and are confident to take part in impromptu activities such as acting in assemblies. The School Council, with representatives from each class, represents the views of the pupils and negotiates issues and problems identified by the staff and pupils. A very important way of promoting relations and friendships is the weekly 'Book Friends' lesson. This pairs an older class with a younger class to share the pleasures of reading. All pupils enjoy this activity and learn and improve more than just reading.

38. Pupils' cultural development is good. This is an improvement since the previous report. The school celebrates the festivals of the Christian church as well as those of other faiths and cultures. Pupils sponsor a child in Africa and the pupils in Year 2 learn about her life. They have looked at African masks in art and a range of instruments from other countries is used in music. Pupils recently took part in a Black History month and at Christmas performed an African version of Cinderella. Discussions in assemblies sometimes include people from other lands and cultures; Martin Luther King was one such used during the inspection. Pupils study their own culture through English, art, geography, and history.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

39. The pastoral support and guidance provided by the school for its pupils are good with elements that are very good. The staff at the school all work very hard to create a warm and welcoming atmosphere in which pupils feel valued, safe and secure. Pupils are well known to staff and they know that staff are always willing to help them. The good relationships that exist within school contribute to the good attitudes that pupils develop and the good learning that takes place.

40. The school has good procedures for child protection. The two designated teachers are familiar with the local arrangements. Good attention is paid to ensuring that all staff are aware of the need for vigilance. There are clear details in the staff handbook of what they should be looking out for and how to report and record any concerns; these records are well monitored by the headteacher. To help pupils to protect themselves, the school aims to raise pupils' awareness and build their confidence. The school pays considerable attention to working with social services in the interest of pupils looked after in the community. The school has a thorough health and safety policy and other policies concerning organising school trips and general safety guidelines within lessons are well used. Fire drills are held regularly and all alarms, appliances and equipment, including physical education apparatus, are tested as necessary. Pupils are well supervised throughout the day.

41. The school has very good procedures to monitor and promote good behaviour and to eliminate any form of bullying and harassment. The behaviour policy was reviewed last year and is very clear and straightforward. Very good records are kept of inappropriate behaviour and, because they are very carefully and regularly monitored, the school has accurate information that allows support to be effectively targeted and knows that the number of incidents is decreasing. Pupils who experience difficulties with their behaviour are well supported in school. Many of the parents of those pupils involved are fully supportive of the school in this. All data is analysed for differences between those of different gender, ethnicity or ability.

42. The support and guidance offered to pupils to help their personal development is good. All staff give good caring support to the pupils. This includes the headteacher, who goes out of his way to talk and listen to pupils and to commend them on their personal successes. There are a number of systems in place that promote personal development such as the School Council, pupil play leaders and 'Book Friends'. Midday supervisors have been trained to promote play after lunch and encourage pupils to enjoy their time outside. Personal development is not formally recorded, but annual reports to parents give good details of pupils' attitudes and personal development. Some support from outside agencies is available for individual pupils to help them with, for example developing their self-esteem and self-management.

43. There has been considerable improvement in the school's procedures to monitor and promote pupils' academic progress. The procedures for monitoring and supporting this are now very good overall; the best practice exists in English, science and mathematics. In these subjects, there has been a very detailed analysis of pupils' strengths and weaknesses in both statutory and optional tests and in their ongoing schoolwork. In addition, any other factors are noted and the impact of each looked at carefully. Those factors that are not related solely to a particular cohort of pupils are carefully considered and the action needed is developed. The information from all this data analysis is used to inform curriculum planning very well, for example to focus on writing in English and practising the reading and interpretation of questions in mathematics. Assessment is used to facilitate the setting of targets for individuals, groups, classes and year groups. Day-to-day assessment is used well to quickly identify and target any difficulties encountered. In order to ensure that pupils

are making progress, they are tested and assessed at regular intervals. Older pupils are being involved increasingly in assessing their own and their peers' work. This means that pupils have a good knowledge of their own learning and what they need to do to improve. While teachers have a very good overview of how each of their pupils is doing, the assessment co-ordinator is also watchful and keeps a close eye on all data to ensure that pupils are given the best opportunities to improve.

44. Although the level of attendance is unsatisfactory, the school has good procedures to monitor and promote attendance. Registers are correctly marked and absences recorded and followed up where this is necessary. The school makes contact on the first day of absence for pupils whose attendance is below 90 per cent; those with attendance levels below 80 per cent may have attendance targets. A weekly trophy is awarded to the class with the best attendance; pupils enjoy winning this accolade. The school makes very good efforts to encourage 100 per cent attendance. A recent very successful initiative, that was popular with both pupils and parents, was a draw amongst eligible pupils for tickets to a Wolverhampton Wanderers' football match. The school has good support from both the educational welfare service and the Excellence in Cities Mini Education Action Zone team. The level of attendance is very well monitored by the school so it knows exactly how it is doing. The data is analysed by gender, ethnicity and ability and the information is well used to formulate ideas on how to improve attendance further.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

45. The parents have positive views of the school. They are happy with all the areas of the questionnaire. They are particularly pleased with the expectations set for their children, the good teaching and the way the school helps their children become mature and responsible. They also say their children like school, they feel comfortable in approaching it and their children make good progress. Inspectors agree with all the positive comments made by parents.

46. The information parents receive is good. Regular newsletters keep parents up to date with a wide variety of events, activities and opportunities, such as the information and communication technology classes to be run for parents in school. Information includes attendance levels, meetings between parents and teachers and broad outline information about what is taught over time in subjects. Other information is targeted at those who need it. Reports on how their children are doing are sent to parents annually; they are of good quality. The details they provide, especially in mathematics and English, on the skills that pupils have mastered, what they understand and what they can do are good. All reports are enhanced by the general comments made by teachers on pupils' attitudes, behaviour and personal development and these show good knowledge of pupils by staff. However, no targets are set within reports. Parents have regular opportunities to meet with teachers to discuss their children, but the meetings are not always well attended. Other evenings to discuss curriculum areas such as mathematics, learning skills and National Curriculum Assessments have also been organised.

47. The school works hard to establish and develop good relationships with parents. They generally feel that the school works closely with them and they are comfortable to approach the school with any concerns. Should a problem arise over behaviour, parents are generally supportive of the school in trying to rectify it. The headteacher meets regularly with parent governors in an effort to improve contact and communication; these meetings were set up as a result of a parental survey that identified communication as an issue. These meetings have resulted in some alterations, such as the amount of notice given to parents about any events at the school.

48. The school encourages parents to come into school to help in the classroom, but the uptake of this is very disappointing. One mother comes in regularly in the lower part of the school and another helps with swimming. A few parents came to work alongside their children in a 'building strong structures' afternoon. This was greatly enjoyed by those who came and the school plans to hold more of such activities. Parents are invited to come to assemblies and shows at school; attendance at these events is satisfactory. The 'Friends of Stowlawn' run events for parents and pupils and the monies raised are used to support the school in its work.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

49. The headteacher has been in post for two years. He provides very good leadership, including a clear educational direction for the school. He is very hard working and provides strong, influential and supportive leadership. The headteacher, ably supported by the deputy headteacher and with good support from all staff, has successfully brought about necessary changes in the quality of teaching, the curriculum and the learning environment. Team working is a strong feature of the school. Everyone contributes to its development and the capacity for further improvement is good.

50. All key issues from the previous inspection have been addressed. Although the results of the Year 6 pupils in the National Curriculum Assessments of 2001 were very disappointing for the school, there are reasons why they have continued to decline, especially in 2001. Of the pupils taking the test, there were a high proportion of pupils with special educational needs; of the seven pupils who joined that year from other schools, three had special needs. The pupils had had eight teachers in their last five terms before taking the tests, which was mainly due to long-term staff illness and teachers who left the school for other appointments. Standards in information and communication technology have improved. The role of the subject co-ordinators has been redefined and all staff now have job descriptions. The school now promotes very well pupils' personal development and their cultural understanding. Greater use is made of the data on pupils' attainment and progress leading to effective action being taken for further improvements.

51. The senior management team and core-subject co-ordinators and the nursery co-ordinator effectively monitor, evaluate and support teaching and the curriculum. The quality of leadership of non-core foundation and special needs co-ordinators is sound but needs further improvement to bring them in line with the high calibre of leadership of the core-subject co-ordinators. There have been many staff changes and absences in recent years that have resulted in a lack of continuity in the leadership provided by subject co-ordinators. There is, at the moment, greater stability of staffing. The headteacher has redefined the managerial roles and all staff have job descriptions. Monitoring of teaching and learning is undertaken effectively by the senior management team and core subject co-ordinators. While the other co-ordinators monitor teachers' plans and sample pupils' work, they are less secure about the standards that are achieved by pupils in their subjects and therefore the added value the school achieves.

52. The leadership and management of the special education needs department are sound. Good progress has been made since the last inspection report because more time is available for the co-ordinator to fulfil her responsibilities. The governor with oversight for this area is very committed to it and brings a useful perspective. In order to develop provision further, the school needs to ensure that other staff are given the opportunities to develop their expertise in this area of work.

53. Equal opportunities for both pupils and staff are well provided for by the headteacher, governing body and the senior staff. There are good relationships throughout the school with

no evidence of racial or other forms of conflict. The school is effective in promoting the needs of individuals within the context of the school as a whole and is committed to the principles of social and educational inclusion.

54. The governing body plays an important part in shaping the direction of the school. The governing body meets regularly and fulfils its statutory requirements well. The chair of governors visits the school regularly and discusses with the headteacher issues as and when they arise. He is a true critical friend and is aware of the strengths and areas for improvement of the school. When the present headteacher was appointed, he was aware that some of the newly appointed governors were not clear about their roles. He therefore wrote papers and booklets to help them become more knowledgeable about their responsibilities as governors. The governors are kept well informed by the headteacher about the life of the school and the standards and quality of education pupils receive. Governors visit the school regularly and have first hand experience of how the school runs. The governing body has a sound understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses.

55. The school improvement plan (SIP) is good, with priorities for improvement clearly identified and targeted. The school takes effective action to meet its targets. There is a long-term strategic financial plan. The carry forward of funds from one year to the next is used to maintain staffing, to fund the high quality computer suite, and to further improve learning resources and the quality of the school environment. For example, there have been considerable improvements to the buildings and accommodation over the past two years. The educational planning and priorities in the SIP are very closely linked to financial planning. All subject leaders have the opportunity to influence priorities, which contribute to the SIP, and help focus the school on what the specific priorities are. The plan is reviewed every six months and this process helps to produce flexible but focussed improvement. The governing body reviews the progress of the plan and was involved in drawing it up. The financial management of the school is good with the SIP making a valuable contribution to shaping the budget.

56. The administration of the school is effective and unobtrusive. The very experienced administration officer carries out day-to-day financial management effectively with support from the local education authority's finance team. Although there had not been an audit over the past few years, there is one planned by the local education auditor next week. The finance committee of the governing body regularly monitors the spending of the budget. The chair of the finance committee also monitors the monthly budget statements. These sensible procedures enable the teachers to concentrate on their work without unnecessary distraction. The school makes effective use of new technologies including a computerised system for monitoring and tracking pupils' performance.

57. The school makes good use of specific grants. For example, the grant for special educational needs is used effectively and spending is topped up from the main budget. The Excellence in Cities Mini Education Action Zone project supports a learning support assistant who works with pupils on a one-to-one basis and helps in the target setting for the pupils. The principles of best value are embedded in the management of the school. Comparison of costs is made with similar schools and tenders are obtained for significant planned spending. The school employs sufficient staff that are well matched to the demands of the curriculum and support roles. Procedures for the induction of new staff are good. The accommodation, although not easy to manage, is good and is well cared for by the caretaker. Learning resources are adequate overall, although the school is aware that the library is rather small. Future plans are that it is to be improved and extended. These plans should go ahead when finances allow. Overall, accessibility of resources including the recently refurbished computer suite is satisfactory.

58. Taking into account the very good leadership of the headteacher, the very good management of the school and the effective contribution of the governing body together with the shared commitment to improvement, the school gives good value for money. The school has good capacity to succeed.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

To further develop the effectiveness of the school and continue to raise standards, the governors, headteacher and staff should:

- (1) Improve standards of attainment in music by ensuring that:
 - all aspects of the subject are taught to sufficient depth;
 - planning of lessons clearly states the learning intention and is appropriate and in line with the scheme of work;
 - learning intentions are shared with the pupils;
 - pupils' acquisition of skills are taught progressively and systematically throughout the school;
 - all pupils are on task during the lesson.

(See paragraphs 2, 6, 35, 134, 135, 137 and 138)

- (2) Improve the role of the non-core foundation subjects and special needs co-ordinators by:
 - sharing the good leadership and management by the English, mathematics and science co-ordinators and similarly developing this good practice within the non-core foundation subjects and special needs co-ordinators.

(See paragraphs 51, 80, 90, 91, 94, 98, 104, 113, 143 and 149)

- (3) Improve pupils' attendance by:
 - continuing to monitor systematically and rigorously authorised and unauthorised absences.

(See paragraphs 12 and 44)

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	54
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	80

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Number	1	10	27	14	1	1	0
Percentage	2	20	50	26	2	2	0

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

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	12.5	233
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	0	100

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	0	0
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	1	29

English as an additional language	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	23

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	48
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	17

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	7.62

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.52

National comparative data	5.2
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National comparative data	0.5
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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 1 (Year 2)

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2001	22	14	36

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	13	16	15
	Girls	12	11	10
	Total	25	27	25
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	69 (88)	75 (88)	69 (96)
	National	84 (83)	86 (84)	91 (90)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	15	15	15
	Girls	12	10	12
	Total	27	25	27
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	75 (88)	69 (96)	75 (92)
	National	85 (84)	89 (88)	89 (88)

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

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

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2001	18	23	41

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	7	8	8
	Girls	13	13	14
	Total	20	21	22
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	49 (73)	51 (60)	54 (83)
	National	75 (75)	71 (72)	87 (85)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	N/A	N/A	N/A
	Girls	N/A	N/A	N/A
	Total	N/A	N/A	N/A
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	N/A (77)	N/A (63)	N/A (67)
	National	72 (70)	74 (72)	82 (79)

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

Ethnic background of pupils

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	5
Black – African heritage	0
Black – other	23
Indian	21
Pakistani	4
Bangladeshi	0
Chinese	0
White	180
Any other minority ethnic group	0

This table refers to pupils of compulsory school age only.

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers and classes: YR – Y6

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	9.2
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	25.3
Average class size	29

Education support staff: YR – Y6

Total number of education support staff	6
Total aggregate hours worked per week	26

Qualified teachers and support staff: nursery

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	0.6
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	25
Total number of education support staff	1
Total aggregate hours worked per week	0.6
Number of pupils per FTE adult	12.5

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Recruitment of teachers

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	2
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	3
Total number of vacant teaching posts (FTE)	0
Number of vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of a term or more (FTE)	0
Number of unfilled vacancies or vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of less than one term (FTE)	0

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	6	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.

Financial information

Financial year	00/01
	£
Total income	437,448
Total expenditure	443,902
Expenditure per pupil	2,017.74
Balance brought forward from previous year	18,960
Balance carried forward to next year	12,505

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	258
Number of questionnaires returned	84

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	63	32	4	1	0
My child is making good progress in school.	59	35	5	1	0
Behaviour in the school is good.	57	32	5	2	4
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	45	40	9	4	2
The teaching is good.	67	32	0	1	0
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	65	24	7	4	0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	72	24	1	1	1
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	83	17	0	0	0
The school works closely with parents.	55	35	6	2	1
The school is well led and managed.	70	23	5	0	2
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	67	32	0	0	1
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	60	26	2	5	6

Summary of parents' and carers' responses

The parents have very positive views of the school.

Other issues raised by parents

No other significant issues were raised at the Parents' Meeting.

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

AREAS OF LEARNING FOR CHILDREN IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

59. The overall provision in the Foundation Stage is good and the overall quality of teaching is sound. The children make good progress including those with special educational needs, pupils from ethnic background and those for whom English is an additional language. This shows an improvement since the last inspection when pupils' progress was considered to be sound.

60. The children enter the nursery on a part-time basis soon after they have had their third birthday. They transfer to the reception class on a full-time basis in the year in which they become five. At the time of inspection there were 25 part-time and 19 full-time children attending in the Foundation Stage of learning. The good induction procedures, which include home and school visits, together with the good relationships, mean that the children soon feel secure; this enables most of them to settle quickly into their class routines.

61. Attainment on entry to the nursery is very low, particularly in the areas of communication, language, and literacy, social and emotional development. The majority of the children's learning experiences only occur in school; this does impede their progress. The results of the most recent baseline assessment tests, taken in the autumn or spring term depending of the age of the children, indicate that the children's attainment is still well below expectations of the local education authority's baseline assessment scheme in all areas of learning. Again, they are particularly so in all communication skills and social and emotional development. This is because the children find difficulty in retaining key vocabulary, despite the good teaching in the nursery. Inspection evidence indicates that by the end of the reception year, the majority of the children are unlikely to achieve the Early Learning Goals (ELGs) in all areas of learning. The few more-able children are likely to just achieve them.

Personal, social and emotional development

62. The personal, social and emotional development of the children are below that expected for their age. Some of the children are co-operative and get on well with each other and want to do well in their work. They share things and take turns and help each other. For example, when they get equipment out or put it away. Others, especially in the nursery, find it difficult to share equipment and often need the support of the teacher, the nursery nurse or support staff to be persuaded to let others have a go, such as with the equipment in the role play area or on the tricycles and large wheeled toys in the outdoor play area. The children learn from each other as well as from their teachers and most listen to what their peers say. However, there are a few children who stay on the edge of the group and do not take a full part in the listening and speaking sessions. Some of the children have the confidence to share their ideas in discussion or when completing a piece of work. About half of the children use their initiative by moving to work groups and organising their own equipment. During a lesson in the reception class, the teacher told the story of 'Farmer Duck' where the duck did all the work on the farm. The farmer became fatter as he did nothing. The duck became very tired and the other animals helped him. The children, after much discussion, realised this and some felt sorry for the duck and could explain why everyone needs to help each other. However, many children had difficulty in speaking in sentences and tended to use only words or short phrases to explain their answers. Many know the difference between right

and wrong and know that their teachers trust them and think they work hard. The teachers provide interesting activities that are planned to extend their development.

63. The quality of teaching in the nursery is good and sound in the reception class. It is one of the reasons why the children make good progress. It reflects the good understanding that the teachers, nursery nurse and support staff have of this age range and of these children in particular. It means that the teaching methods are age appropriate and based on their individual needs.

Communication, language and literacy

64. As a result of the sound teaching, the children achieve well over time. However, their attainment is well below that expected for children of this age. The majority of the children will not reach the Early Learning Goals by the time they enter Year 1. The more-able children will do so. Although the teachers work very hard to introduce and consolidate new vocabulary, children do not always retain it. Because the children receive most of their experiences in speaking and listening in school, teachers are very careful to model the use of language for a particular purpose. As an example, in a good lesson in the nursery, the teacher showed the children a turnip and asked them if they had ever eaten one. She used the turnip to introduce words such as 'roots' and 'hard'. She told them the story of the 'Enormous Turnip' and asked them to act out characters from the story. All the children enjoyed this activity especially the part when they had to pretend to pull the turnip up. Teachers continuously challenge children to participate in conversation.

65. Books have a prominent place in the classrooms and library corners look inviting. When the children first attended the nursery many of them did not know how to hold a book and were not interested in looking at the pictures. However, now they sit quite quietly looking at the pictures. The children choose both fiction and non-fiction although only a minority of older children can talk about the main events in their favourite stories. By the time they enter Year 1 higher-attaining children know a number of frequently used words and attempt to decode others by using their well taught phonic skills.

66. Most of the children by the time they enter the Year 1 class can write their own name unaided. A few children, who are less skilled, select their own nametags and copy from them to write their name on their pictures. A few more-able children in the reception class can write simple words and phrases with simple words spelled correctly. They make attempts at words they do not know, usually phonetically. For most children of this age their letters are not clearly shaped or formed correctly.

67. The teaching in this area is good in the nursery and sound in the reception class. Questioning is good and challenges children's thinking. As a result, the children gain new knowledge and understanding week by week and their understanding is built up in such a way that the children can cope with it.

Mathematical development

68. The children enter the reception class with mathematical skills, which generally are well below those expected for children of a similar age, although their understanding of number is slightly higher. Children in the nursery can count to five, more-able children to ten. For example, in one lesson the nursery nurse played a game with them about the number of frogs jumping into the pool and how many frogs were left. The more able children could do it and tell say how many frogs were left on the side of the pool. However, most of the group could not, even though it was a very practical activity with an illustrated pool on a board and toy frogs. In the reception class, most of the children can count and recognise numbers up

to ten, more-able children to twenty. They learn number rhymes such as 'Five Little Speckled Frogs' and know several number rhymes and enjoy playing number games. They have painted 'Teddy Bears' and recorded how many blocks tall they are. Some children have a sound knowledge of shapes and can name squares, rectangles, circles and triangles and describe in simple terms their properties. The more-able children have knowledge and understanding of more shapes and name some solid shapes.

69. Teaching in this area is good and accounts for the good progress that the children are making. This is rooted in good planning that interprets the requirements of the National Numeracy Strategy for the children in an interesting way. The activities are interesting and so the children work hard, sustaining their concentration more than they usually do. The nursery nurses make a good contribution to the children's learning because they are well briefed and attend planning meetings. There were missed opportunities during snack time to reinforce pupils' learning of number. The children find difficulty in retaining correct mathematical vocabulary although this is introduced and consolidated systematically.

Knowledge and understanding of the world

70. Standards are below expectations in this area of learning by the time children enter Year 1. Nevertheless, sound teaching enables them to make good progress from their prior attainment. In learning to take care of the world around them, the children know that their goldfish must be fed and looked after. In enhancing their surroundings, they plant seeds and know that these need water and light to make them grow healthily. They are taught about the effects of litter on the environment, especially in their classrooms during snack time when they are careful to put their litter in the bin. Computer skills are taught soundly; thus children are gaining confidence in controlling the mouse to play simple games. However, most of the children cannot use the computer to write their names or write text without much support from the staff. The children do not have a clear sense of chronology although some children know that what happened yesterday is history.

71. The teaching and learning in this area is sound because the teachers' explanations and questioning encourage the children to use the skills they have and extend their understanding further.

Physical development

72. Attainment in this area is below expectations for children of this age. Their fine motor control is developing. However, many younger children, do not have the ability to form their letters and figures correctly. They enjoy using paint and used cut vegetables to print a picture. Most of the children can put their coats on but have difficulty in doing them up. There is a very good outside play area and the children have regular opportunities to play with large wheeled toys, these activities extend their development of their large motor control. The school has two halls, one of which is solely for the use of Years 1 and 2 pupils and the children in the Foundation Stage. It is appropriately equipped for indoor physical activities and is used regularly and well to develop the children's physical development. The children are gaining confidence in moving around the hall and can run, jump and skip with increasing control. Although they do not always use the space well, the children are increasingly aware of the need to exercise care because teachers draw their attention to issues of health and safety.

73. Pupils' attitudes are good and many are enthusiastic and busy. They are interested in what they are doing and older children enjoy talking about their work. Although they are proud of their work, few of the children know how well they are doing and what they need to do to

get better at their work. Most of the children lack confidence and the behaviour of a few children is less than satisfactory.

74. The teaching in this area is satisfactory and some times good. The majority of children are unlikely to achieve the ELGs by the time they enter Year 1.

Creative development

75. Attainment in creative development is below that expected at this age. Although the children enter the nursery with very poor skills in this area of learning, good teaching means that they soon learn to control mark-making tools such as brushes and pencils. In the nursery and the reception class, the children develop sound working routines. For example, they put aprons on without being reminded before they paint. They enjoy painting and gluing and drawing. Teachers provide opportunities for drama and imaginative play in the home corner. For example, the nursery children made a meal and used the toy microwave oven to cook the vegetables. The teacher joined in with the children and every opportunity was taken to encourage them to talk about what they were doing. The children imaginatively explore colour, texture and sound. Their skills in cutting and sticking are developing because of the well-planned opportunities to practice. A large majority of the children know their primary colours. The children sing songs and nursery rhymes and often sing in tune. They understand that instruments make different sounds, as demonstrated in a physical education lesson when the teacher used different instruments to tell the children what to do. Later in the lesson, the children also used instruments to inform the rest of the class what to do.

76. The quality of teaching in the nursery is good and sound in the reception class in this area of learning. The majority of children are unlikely to achieve the ELGs in this area of learning before they enter Year 1.

77. Parents are made to feel very welcome to come into the classes at anytime and some help in the nursery on a regular basis. The Carers' and Toddlers' Group meet weekly in the school and is well supported by the 'Sure Start' team. The provision is good and the children have the opportunity to play with their parents or carers with a wide range of equipment. The speech and language team from the local education authority also visit the group. One afternoon a week the school finances a playgroup, which is run by a nursery nurse.

78. Accommodation and resources for the Foundation Stage are good. The nursery and the reception class are kept tidy and provide a stimulating environment for the children. Staff regularly change displays and learning activities to sustain the children's interest.

79. The overall quality of teaching is satisfactory. In the nursery it is good. With 100 per cent of lessons being at least satisfactory and two out of five lessons being good. Planning is very good and targets are set for small groups of children. The assessment systems are very good and cover all the different areas of learning in the Foundation Stage. Teachers use the results of these assessments to match work accurately to the children's varying needs. The nursery nurse and the learning support assistant give much help and assistance to the teachers and children. All staff are very conscientious and hard working. The children are eager and happy to come to school.

ENGLISH

80. All pupils make good progress in English, as the result of good teaching that is very well co-ordinated. The previous report indicates that standards in reading and writing were

broadly average for both seven and 11-year-olds. The attainment of the majority of the current Year 2 pupils is below the national average for reading and writing.

81. The attainment of the present Year 6 pupils is slightly below the nationally expected levels in English, but standards in reading for the majority of pupils are average. This represents an apparent decline in standards since the previous inspection.

82. Several factors influence these results. The school has a considerable number of pupils with special educational needs, there has been a high turnover of staff in recent years and a large number of pupils join the school other than at official times. These three factors need to be taken into account when considering English results. The children enter the school with very poor language skills in comparison to children of a similar age. Many of the children are reluctant and hesitant communicators and have poor speaking and listening skills. Attainment of Year 2 pupils is below the national average. All pupils, including those with special educational needs, those with English as an additional language and those from ethnic backgrounds, make good progress in relation to their prior attainment. Most pupils appear to listen to what the teacher is saying, but only a small number reply to questions with relevant comment and detail. Most pupils require constant reminders to ensure that they understand the tasks and activities set for them. Many lower-attaining pupils, although appearing to listen carefully to their teachers, have difficulty in expressing their thoughts and ideas. Teachers work hard to compensate for pupils' lack of expressive vocabulary and modify questions well to match pupils' level of understanding. In a very good lesson in Year 1, the teacher captivated the pupils' interest by having a 'telephone conversation' with the nursery nurse. Pupils listened well and realised the importance of listening and the clarity of speech. In the development of this lesson, they were able to identify words, which have a similar sound but a different meaning. Pupils made very good progress in this lesson.

83. Pupils' speaking and listening skills in Year 6 have developed well. All teaching addresses the problem of communication, through good questioning and by the very good models of speaking provided by adults in the classroom. By Year 6, pupils have considerable confidence in speaking within the class and also to visitors. They listen well to their teacher and can reflect on the views of other pupils.

84. Pupils' attainment in reading is below the national average by the age of seven, but by the age of 11 is at the expected standard for this age group. All pupils, including those with special educational needs, those with English as an additional language and those from minority ethnic backgrounds, make good progress in their learning in relation to prior attainment. All pupils show an interest in books and respond well to stories in class and to the opportunities presented for reading individually and in groups. Some pupils have insufficient strategies to tackle new words. For instance, many younger pupils are aware of the names of letters but cannot connect this with the sound, so are unable to attempt new words. Even if pupils know the letter sounds they are unable to put them together to form words. Some pupils rely on adult support when reading and are hesitant and lack confidence. Many pupils have difficulty in understanding the book and cannot deduce or predict what might happen next without considerable support. Most pupils attempt to join in with class reading during the literacy hour. A small number of pupils in Year 2 are reading at the expected level and read accurately, fluently and with understanding.

85. By the age of 11, most pupils are reading at the expected level for their age. As a result of very focussed work by the teacher, pupils have made considerable improvements and many read fluently and with expression. Higher-attaining pupils predict events in a story and talk about their favourite books and authors. Many pupils know how to select an information book from the library. Reading records, which illustrate the progress and development of reading skills, are kept in all classes. The school works very hard to

encourage pupils to read. Teachers encourage pupils to take books home to share with parents. There are appropriate reading books in all classes and the library books are attractively displayed. The pupils are surrounded by an exciting collection of high quality books and many of the older pupils expressed a love of literature.

86. Pupils' attainment in writing is below the national average by the age of seven and just slightly below what is expected by the age of 11. The implementation of the National Literacy Strategy is having a positive impact on writing standards and pupils, when considering prior attainment, make good progress.

87. Pupils in Year 1 and 2 write for a wide variety of purposes. Work sampling indicates that they write poetry and stories. They retell traditional stories as well as create their own. In addition to this, they compile lists and order a sequence of events to present instructions for making a sandwich.

88. Older pupils have opportunities to write in a wide range of different genres. For instance, work sampling indicated that pupils have written poetry, stories, reports and instructions. Pupils make particularly good progress in Year 6 when their writing becomes evaluative and many are succinct when expressing their own opinions. For example, many pupils were successful when presenting a reasoned argument concerning animals in captivity. Most pupils have a sound understanding of basic grammar and the focus on raising standards in writing across the school is having a positive effect by the time they are 11 years of age. Teachers have a clear view of the stages of development in writing and there has been a good programme of staff training. Clearly this structure and concentration on developing basic skills is beginning to have a positive effect as pupils move through the school. Although presentation of work is usually good and letters are well formed the younger pupils do not use a cursive style of writing. In Years 5 and 6, pupils begin to adopt a cursive style. Due to very good teaching in Year 6 most pupils write neatly with a consistent cursive style. There is a consistent approach to the teaching of spelling, although this could still receive more attention to enable pupils to transfer their skills to their writing more regularly.

89. The quality of teaching and learning overall is good with examples of some very good teaching. In the very good lessons, teachers show confidence and good knowledge and understanding of the subject. Work is planned to be challenging and builds on pupils' knowledge, which raises attainment. This was evident in a Year 5 literacy lesson where the teacher skilfully conveyed her love of amusing poetry and challenged the pupils to create more imaginative and comic words to include in their poems. Some teachers make very good use of question and answer sessions to develop pupils' speaking and listening skills, skilfully adapting questions so that pupils of all abilities can succeed and respond. Target setting is firmly in place. Pupils are constantly reminded of their targets and receive appropriate encouragement and support to reach them. Older pupils are actively involved in setting their own targets. They have practice in evaluating their own work and the work of their peers considering the levels of attainment in the National Curriculum assessments. There is a lively pace to lessons and high expectations of pupils' work and behaviour. Where teaching is not so successful, the pace of lessons is too slow and the teacher's expectations of what the pupils can achieve are too low.

90. Assessment procedures for literacy are excellent. The school has introduced some very successful systems to assess and track the pupils' progress. The information collected as a result of a wide range of assessments and tests from when the pupils first start school are collated and analysed to identify areas of development for the pupils, the staff and the school. In lessons, the use of regular assessment to inform future planning of pupils' individual needs relates to the targets set. Marking throughout the school is positive, often relates to the pupils' targets and indicates what pupils need to do to improve their work.

91. The co-ordinator has worked very hard to introduce new systems and procedures, or to revise others, which are in use, by refining and improving them. She has had a significant impact on standards, through her work in leading the implementation of the National Literacy Strategy. Because of the very good monitoring procedures in place, she has a very good understanding of strengths and weaknesses in the subject. Homework is set regularly, but is not always completed by all pupils. Resources are adequate to meet the needs of the curriculum although there are too few information books in the library for the number of pupils in the school. The library is also small for the number of pupils in the school.

MATHEMATICS

92. The provision in mathematics is good.

93. Standards are unsatisfactory by the end of Year 2 and Year 6. In the National Curriculum Assessments in 2001, pupils' attainment at the end of Year 2 was well below the national average when compared with all schools and below the average of schools with pupils from similar backgrounds. At the end of Year 6, pupils' attainment was well below the national average when compared with schools nationally and when compared with pupils from similar backgrounds. Girls tend to do a little better than boys.

94. The children's attainment on entry to the nursery is very poor. By the time they enter the reception class their attainment is well below expectations for children of a similar age. By the age of seven, most pupils achieve well in the National Curriculum Assessment tests, in comparison to their prior attainment. By the age of 11 most pupils also achieve well. Well developed planning, which ensures coverage of all aspects of the subject, effective teaching, especially in Year 6, supports this. The teacher responsible for mathematics has worked hard to use the wealth of assessment information to chart the progress made by individual pupils. This is shared with the older pupils and, as a result, they are interested in mathematics and have good attitudes towards the subject. The National Numeracy Strategy has been introduced effectively and this is helping to raise standards. Pupils with special educational needs, those with English as a second language and from ethnic backgrounds are well provided for and make good progress. Although standards are low in comparison to other schools, parents can be confident that the school is working effectively to raise them.

95. Pupils make good progress and by the age of seven the evidence shows that they are gaining increasing fluency and confidence in their use of numbers. However, in Years 1 and 2, some pupils still do not have a secure understanding of the number system. Most pupils add and subtract numbers to ten well, but some pupils have difficulty and cannot write numerals correctly. They are beginning to develop an understanding of number sequences and many recognise odd and even numbers. Many also recognise and name common two and three-dimensional shapes. Most recognise angles, such as right angles, but have a limited understanding of angles as measurements of turn.

96. In Key Stage 2, pupils develop their understanding of the number system and use their knowledge of place value to multiply by ten satisfactorily. However, some pupils do not have quick mental recall of number and multiplication facts by Year 6. Pupils add and subtract numbers to 100 and multiply numbers to 100 by single-digit numbers, with varying degrees of success. The use of approximation, calculators and different methods to apply their mathematical understanding to everyday problems is insufficiently developed. Pupils are introduced to many shapes, such as 'squares', 'circles' and 'triangles' but some fail to recognise and name them confidently. There is limited evidence of pupils handling data.

97. The quality of teaching and learning is good. It is excellent in Year 6. The main factor for effective teaching is the quality of the relationships, which enables pupils to be relaxed and able to respond well. The teachers' plans meet the individual needs of all pupils. They are fully engaged and the teachers intervene quickly to help solve problems and deal with difficulties. Information and communication technology is used as appropriate. Pupils' learning is helped by their good behaviour and responses to mathematics.

98. Leadership and management are excellent. The use of assessment data is exceptional. The monitoring of pupils' standards enables work to be set at an appropriate level and pupils are given very good guidance on their progress. The assessment of pupils' progress is documented and recorded in detail. The older pupils chart their own progress and take great pride in their achievements. The higher-attaining pupils benefit greatly from some work integration at the local secondary school. Similarly, many pupils benefit from special 'booster' support to ensure they achieve their potential. Resources are adequate to meet the needs of the curriculum.

SCIENCE

99. Currently at age 11, the standards attained by pupils are just below the national average. The achievement of the pupils of this age is good when compared to their low prior attainment in the subject. This is the result of good teaching in Year 5 and very good teaching in Year 6. At age seven, the standards attained by pupils are also below the national average. However, they achieve well. This is a result of good teaching in Key Stage 1. Overall, during their time in the school all pupils, including those for whom English is an additional language, those with special educational needs and those from ethnic backgrounds, achieve well from a well below average start. All pupils are fully included in the science work of the school.

100. The results of teacher assessments show that, in the summer of 2001, pupils age seven attained standards that were well below those expected of pupils of their age. Inspection evidence shows that the attainment of the present Year 2 is below the average. No comment was made in the previous report about standards in science and it is therefore not possible to make a comparison. Pupils understand that contact must be made between two wires from a battery to a bulb for it to light. They are less sure that a circuit is required but persevere with various combinations to ensure the bulb lights. They confidently sort objects into those that are shiny and those that are dull, but are not sure if the shiny objects reflect light or give off light of their own.

101. The results of the National Curriculum Assessment tests undertaken by 11-year-olds show that in 1998 and 1999 standards were well below average. These improved in the year 2000 to be below the national averages, but due to pupils leaving and other pupils joining the school and a high number of pupils with special educational needs they dipped in 2001 to well below average. Currently, attainment by pupils in Year 6 is just below the national average and for some pupils with higher prior attainment it is at least at the national average and on occasion some pupils demonstrate attainment that is above average. This is the result of very skilled teaching in Year 6. All pupils are confident at putting forward suggestions for ways to carry out a fair test in an investigation. For example, when testing the difference between mass and weight and the effect it has in water. They are less sure of the concepts behind the work such as 'up thrust' and 'gravity' and this means that the majority are not able to explain their findings sufficiently clearly in scientific terms. This is the result of their prior knowledge in science not being developed in a sequential way. The Year 5 and Year 6 teachers have done all they reasonably can to catch up on this prior knowledge and develop pupils' understanding through appropriate activities and this has raised pupils' attainment significantly in these year groups.

102. In Key Stage 1, the quality of teaching and learning is good. In Key Stage 2, teaching varies between satisfactory and very good, and overall it is good. The most successful teaching seen was where the teachers had a very good understanding of the requirements of the National Curriculum programmes of study and set up activities that enabled pupils to strive towards the levels of the attainment targets expected for their age. For example, in the lesson on mass and weight, pupils were expected to carry out an investigation at Level 4 in the national curriculum, the expected level for 11-year-old pupils. In a lesson in Year 5, on the parts of a flower, the teacher pitched the lesson at the level pupils of ten-years-old are expected to attain. She provided a clear scientific introduction and good samples of plants to aid pupils' understanding. Despite pupils' lack of prior knowledge about the parts of plants, she gave very good support to groups to help them catch up and fill the gaps in their previous knowledge. Similar provision is being made in Key Stage 1. Achievement in such lessons is good. Throughout the school, class teachers, support teachers and learning support assistants work closely with the pupils correcting any misconceptions and assessing the pupils level of understanding. The result is that pupils rise to these high levels of challenge with confidence and work keenly and with great enthusiasm. The outcome is rapid learning and much ground made up in their lack of knowledge.

103. All pupils are keen to undertake science activities and the majority of pupils have attitudes to learning that are good and they behave well. This means that teachers can set many interesting and often exciting practical activities that help pupils understand the concepts being taught and this aids pupils' learning well. Setting out clear learning objectives for the lessons help pupils to understand what they are learning and engages them in taking responsibly for their own learning. In addition, relationships between adults and pupils and between pupils themselves are good and thus co-operation in groups is always good and they carry out practical work carefully and safely. This ensures that learning is secure as pupils strive hard to complete the work set by the teachers and learn well from each other and listen carefully to advice offered by teachers and other adults in the classroom.

104. Although the co-ordinator is relatively new to the post she has a clear idea of the standards the school achieves and good knowledge of the scheme of work. She provides good support to the teachers in their planning and ensures they are well supported with appropriate and sufficient resources to complete their planned activities successfully. This means teachers offer work well matched to the pupils' needs and this has resulted in improved attainment. In addition, the co-ordinator has been well trained by the headteacher and deputy headteacher in monitoring teaching and is well placed to monitor provision in the school as her role develops. This is good leadership and management by all concerned. The school employs an additional teacher to support science in Year 6 and this has a positive impact on learning in that class.

105. The curriculum meets statutory requirements and has good breadth and balance. Links with other subjects are satisfactory. Teachers identify opportunities where learning in numeracy may be extended, for example through measurement in science and the drawing and interpretation of graphs. Opportunities in numeracy are further extended by the use of information and communication technology to assemble a database of information, for example on pulse rates of individual pupils at rest and after exercise and to produce appropriate graphical representation of the results for analysis. In addition, pupils make good use of sensors to collect data about temperature change. Writing up of scientific investigations contributes well to the development of pupils' understanding of different types of writing in literacy. These links establish a greater understanding of the purpose of learning in these subjects and greatly influences pupils' attitude and rate of learning. Provision for pupils' spiritual and moral development is good, social development is very good and is the

result of very good relationships impacting well on the quality of learning and development of understanding.

106. Considerable amounts of homework are given in Year 6 and this is helping to develop pupils' background understanding. Assessment procedures are good and are being used well to identify quite specifically where pupils need to develop scientific knowledge and understanding. Older pupils self-assess their work against the levels set out in the National Curriculum. These strategies are having a significant impact on raising standards. There are adequate resources that are well organised and readily available for staff and pupils to use. The developing woodland areas around the school grounds are used to make a useful contribution to pupils' understanding of how things grow.

ART AND DESIGN

107. By the end of Year 2, pupils have made good progress and their attainment in art and design is above national expectations. By the age of eleven, pupils' progress is good and their attainment is above national expectations. Pupils, with special educational needs, those from ethnic backgrounds and those for whom English is not their first language, make similar progress as their peers. The previous report did not record a judgement on this subject. However, from an analysis of pupils' past and present work it would appear that standards have improved over time.

108. Through cross-curricular links with other subjects, teachers provide pupils with opportunities to observe objects and record their observations using pencil crayons, paint, chalk and pastels. However, in some classes, the range of work tends to be rather narrow and does not always promote adequate development of the progression of skills associated with the subject.

109. Pupils aged five to seven years explore imaginatively the medium of paint. They mix colours examine texture and apply paint correctly using a variety of tools, including brushes of varying sizes and simple shapes for printing on cloth. They effectively use paint and collage to illustrate 'a host of golden daffodils' inspired by a poem by W. Wordsworth. There are good links between what pupils produce in their art lessons and visits to places of interest. For example, Year 2 pupils went on an overnight trip to Kingswood during which they looked at plants and animals and wrote and illustrated a 'Spring Booklet'. Throughout Years 1 and 2, pupils show respect for their work and other's work.

110. Pupils aged seven to 11 years are provided with good opportunities to use and apply paint and crayons in a variety of ways. Many of their pictures show a good understanding of colour mixing. This was seen to good effect in the Year 5 classes when pupils painted in the style of Monet. In a very good lesson in Year 5, pupils were set the task of designing an intricate pattern in paper. They produced designs using contrasting and complementary colours. The teacher used very good vocabulary to reinforce the learning objectives. Such words as, 'symmetrical' and 'fragile' to inspire their imagination. Pupils cut the paper accurately using good hand control. They were exceptionally well motivated, which resulted in their behaviour being very good. In a good lesson in the Year 4 class, the pupils were producing observational drawings of cats. The teacher had brought in a collection of her cat ornaments. The teacher demonstrated the technique of drawing circles in appropriate sizes to get the overall shape of the cat. The pupils used this technique well and the finished results were good.

111. Pupils respond well to their work in art. They are often well motivated, concentrate for long periods, share and use materials and equipment well and produce good results. They take responsibility for tidying away materials. Older pupils have the opportunity to discuss

their work and suggest ways in which they can improve it. Pupils enjoy the practical activities, they talk to each other while working and show a pride in having their work being praised and admired by their teachers.

112. The quality of teaching and learning is good in both key stages. In a very good lesson observed in a Year 1 class, the teacher shared the learning objectives with the pupils; she inspired the pupils with her enthusiasm and managed the pupils extremely well. Pupils made very good progress during this lesson. They acquired new skills and extended their knowledge and understanding of mixing colours. In another very good lesson in a Year 5 class, the teacher gave a very clear and well-planned introduction, shared the learning intention with the pupils and managed the pupils very well. Pupils made very good progress during this lesson. Teachers' knowledge of the subject is good. Pupils are given the opportunity to try out their designs in a sketchbook first.

113. The curriculum is broadly balanced. However, there was little evidence during the inspection of any three-dimensional work being completed. There is a good policy, which has been reviewed in line with Curriculum 2000. The subject is assessed according to the National Curriculum guidelines and teachers use observation sheets to make judgements on pupils' achievements. Opportunities are good for art to contribute to the moral, social and cultural development of pupils. There was limited evidence that information and communication technology is used to support art. Resources for the subject are adequate to meet the needs of the curriculum. Parents often support the school by donating paper and fabric. The co-ordinator is aware of the value and importance of using sketchbooks, which, at present, is under-developed in some areas of the school.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

114. Across the school standards of pupils' work are at the expected level for their age and their learning and progress are good. Pupils with special educational needs, those for whom English is not their first language and those from ethnic backgrounds, make similar progress as their peers. The previous report did not record a judgement on this subject. However, from an analysis of pupils' past and present work, discussions with pupils and staff, it would appear that standards have been maintained over time.

115. In Year 1, pupils have designed and made moving pictures, using levers to slide the mechanism. In Year 2, pupils designed a puppet. They used fabric and sewed on buttons and sequins to produce face features. Pupils evaluated their puppets well and described what they found easy and what they would change if making them again.

116. In Year 3, pupils studied packaging and designed and made their own cereal boxes. They presented their ideas in an assembly and went through all the stages of designing and making. Computers were used to produce posters for the school's disco. Year 5 pupils tasted different types of bread. They made their own and after tasting it evaluated whether they liked it or not and why. The measuring of ingredients is an effective link with numeracy. Pupils in Year 6 designed and made caps in paper first and then made them in fabric. They used a sewing machine and hand sewing to give a very professional finish to their caps. Their written plans and evaluations and carefully labelled diagrams show that pupils use their literacy skills well.

117. Across the age range, responses are good, with pupils showing interest and ability to concentrate on their work, co-operating in using tools and materials sensibly and behaving in a mature manner.

118. The quality of teaching and learning is good in both key stages. In a good lesson in Year 2, the planning was good, and assessment of pupils' achievements and areas for improvement were recorded to aid future planning. The learning objective was shared with the pupils and the teacher ensured the pupils understood the task. The learning was good because the pupils were extending their knowledge and understanding of skills and using appropriate vocabulary such as, 'axles', 'bearers' and 'base'. The pupils set about the task of making a simple wind up mechanism with much enthusiasm. The teacher reinforced the need for care and safety when using the saw. She evaluated their work during the lesson and when she realised that many pupils were having difficulty with the bearers being not big enough to hold the axle up high enough for the drum (a cotton reel) to rotate, she discussed with the class what was needed to resolve the problem.

119. In a good lesson in the Year 3 class, the teaching was good because the teacher revised the previous lesson, discussed the learning objectives with the pupils and had good expectations of behaviour and quality of work. Learning during this lesson was good because the pupils were gaining and extending their knowledge and understanding, were interested in the task and sustained concentration. They could explain the meaning of pneumatics. In a very good lesson in Year 6, pupils had previously made a circuit to power a motor and now designed and made a vehicle that would be powered by the motor. They worked in teams making such vehicles as a truck or bus. The teacher gave much praise and reminded pupils of the need to take care when using tools. Learning was very good because the pupils were extending their knowledge and skills of joining, designing and making. They made very good evaluations of their work.

120. There is a good policy, which has recently been reviewed, to ensure good coverage of the Curriculum 2000. The scheme of work is from a published scheme, and Nuffield Units support the teachers in the planning of this subject. Pupils assess each other's work and their own. Teachers record the results of pupils' achievements and also give oral feedback to the pupils. The co-ordinator has only been in post since last September and is a very experienced teacher of design and technology and has been given an award from the trustees of the Design and Technology Association in praise of her work.

121. Years 5 and 6 parents, together with their children, have been involved in an Architecture Workshop funded by the Education and Business Partnership. The task was to develop ideas for building a strong structure for a bridge. The best two bridges were entered into the Wolverhampton Schools Competition.

122. Resources are adequate to meet the needs of the curriculum.

Geography and History

123. The last time the school was inspected standards were judged to be at national expectations, with some good work seen. Only two lessons were seen during this inspection and both of these were in Key Stage 1. Through looking at work, including displays, and talking to teachers, it is clear these standards have been maintained by the end of Year 2 and Year 6.

124. In both the lessons seen, the teaching was good and so pupils made good progress. In geography the younger pupils look at the local area, where they live, the school building and site, the local estate and its facilities, and compare Stowlawn to other communities. Pupils express their views about the environment, suggesting how it might be improved. They draw up simple plans and pupils work particularly well together, taking turns to scribe. The older pupils learn about Bilston, Wolverhampton and the West Midlands, and go on to study Kaptalamwa in Kenya.

125. In history, the younger pupils use photographs to find out about 'olden times'. They use secondary evidence to compare stagecoaches with trains. Effective links are made with other subjects. In Year 5, 'The Adventure in the Desert' drama unit supports the study of ancient Egypt, while the 'mutugwa' music unit enhances work on Kaptalamwa.

126. Teachers share the learning objectives with pupils. They prepare their lessons well, and use appropriate resources such as digital photographs. They use the school site and the immediate surroundings particularly effectively. The listening skills of many pupils are below average and teachers are very careful in persevering at developing this. The learning support assistants make an effective contribution, working well with small groups. Teachers use the time available well and take care to evaluate learning by the end of the lesson. A particularly effective feature is the way that, at the beginning of each new topic, pupils are encouraged to state what they already know and what they would like to find out about it.

127. Pupils benefit from many opportunities to visit places of interest. These include visits to Bantock House and to Blists Hill Open Air Museum, and also a residential visit. In order to develop the subjects further the school needs to ensure that the subjects are receiving sufficient time and attention and pupils do not go for too long without studying them. Teachers record the results of pupils' achievement on an assessment sheet. Resources are adequate to meet the needs of the curriculum.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

128. By age seven, pupils' attainment is below average, but by age 11, pupils' attainment is average. This is an improvement since the previous inspection. Over their time in the school, the achievement of all pupils, including those for whom English is an additional language, those with special educational needs and those from ethnic backgrounds, is good. Some specialist teaching of the subject occurs. All pupils have time-tabled access to computers and are supported well by teachers, support teachers, learning support assistants, and all pupils are fully included in learning in information and communication technology.

129. By the end of Year 2, pupils enter simple text and are beginning to learn appropriate keyboard skills, that the mouse controls the cursor on the screen and that they can give commands to the computer via the mouse. They recognise that video and tape recorders and the school's digital cameras are all items of information and communication technology. Their low attainment in English and language skills means they do not attain as high standards as may be expected for pupils of this age in information and communication technology. The use of computers does mean however that they achieve well in language development against a well below average start.

130. By the end of Year 6, pupils confidently access a wide variety of appropriate programs to support their work in class. For example, they confidently enter into a database the data collected during a science investigation into the way pulse rates vary between individuals at rest and as a result of exercise. They flick between various graphical presentations of the data looking for the best display that will enable them to analyse the data and show their findings in the best way. They draft and amend text, correcting spelling errors and improving the quality of vocabulary used. Through the range and accuracy of vocabulary needed to carry out these various activities, information and communication technology makes a good contribution to literacy and to numeracy work through data collection and display. Pupils make good use of sensors to collect data about temperature change.

131. Pupils are keen to use the various computer programs available. They listen carefully to their teachers, ask sensible questions to check what they have to do and then willingly work with the mouse and keyboard to achieve the task they have been set. From time to time, the program does not respond as it should and pupils are becoming increasingly confident in their attempts to trouble-shoot the problem themselves before asking for help. This level of confidence, keen attitudes and the good behaviour of the pupils means that pupils can work independently to learn well the procedures and uses of information and communication technology and this is beginning to successfully enhance learning in many aspects of the curriculum. This is an improvement since the previous inspection.

132. Overall, the quality of teaching in information and communication technology is satisfactory. The quality of teaching for Year 5 and 6 pupils is good. In these lessons, teachers skilfully combined the use of information and communication technology with their work in other subjects such as science, religious education and literacy. This is good practice and is an improvement since the previous inspection. Good use is also made of digital cameras to record events and prepare displays celebrating events that have taken place in school and raising pupils' self image and esteem. Pupils thus see information and communication technology as a practical tool to support themselves and their work in school. Pupils find information and communication technology activities interesting, inspiring and motivating and are keen to use them. Teachers are often effectively supported by able adults who work with pupils who have a specific learning difficulty or have lower prior attainment compared with the rest of the class. As a result, all pupils learn at a good rate. Teachers sometimes change classes to make best use of their expertise, for example the deputy headteacher took a Year 4 class for information and communication technology and this had a positive impact on the pupils' learning.

133. The breadth and range of the information and communication technology curriculum are satisfactory. The use of information and communication technology to support standards in other subjects is developing well. The subject contributes well to the development of pupils' social skills as they work closely together to solve problems and present their group findings in the best possible way. The subject is well led by the curriculum co-ordinator. Hardware resources are good, software resources are developing, currently, they are adequate. The information and communication technology suite is having a significant impact on learning in some subjects, particularly for the older pupils. Self-assessment procedures are in place and do much to aid pupils in their understanding of what they should be learning and their relative achievement. This approach is judged to have had a good impact on the standards achieved.

MUSIC

134. The previous report in April 2000 does not give clear judgements in music. During the inspection, it was not possible to observe lessons in Years 1 and 2. By Year 6, standards are below what is expected for pupils of this age. The standard of singing throughout the school is good.

135. Pupils sing a range of songs with enthusiasm during assemblies. They sing in tune and with obvious enjoyment. Unaccompanied, they sing a wide range of notes clearly. Unfortunately, there are missed opportunities for developing pupils' appreciation of a variety of music through regularly playing music for pupils to enter and leave the hall during assemblies.

136. In Year 3, the majority of pupils can beat a steady rhythm and start and stop when a pause is appropriate. They have developed a satisfactory understanding of the importance of a rest in the music and to use percussion instruments to emphasise the phrases between

the rests. Pupils in Year 6 sang an African folk song and showed a developing sense of rhythm as they created their own movements to accompany it. Pupils' are insecure in their knowledge of notation, the value of individual notes and the effect the values has on rhythms.

137. The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory overall. Teachers use a list of suggested themes and audiocassettes to guide their planning and teaching. In Year 3, the teacher successfully interrupted the tape to clarify and provide the pupils with additional time to practice. The demands of the tape were insufficiently challenging for this group and the teacher was able to pause and ask more demanding questions of the pupils to support their learning. For example, he enabled most pupils to recognise the sign for a rest within the notation. Teaching is less satisfactory in lessons where the pace slows and management is less secure. Missed opportunities for pupils to receive a full range of opportunities and breadth of experience occur when teachers rely too heavily on the audiocassettes and course books.

138. There is a need to provide support for teachers in the delivery of the music curriculum, which at this time provides too few challenges for most pupils. There is no whole-school planned approach to the monitoring of teaching and learning in lessons. When the school comes to evaluate the scheme, it should consider a programme of staff training to raise the expertise of teachers in the delivery of the curriculum and systems to monitor pupils' progress. Additionally, it might address ways of developing pupils' independence in the use of resources and used well.

139. The school has recently arranged for some pupils to learn the clarinet and there is a recorder club and a music club for the older pupils. Pupils enjoy entertaining senior citizens and other members of the community at regular intervals throughout the year. Resources, which include a wide range of multi-cultural percussion instruments, are good and are displayed attractively.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

140. Pupils' physical education (PE) skills meet national expectations for pupils at both the age of seven and 11 years. The previous report did not provide clear judgements in PE. Pupils throughout the school make steady progress in the acquisition of physical skills. In Year 1, pupils explore the space around themselves with controlled and confident movements and begin to create their own sequences. They are beginning to understand the importance of exercise and the effect it has on their bodies. As they move through the school, pupils continue to develop their skills. In Year 5, pupils showed sound standards in throwing and catching in readiness for playing rounders. There is evidence that almost all pupils reach a satisfactory standard of water confidence and swimming technique by the time they leave the school because of the good focus on swimming in Years 3 and 4.

141. The satisfactory standards and the gains in learning are a result of the overall good quality of teaching. Teachers plan lessons carefully. They give clear instructions and manage behaviour well. Teachers set challenges, for example when teaching pupils to throw and catch a ball within the confines of a rounders pitch. In the best teaching, the teacher shows very good knowledge and is able to point out to pupils how to extend their learning. For instance, in Year 1, pupils developed sequences of movements and because the teacher set them yet another challenge they were able to mirror the movements of their partner. In a good lesson in Year 2, pupils worked in pairs travelling and supporting each other as they balanced. The teacher set further challenges for the pupils enabling them to become more adventurous and agile. Nearly all lessons have good pace, rigour and attention to detail. This keeps the attention of pupils, reinforces good practice and makes a positive contribution to health. As a result, pupils have a high level of enthusiasm for this subject and develop a very

good level of group and team skills. They learn to co-operate, evaluate and take constructive comments, which assist in improving performance. A good gymnastics lesson in Year 1 saw the pupils warming up with a very effective running commentary from the teacher, who emphasised the reasons for doing it, what to avoid and why. The control that they practiced at this stage was applied to the throwing and catching skills introduced later in the lesson.

142. In a good lesson in Year 5, pupils learned that they must be sympathetic when throwing a ball if they were to make sure that another member of the team would catch it. The level of co-operation between pupils was very good as a result of accurate instructions and clear boundaries.

143. At this time there is no formal system for monitoring the standards, progress and development of pupils' physical skills. When the school comes to evaluate the scheme this could usefully be addressed. The co-ordinator has ensured that the provision of resources for PE is satisfactory. There are two school halls and both are well equipped with large and small apparatus. Unfortunately, much of the apparatus in the hall for the eldest pupils is stored in the hall, which decreases the space for activities. The playground and field are spacious and the markings in the playground help to give pupils the opportunity to play games and practice skills outdoors. Most pupils dress suitably for PE, although a small number do not always bring the correct dress.

144. The school broadens pupils cultural awareness by providing a range of activities both within the curriculum and as extra-curricular clubs, for example football, cross country running and rounders. Such activities develop good attitudes to competition, teamwork and sportsmanship.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

145. At age 11, attainment is broadly average and similar with local expectations of the locally agreed syllabus. Due to time tabling arrangements for the pupils in Years 1 and 2, it was not possible to gather enough evidence to make a secure judgement about the standards achieved by these pupils. No reference was made to religious education in the previous inspection report and it is therefore not possible to make a comparison. Over their time in the school, the achievement of all pupils, including those for whom English is an additional language, those with special educational needs and those from ethnic backgrounds, is good.

146. Pupils make comparisons between the Christian and Muslim stories of creation. They identify the parts of the story that are similar and those that differ. They research the stories by reference to the Bible and to appropriate Islamic texts. They study the lives of significant religious figures, such as Mahatma Gandhi, and, following research into his story, write their own versions. They study the significant festivals of the main faiths represented in the community and visit the places of worship. They apply some of the ideas behind the texts of the various faiths to their own lives drawing up, for example a personal stairway to heaven. Younger pupils talk about significant events in their lives and begin to explore what is important about being a human.

147. Pupils have good attitudes to the subject. They are keen to learn about the different aspects of the different faiths. They listen carefully when teachers talk about the Bible or The Qur'an and tell some of the stories from the different faiths being studied. They write careful accounts of their visits to the places of worship and what was special for them about those places. This makes a significant contribution to their cultural development and is an improvement since the previous inspection.

148. The quality of teaching is good. In one of these lessons, the teacher caught the interest of the pupils through a note taking session as they read the Muslim version of the creation story. This meant that pupils had to listen carefully, recall the Christian version from the previous week, made notes quickly and then working from their notes report to the class. This improved their skills in speaking and listening well and their skills of note taking. Following visits, teachers make good use of word processing packages to enable pupils to write up the visits. These write ups are often in considerable detail and of good length, developing pupils' literacy skills of report writing as well as their skills in information and communication technology. Teachers do not lose sight of the religious context of this work and pupils are expected to conclude each lesson by stating what they now know, that they did not previously know. This leads to good learning and makes sense for pupils, of learning in one subject, enabling learning in another. The thoughtful discussion and reflection that takes place in these lessons makes a good contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

149. The co-ordinator is relatively new to his post, but is developing the subject appropriately and provides useful support to staff through his consultancy role. The resources are adequate. Assessment procedures are still to be developed. The school has a system of pairing older classes with younger classes, for example for reading practice. This is being extended to celebrate the main religious festivals. Such linking of classes makes a further significant contribution to pupils' social development. The school receives much support for this work from the representatives of the faiths in the local community.