

# INSPECTION REPORT

## WIGHTWICK HALL SCHOOL

Compton, Wolverhampton

LEA area: Staffordshire

Unique reference number: 124523

Headteacher: Mr Tony Milovsorov (Acting)

Reporting inspector: Mr M G Whitehead  
21061

Dates of inspection: 2<sup>nd</sup> - 5<sup>th</sup> December 2002

Inspection number: 249414

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

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## INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school: Special  
School category: Community special  
Age range of pupils: 3-16 years  
Gender of pupils: Mixed

School address: Tinacre Hill  
Compton  
Wolverhampton

Postcode: WV6 8DA

Telephone number: (01902) 761889

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Appropriate authority: Governing body

Name of chair of governors: Mr J Strutt

Date of previous inspection: 6<sup>th</sup> November 2000

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members			Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
21061	M G Whitehead	Registered inspector	Modern foreign languages	What sort of school is it? The schools' results and pupils achievement How well are pupils or students taught? How well is the school led and managed?
11229	M Freeman	Lay inspector		Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development How well does the school care for its pupils? How well does the school work in partnership with parents?
23637	J Donnelly	Team inspector	Information and communication technology Design and technology	
13101	M Kell	Team inspector	Science Physical education	Educational inclusion
20055	S M Entwistle	Team inspector	Mathematics Geography Religious education	Special educational needs
23696	J Morris	Team inspector	Art and design History Music	How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils or students?
31775	M A Meredith-Jones	Team inspector	English	

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London WC2B 6SE

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## **PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT**

### **INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL**

Wightwick Hall School is for pupils with moderate learning difficulties and pupils with autistic spectrum disorders (ASD). There are also a small, but significant, number of pupils with emotional and behavioural difficulties. It is situated in idyllic surroundings on the outskirts of Perton, Staffordshire and caters for both resident and day pupils. There are 98 pupils on the school roll, three of them attend part-time and they are the only children of nursery age. There are 76 boys and 22 girls and their ages range from three to 16 years. There are seven pupils in residence as weekly boarders; at present they are all boys. They are resident because their homes are a long way from the school and travelling on a daily basis would not be appropriate. There are three pupils who are not white British. There are no pupils in the school who have English as an additional language. Approximately one quarter of the pupils are entitled to free school meals. The attainment of pupils when they join the school is well below the national average as is to be expected of pupils who have such learning difficulties.

### **HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS**

Wightwick Hall School is a good and improving school. The pupils work hard and achieve well as they progress through the school. Whilst the standards they achieve are below the national average, the progress that they make is good when taking into account their learning difficulties and ASD. The quality of teaching is high. There is a very large proportion of good teaching and a very significant proportion of very good teaching. The strong leadership of the acting headteacher, the dedication and enthusiasm of the subject leaders and the high level of support from the governing body ensure that the school has clear direction. Taking account of the high quality of teaching in the school, the strong leadership and management of the school and the cost per pupil, the school provides good value for money.

#### **What the school does well**

- The strong leadership of the acting headteacher, deputy headteacher, senior management team and governors.
- The high quality of teaching.
- The behaviour, attitudes and relationships of the pupils.
- The high quality of care and the provision for the personal and social development of the pupils.
- The school enables all pupils to make good progress and achieve well.

#### **What could be improved**

- Procedures for assessing pupils' achievement to enable teachers to plan more effectively and help pupils to know how they can improve even further.
- The curriculum and arrangements for accreditation and the teaching of design and technology in Years 7 to 9.
- Improve the accommodation for GCSE science and improve the toileting provision within the autistic resource.

*The areas for improvement will form the basis of the action plan prepared by the appropriate authority.*

The management of the school could also be improved by ensuring that all aspects of the strategic planning are fully costed. This is a minor issue.

### **HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION**

The school was last inspected in November 2000 and since then the improvement has been good. The leadership and management of the residential provision and the residential accommodation have improved significantly. Learning opportunities have improved, but there are still some areas for

development. The school is aware of these and the acting headteacher, senior managers and governors are beginning to address them.

## STANDARDS

The table summarises inspectors' judgements about how well pupils achieve in relation to their individual targets.

Progress in:	by age 5	by age 11	by age 16	Key
Speaking and listening	B	B	B	very good A
Reading	B	B	B	good B
Writing	B	B	B	satisfactory C
Mathematics	B	B	B	unsatisfactory D
Personal, social and health education	B	B	B	poor E
Other personal targets set at annual reviews or in IEPs*	B	B	B	

\* IEPs are individual education plans for pupils with special educational needs.

Progress in Information and communication technology is good. Progress in design and technology is satisfactory for the younger pupils, but for the pupils who are in Year 7 and above their progress is unsatisfactory as there is no provision for working with resistant materials. All pupils make good progress in personal, social and health education (PSHE). This is because of the discrete lessons in PSHE, which incorporate citizenship and careers, particularly in the secondary department. The strong links with colleges and the relationships between adults and pupils in all lessons and at other times, including lunch, breaks and in the residential provision, help to make sure that all pupils make good progress in many subjects. Overall, pupils make good progress towards their individual targets. However, progress is limited occasionally by the lack of permanent staffing, especially for the youngest pupils in the school. Here there is a great and successful reliance upon the knowledge and skills of the learning support assistants, who maintain consistency of understanding and approach. Good progress is also made by the school towards its overall targets concerning pupils' achievements.

## PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Good. Pupils enjoy coming to school, work diligently and take pride in their work.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Good overall, which makes a significant contribution to good learning and very good relationships.
Personal development and relationships	Very good relationships and good personal development contribute effectively to pupils' social development and maturity.
Attendance	Satisfactory and slightly above the national average for similar schools.

Pupils generally behave well. Relationships are very good and the school presents as a harmonious, happy community. There is a very positive atmosphere within the school in which pupils are polite and welcoming to visitors. They take care of the building and the contents, making sure that it is a good place in which to work.



## TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils:	Aged up to 5	Aged 5 - 11	Aged 11 - 16
Quality of teaching	Good	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 teaching of English is good overall and it is often very good. Teachers ensure that the work is carefully matched to the individual needs of the pupils so that they can all gain maximum benefit from their lessons. Teaching of mathematics is good; lessons are well planned in accordance with the National Numeracy Strategy and begin with brisk, lively oral sessions. There are clear explanations during the main parts and the work is carefully planned to meet the needs of all pupils from the lowest to the highest attaining pupils. Resources are used well and teachers take great care to emphasise the special vocabulary that is used in mathematics. Science teaching is good particularly in Years 7 to 11, where it is taught by a subject specialist. Activities are well planned to enable pupils to build on their previous learning and the tasks are well matched to pupils' needs. Generally investigative skills are promoted well through challenging questions and activities. However, on occasions they are too prescriptive and do not encourage pupils to find out for themselves.

## OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	The school provides good learning opportunities for all pupils. The provision for pupils with autistic spectrum disorders is good and improving. Links with colleges are very good and careers education is good. There is room for improvement in design and technology in the secondary department and ICT throughout the school.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Good overall. Spiritual development is satisfactory, moral development is good and social development is very good. Cultural development is satisfactory, but opportunities are missed to develop the pupils' awareness and understanding of cultural diversity.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Very good child protection and welfare provision foster a secure, harmonious atmosphere conducive to good learning and social development. Procedures for monitoring and supporting pupils' academic progress are satisfactory, with pockets of good practice in science, mathematics and personal, social and health education. The monitoring and use of assessment data and records by senior management is not rigorous enough. Formal procedures in the residential provision are good and daily practice is good with very good features.

The school works very well in partnership with the parents and provides a good quality of information for them. The school brochure and the governors' annual report to parents are very well prepared and provide good quality information that is readily understood and very informative.

## HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management	Good. The headteacher is a strong leader and is supported well by

by the headteacher and other key staff	his deputy and senior management team.
<b>Aspect</b>	<b>Comment</b>
How well the appropriate authority fulfils its responsibilities	Good. The governing body is working well in support, and in many areas there is good practice. There are some areas where there is room for further development.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Good. The school spends the budget wisely, but has not yet evaluated the spending with regard to measurable outcomes for pupils.
The strategic use of resources	Financial planning is satisfactory. The strategic development plan is focused on raising standards. However, it is not fully costed.

There are sufficient teachers and support assistants in the school to meet the needs of the pupils and the demands of the curriculum. Unfortunately the school has to rely on the work of some supply teachers to meet these demands. This is not a secure position and needs to be addressed as soon as possible. The permanent teachers are appropriately qualified and continue with their professional training as part of their individual development plans. The support staff are particularly well qualified and this is a strength of the school and demonstrates the high expectations that management has of its staff. The accommodation is satisfactory overall, but there are areas where there are weaknesses. For example, there is no facility yet for the teaching and use of resistant materials when studying design and technology. Similarly, facilities for indoor physical education are very limited. The school does have a good range of appropriate resources to help deliver the curriculum in ways that can be understood and enjoyed by the pupils.

The school benefits from the strong leadership of the acting headteacher and his senior managers. He leads in a manner that inspires confidence amongst his staff and governors. All staff are very supportive of him and work well with him towards meeting the aims of the school. The governors monitor the work of the school effectively and in particular the work of the acting headteacher as he develops his new role in the school. Targets are set for the acting headteacher and he works effectively towards meeting them. He has been in post for a very short time, but has already had a very positive impact on the work of the school. This in turn has had a positive effect upon the standards achieved by the pupils. The school applies principles of best value well through discussion and investigation of any financial transaction.

## PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The school has high expectations of its pupils.</li> <li>• The school fosters good personal development and responsibility.</li> <li>• The school promotes good behaviour and attitudes to learning.</li> <li>• There are very good relationships amongst pupils and adults.</li> <li>• The responses to parents' concerns and suggestions are positive.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The range of activities outside lessons.</li> </ul>

Inspectors agree with the positive views of the parents and also believe that the school offers a good range of extra-curricular activities for pupils. The school works hard to try to overcome the difficulties that arise concerning transport, which have a negative impact on the ability of pupils to attend these sessions.

## **PART B: COMMENTARY**

### **HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?**

#### **The school's results and pupils' achievements**

1. Achievement and progress are good throughout the school. There is clear evidence of good progress during lessons and over long periods of time in speaking and listening, reading and writing throughout the school.
2. Achievement and progress are good in mathematics, physical education, information and communication technology (ICT) and personal, social and health education (PSHE). Progress and achievement in French are very good in all lessons, although it is taught only to pupils in Years 7, 8 and 9. Progress is satisfactory in religious education for pupils in Years 1 and 2, and in Years 7 to 11. Good progress is made by pupils in Years 3 to 6. Achievement and progress in geography are satisfactory for the pupils in Years 1 and 2, they are good for pupils in Years 3 to 6 and they are very good for pupils in Years 7 to 9.
3. Teachers set individual targets for each pupil and these are recorded in their IEPs. These targets are reviewed each half-year or more frequently if required. Data is collected concerning the progress of each pupil and this is carefully presented to parents on a half-yearly basis. Teachers' records and school reports show that pupils across the school make good progress in meeting the targets set.
4. The school offers some accredited courses for senior pupils including entry level certificates in English and science, City and Guilds and Assessment and Qualifications Alliance (AQA) achievement tests. The school has also adopted the National Numeracy and Literacy Strategies, which are proving effective. The pupils at Wightwick Hall School achieve consistently high results, which are above the average for similar schools across all ages and in all subjects.

#### **Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development**

5. Pupils have good attitudes towards school and their behaviour is also good. This makes a significant contribution to their good achievement. Since the last inspection, the school has provided more opportunities for pupils to take responsibility. This aspect of the school's work is now good.
6. Attendance is just above the national average and is satisfactory. Registers are marked briskly, stored safely and meet statutory requirements. Unauthorised absence is high, at 1.5 per cent; much of this is caused by parents not informing the school of reasons for their children's absence. However, there is a lack of rigour by the school in addressing this issue. Punctuality to lessons is good and pupils start work promptly.
7. Relationships throughout the school are very good and make a strong contribution to pupils' learning and social and personal development. Pupils are polite and helpful to each other and adults, and they respect each other's feelings and beliefs. They move around the school in a safe and orderly manner and show respect for the building and its equipment. There is a singular lack of graffiti and litter. Lunchtimes are well organised and pupils are given lots of opportunities to interact and talk to each other in a calm and orderly environment; this helps their social development greatly.
8. Behaviour, overall, is good with only eight temporary exclusions involving five boys in the last year. These are pupils who have come to Wightwick Hall School having

previously been to schools for pupils with emotional and behavioural difficulties. Pupils behave very well in lessons and this makes a strong contribution to their effective learning. There are good systems of rewards and sanctions; for example, the 'Pupil of the Week' award and the 'Award' assemblies. These effective measures buttress and encourage good, positive behaviour amongst pupils. Although there are some difficult and challenging pupils in the school and there are very occasional incidents of bullying or inappropriate behaviour, the school deals well with such cases, involving parents where appropriate. The school has clear and concise rules of behaviour and pupils are fully aware of these, as are their parents.

9. Attitudes to learning amongst the pupils are good and positive, and a strength of the school. Pupils like coming to school and they work diligently and take a pride in their work. They are eager to learn and to produce good work, and they co-operate well with each other. These good attitudes to learning underpin much of the success of the school.
10. Personal development is good. Responsible tasks are given to pupils; for example, helping at lunchtimes, and they respond well to such opportunities, growing in independence and maturity. The good range of extra-curricular activities and visits provided by the school helps to foster initiative, instils a growing understanding of the community and the wider world and helps to expand interests and knowledge. The well-structured PSHE programme makes a good contribution to the personal and social development of the pupils.

#### **HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?**

11. The quality of teaching and learning at Wightwick Hall School is good overall. In all classes there is good and often very good teaching. Teachers make sure within their planning that all pupils are included and that no one is denied access to the curriculum in any way. A strength of the school is the way in which teachers successfully plan for the mixture of special educational needs being represented by the pupils in their groups. With the aid of the highly skilled and experienced support staff, teachers are able to teach successfully pupils with moderate learning difficulties and ASD, alongside each other. Where the ASD is more severe, the pupils are grouped separately for some activities.
12. The teaching of English throughout the school is good. Teachers have a very good rapport with the pupils and relate very well to them. Teachers support the lower attainers and give them lots of encouragement. Teachers have a very good knowledge of pupils and their special educational needs. This knowledge is put to very good use as teachers make sure that the work is always carefully matched to the needs of the individual pupils.
13. The teaching of mathematics throughout the school is good and often very good. Teachers plan their lessons in great detail and list specific activities for each pupil, ensuring that the lessons proceed at a brisk pace. Teachers follow the guidelines of the National Numeracy Strategy and they are very successful.
14. The teaching of science is consistently good throughout the school. The school benefits from the expertise of a science specialist. Lessons are well introduced and are very relevant to the needs and interests of the pupils. Teachers are very careful to make sure that the pupils understand fully the concepts that are being taught.
15. The teaching of art and design and French are very good and the pupils benefit greatly from these very well prepared and delivered lessons. Art and design lessons are well

resourced and some of this is due to the generosity of a local company. The teacher is also very skilled at questioning the pupils and checking their understanding. The French teacher encourages pupils to talk about what they are doing, using their French, whilst playing a 'beetle' game. The very good relationships that there are between the teachers and the pupils are very helpful in ensuring that learning is very good and the pupils make very good progress.

16. The work of the learning support assistants is invaluable within the school. They work very well with the teachers and make sure that pupils are able to take a full part in the lessons. They give support and guidance to the pupils as well as assisting the teachers. The relationships between the teachers and support assistants are very good and they enjoy a common enthusiasm and commitment.
17. Teachers have high expectations of the pupils and are constantly striving for the very best outcomes during lessons, in line with the school aims. Pupils work hard and learn well; they waste no time during or between lessons. The day starts promptly and all pupils are keen to get to class and begin their lessons. There are some pupils with additional special educational needs and these are met well by the teachers, and the acting headteacher makes sure that there is appropriate provision for them.

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

18. The school provides a broad, balanced and relevant curriculum for all the pupils. Improvement has been good since the previous inspection. Most of the issues identified in the last report have been addressed. Where this is not the case; for example, increasing pupils' accreditation opportunities, particularly in GCSE for the higher attainers, good plans are in place within an appropriate timescale since the last report. The curriculum meets well the needs of all pupils attending the school. The school meets the requirements and entitlements of the National Curriculum and religious education in all but a few areas. Where it does not, it appropriately and reasonably modifies its provision or disapplies groups of pupils from aspects of the curriculum in accordance with the flexibility accepted in special schools generally and all schools in Years 10 and 11. The following points are all minor weaknesses in the curriculum, but, apart from design and technology, do not constitute non-compliance with statutory requirements.
19. The school does not provide daily acts of collective worship for all pupils in the form of whole-school or department assemblies, but there is a daily act of worship held within each classroom. A modern foreign language is not taught in Years 10 and 11, as the school has disapplied these pupils from that course in order to concentrate on the basic skills of literacy and numeracy, and to focus on vocational qualifications prior to their leaving school.
20. No design and technology is taught in Years 10 and 11 and no woodwork or metalwork is taught in Years 7 to 9, largely because of accommodation issues that are being addressed. This is an area in which the school does not comply with statutory requirements. The school is aware of these shortcomings and has plans to address it in the near future. Insufficient attention is given to the control and modelling elements of the ICT Programmes of Study and there is not enough development of ICT skills across the curriculum. Not enough time is clearly identified for science in Years 1 and 2.
21. The school makes good provision in accordance with pupils' needs in most subjects. The National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies have been implemented well in both the

primary and secondary departments. The school is currently developing a Key Stage 3 strategy for the teaching of science and ICT.

22. The provision of extra-curricular activities is good. As in many special schools, there are considerable difficulties in providing after-school activities because of transport difficulties. However, there are currently three, organised lunchtime clubs, namely two 'art and craft' clubs, one of which takes place three days a week, and a recorder group. There are very good opportunities for pupils to participate in outdoor pursuits whilst participating in residential activities away from school. There are very good competitive sporting opportunities through the links with other special schools in the area.
23. Provision for pupils with ASD is good throughout the school generally and specifically in the three classes for pupils with these particular difficulties. Teachers appropriately use a wide range of recognised materials and techniques in planning for these pupils. These include National Curriculum guidelines produced by the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority, Equals materials for pupils with SEN, Picture Exchange Communication System (PECS), use of other signs and symbols, a widely recognised structured methodology for pupils with ASD and the Staffordshire Interactive Curriculum (STIC). Teachers appropriately refer to the Foundation Stage curriculum, designed for children in mainstream nursery and reception classes, with pupils as old as eleven. The school is aware of the gender imbalance in the school population and shows good awareness of the specific needs of the girls in its provision for sex education and encourages equality of opportunity in lessons and socially at lunchtimes and breaktimes. In these ways the school meets the needs of different groups of pupils well through its curricular planning and class groupings and is effectively working towards even better practice. Links with mainstream schools, both primary and secondary, contribute well to staff development, but currently do not provide any inclusion opportunities for pupils.
24. The school makes good provision for the pupils' PSHE and has taken appropriate action to meet the most recent requirements and recommendations for citizenship, in particular. Very good provision is made for the pupils' careers education in Years 10 and 11, including specific lessons in careers, a good input from the local careers officer and a small library in the school. There are very good opportunities for work experience in Year 11 in a wide variety of settings. There are very good links with two colleges enabling pupils to follow courses in agriculture, horticulture, animal care, motor vehicle maintenance and catering and hospitality. These experiences contribute substantially to the pupils' work towards accreditation through the Award Scheme Development and Accreditation Network (ASDAN) youth award scheme, bronze level, and National Vocational Qualifications, Level 1, Part 1.
25. Provision for the pupils' spiritual development is satisfactory. There are assemblies in both the primary and secondary departments at least once a week. During the inspection, one secondary assembly, following a lively hymn practice, and two primary assemblies were observed. All these assemblies, lunchtimes and mealtimes in the residential provision include prayers and/or the saying of grace. Local preachers and other visitors often contribute to assemblies giving them a strong Christian character. The provision in religious education promotes a good understanding of Christianity and other major faiths. The school has given pupils the opportunity to reflect upon the events that took place on September 11<sup>th</sup> 2001 in America. They also focus their thoughts on the victims of the two world wars during a moment of quiet on Remembrance Day. However, opportunities are missed to explore 'the spiritual dimension' in other subjects.

26. Provision for the pupils' moral development is good. All staff set a good example to the pupils in their relationships and personal conduct. The school teaches right from wrong throughout its work and this is emphasised through lessons in PSHE and religious education. All staff have high expectations of both work and behaviour, giving pupils consistent messages about what is and what is not acceptable in different situations. Pupils have a good sense of fairness and celebrate the success of their peers spontaneously. Pupils' achievements are celebrated through the reward systems in the separate departments leading to 'pupils of the week' and the awarding of prizes and certificates in assemblies. This recognises personal endeavour, enabling all pupils who try hard to receive an award not just the most able, and raises self-esteem and confidence.
27. Provision for the pupils' social development is very good. The school promotes positive relationships between all members of its community. There is substantial evidence that it is very successful in this key area. Relationships between staff and pupils and among the pupils themselves are very good during lessons and at other times during the school day, and in the residential provision. Pupils were polite and friendly to the inspectors and readily participated in sensible and good-humoured conversation with them. Sporting activities and college links contribute significantly to the pupils' social development. In lessons, pupils work well together when asked to do so and, for example, in physical education and music activities, show good attitudes to teamwork, healthy competition and appreciation of the efforts of others.
28. Provision for the pupils' cultural development is satisfactory. The school makes good provision to promote the pupils' understanding and awareness of their own heritage and local culture. Examples were seen in history, PSHE and ICT displays and lessons. There are educational visits; for example, to museums and galleries, during the school day and social and leisure activities in the residential provision. Some examples of activities with a multicultural dimension were seen, such as pupils' work based on African art and the use of music and dance from around the world in last year's Christmas concert. However, opportunities to develop the pupils' understanding and awareness of the diverse nature of the world at large and modern British society are missed in a range of subjects including English, art and design, geography, history, ICT and music.

#### **HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?**

29. The school cares very well for its pupils. Child protection procedures are very good, with the acting headteacher being the nominated person who has undergone the full child protection training. All the staff have received a basic child protection training and there is good, effective liaison and use of the appropriate local authority support services, such as social services and speech and language therapy. These high standards of child protection and welfare contribute effectively to the security, safety and general well-being of pupils. The good residential care and welfare provision also play a large part in providing a secure and comfortable environment for pupils.
30. The systems for checking and promoting attendance are generally satisfactory. The school follows up non-attendance quickly and parents and carers are kept well informed of the school's requirements regarding attendance and the notifying of the school in cases of absence. Unauthorised absences are not followed up as swiftly or as rigorously as they might be, however. The education welfare officer visits regularly and provides effective support and monitoring. Although registers are checked weekly by the school office staff, no formal system of reporting attendance statistics to the headteacher and senior management team on a regular basis exists. An annual

statistical analysis of registers is done and this is helpful. The school tends to rely on an informal system of reporting trends and patterns of absence of pupils amongst teachers themselves in an unstructured way, which, nevertheless, works effectively in such a small school.

31. The arrangements in place for monitoring and encouraging good behaviour are very good and well planned. They are simple, clear and well understood by pupils and parents. The system of rewards for good behaviour, good work and achievement works well and pupils' achievements are recognised publicly at 'Award Assemblies' weekly. There are good, positive systems in place for dealing with any bullying, racism or other inappropriate behaviour and the exclusion procedure is fair, clear and involves parents and governors.
32. Personal development is well monitored and supported. Teachers keep clear, concise and helpful information on personal development in each pupil's 'General File' and a good deal of personal development information is shared informally. Teachers know their pupils very well and keep themselves well informed on how their pupils' personal and social development is progressing. There are also good links across to IEPs, where personal development is covered, and to each annual review of the Statement of Special Educational Needs.
33. Overall, the school has satisfactory procedures for assessing pupils' academic achievements and progress at the end of modules or units of work, although there are pockets of particularly good and effective practice in subjects such as science, mathematics and personal, social and health education. In these subjects achievement is assessed regularly and there is growing evidence of pupils becoming increasingly involved in self-assessment of their developing skills, knowledge and understanding. However, the ongoing assessment and recording of what pupils can do, know and understand is unsatisfactory in some subjects. This is because there are shortcomings in marking and recording procedures. Although pupils' work is marked they have limited knowledge of their own learning because they are not given information, in a form that they understand, about what they need to do in order to improve. In addition, there is inconsistency across the school in the way that teachers maintain these ongoing, day-to-day records. As a result, teachers are not always in a position to use this assessment information effectively to plan future work to meet individual pupils' needs.
34. The school's arrangements for monitoring and supporting pupils' academic progress are satisfactory. All subjects have procedures that are at least satisfactory and there is some whole-school monitoring of pupil performance by senior management, but assessment is not yet fully integrated into the school's self-evaluation of the teaching and learning process. This is evident in the school's outdated staff guidelines for assessment, recording and reporting. Therefore, although senior management monitors assessment details this only occurs in the core subjects of English, mathematics, science, and personal, social and health education and then only on an annual basis. Co-ordinators of other subjects are responsible for monitoring pupil progress, but there are no arrangements in place for co-ordinating or evaluating the effectiveness of this process. In addition, the school does not yet have in place routine, systematic and established procedures that involve staff meeting together to ensure that they are all applying 'P' Level or National Curriculum criteria in the same rigorous way when standardising pupils' work. The absence of such internal moderation and levelling practice has an adverse effect on ensuring consistency of assessment.

35. The school is at the early stage of analysing and using whole-school assessment data. It uses a commercial software package that enables it to collate assessment information, and forwards this information for independent analysis in order to compare its performance with similar schools. The data is not yet examined internally to compare pupil progress in different subjects or in different classes. Therefore, the information is not used effectively as a basis for discussion with teachers or subject co-ordinators in order to set individual pupil targets in order to raise standards. However, the headteacher is aware of the need to use this assessment data more effectively and creatively in the drive towards raising standards and the quality of education the school provides.

### **HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?**

36. The partnership with parents is very good and is a strength of the school. Parents receive good, clear and helpful information from the school. Letters to parents are concise and helpful, the prospectus is attractively produced, informative and comprehensive, as is the governors' annual report to parents. The school has put a lot of effort into improving its written communications with parents and this is paying off well. The impending revival of the school newsletter will also be a further help in communicating well with parents. There is an efficiently run and well supported Friends of Wightwick Hall School, which raises useful sums of money for school funds. Parents are very supportive of the school and several provide valued help in the school on a regular basis.
37. The annual report on progress and the annual reviews of stated needs are clear, informative and helpful to parents. Parents meet with teachers regularly and these consultation meetings are well attended and helpful. The school staff are open and accessible to parents and any parental complaints or issues are dealt with sympathetically, swiftly and effectively. Parents feel comfortable and secure in their relationship with the school.
38. Parents are mostly well engaged with their children's homework and the use of a homework personal diary is a good method of communication between the school and parents. The home-school agreement with parents is clear and effective and most parents are very interested in the work of the school and in helping with their children's work and interests. There is a comfortable, welcoming and well-resourced parents' room in the school, which provides good information and a haven in which to relax.
39. Partnerships with external agencies and support services are good and productive. The links with the local community are good and the school receives excellent support from such local organisations as the Tettenhall Round Table, fire brigade and churches. The liaison with local further education institutions, such as Stafford College, is good, well structured and productive.

## HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

40. The school is under the leadership of an acting headteacher following the retirement of the substantive headteacher. The acting headteacher, his deputy and the key staff provide good leadership and management throughout the school. The acting headteacher, who is very new to the position, provides very strong and effective leadership for the school. The quality of leadership of the acting headteacher, senior managers and the governors ensures clear educational direction for the work of the school. A very high priority is given to school improvement, and the management team share a very keen commitment to school improvement and the further raising of pupil standards. Building a high-performing team is a leadership objective and teamwork between teachers and other staff is very well established. A very high priority is placed on the inspiration and motivation of staff, and the leadership helps by providing a good example to follow. The explicit aims and values of the school are fully reflected in its work. Responsibilities are clearly delegated to management staff. The management team are very aware of what needs to be done, and in what order, and have positive expectations.
41. The governors are good at supporting and monitoring the work of the school. They have good access to outside specialist skills and expertise, and the governors are deeply involved in making important, strategic decisions that affect the future direction of the school. They have a very keen understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the school, and they take a positive part in setting targets for school development and improvement. They put significant emphasis on monitoring school improvement, and they have very many contacts with the school. The governing body ensures that it fulfils its statutory duties. There is a positive relationship between the headteacher and the governors. Governors regularly set targets for the acting headteacher. They have responded well to the previous inspection and most of the key issues have been addressed successfully. Whole-school targets are carefully addressed and have resulted in the successful development of the PSHE curriculum. The development of ICT across the school has also been one of the school's targets and this is progressing well. The long-term future of the school, its location and overall provision is a target that generates a great deal of discussion and forward planning. This is a very positive indication of the clarity of vision of the acting headteacher and the governors in securing the school and ensuring a successful future.
42. The management of special educational needs at this school is effective, and great care is taken to make sure that individual special educational needs are met, and this special provision is managed on a day-to-day basis by the acting headteacher. He monitors the effectiveness of provision in this area, and the outcome of any extra expenditure is very carefully matched against the original purpose. The acting headteacher monitors all teaching and, following a monitoring visit, he gives a written report of his observations and judgements. These always include points for development, as the staff are committed to improving their own performance and value this guidance. Good teachers are used to support others and develop their expertise; areas of less effective teaching are addressed well. Teachers who are less experienced in working with ASD pupils are given support and guidance by more experienced staff. Others receive support and help in planning their teaching to meet the individual needs of the pupils. The school's policy concerning professional development is very effective and ensures that all staff are appropriately qualified and trained in working with pupils with ASD. It is a management policy, and clearly the practice, that the school appoints only appropriately skilled and qualified staff. The procedures for the induction of new staff are effective and are managed by the deputy

headteacher, although there is no written policy for induction. Staff development has improved since the previous inspection.

43. The school's performance is also monitored and evaluated well by governors. They visit the school individually and spend a day with subject co-ordinators, observing their teaching and monitoring the work in other areas of management and administration. Each governor has a specific area of the curriculum for which he/she takes responsibility. The governing body receives formal presentations from the teachers concerning specific areas; for example, working with autistic pupils, the implementation of the National Numeracy and Literacy Strategies, and the use of ICT across the curriculum. Appraisal and performance management procedures are very good, and performance targets are clearly understood by the teaching staff. Teachers and support staff work very well together and the expertise of support staff is invaluable when classes are being taught by supply teachers. The school's priorities for development are appropriate. The actions taken to meet the school's targets are effective as these have been written in the light of the previous inspection. The management team share a significant commitment to improvement and demonstrate a positive capacity to succeed.
44. The school makes effective use of resources, grants and other funding. Educational priorities are supported through the school's sound financial planning. The efficiency and effectiveness of the financial administration systems are satisfactory, and the school reacted appropriately to the most recent auditor's report. The senior management team periodically review the school finances. Staff training with new information and communication technology is firmly in place, and the school's administration and pupils' learning is satisfactorily supported by new technology. There is a major drive to raise the level of use of ICT throughout the school and this is beginning to take effect as interactive whiteboards are installed in classrooms. Specific grants are used for their designated purpose. The school monitors the effectiveness of its spending satisfactorily and governors are kept fully informed, and the school's objectives and the outcome of expenditure are satisfactorily matched. However, the school's strategic development plan, whilst focusing on raising standards, is not fully costed.
45. The principles of best value are a consistent consideration in school spending. The school is aware of the need to compare its costs with those of other schools. The school usually engages in competitive tendering, and the staff are required to justify their use of resources and identify further needs for their subjects. The school usually consults widely on further improvements and major expenditure decisions.
46. Teachers and support staff are appropriately qualified and experienced. There are just enough teachers to meet the demands of the curriculum and the special educational needs of the pupils, but the school has to rely heavily upon the services of supply teachers in some areas. This is to cover the nursery and Years 1 and 2 in the lower end of the school and the modern foreign language teaching in Years 7 to 9. The use of specialist teachers in science, music and modern foreign languages is especially successful in raising standards of achievement.
47. There is a well structured programme of in-service training in place geared to developing teachers' professional expertise and areas where there are subject deficits, as in English in the senior school. The headteacher is aware that staff training needs are changing as the nature of pupils' special educational needs changes. The school currently has almost 50 per cent of its pupils with ASD.

48. Teachers and co-ordinators have good job descriptions, which set out clearly defined roles and responsibilities, and these are used well to support performance management. Administrative and support staff are well deployed, and good use is made of their talents. The school has good arrangements to cover during staff absences.
49. Overall, the accommodation is satisfactorily matched to meet the current demands. Classrooms are adequate for the current pupil numbers, and the accommodation is matched to the requirements of the age range of pupils. The provision for indoor games and sport is adequate, and there is adequate space for outdoor play and vigorous activity. However, the equipment and facilities for pupils to use outdoors are in need of improvement. There is very limited provision for outdoor play for children in the Foundation Stage.
50. Staff and pupils benefit from the good library provision, ICT suite, a number of good sized classrooms and the swimming pool. These rooms are used imaginatively and add extra dimensions to the education that is provided. The school also makes good use of museums, galleries and field centres to enrich the curriculum.
51. The attractive and spacious grounds provide a rich learning resource, which is well used by many classes. The early years pupils have a very small, but secure and enclosed play area which is appropriately fenced. The school building is regularly and well maintained and pupils' learning is enriched by relevant and stimulating classroom and corridor displays. There are, however, areas where the limited accommodation has a detrimental effect on the curriculum; for example, aspects of design and technology (resistant materials), indoor physical education and science. There has been no improvement in the accommodation for these subjects since the last inspection. Although there is a lift and some ramps the school is not fully adapted to cater for the needs of non-ambulant pupils.
52. In the autistic resources block there is a long-standing problem with lavatory ventilation. This has been reported, but has not been rectified.
53. Resources for teaching the curriculum are good overall. The library is well furnished and well stocked with relevant books, audiocassettes and computer software. The quantity and quality of early years books is good. The colour coding arrangement according to difficulty is helpful to pupils who select their own books. Pupils also access both fiction and non-fiction books in the many small libraries housed in classrooms and other areas of the school. Pupils are encouraged to take books home and to follow the system of regular returning of, and respect for, the books they borrow. Staff maintain a regular reading record for each pupil and use the library to hear pupils read aloud. There are, however, insufficient resources in some areas of design and technology and there are not enough specialised resources for the lowest attaining pupils.

## **WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?**

54. In order to improve the quality of education even further the acting headteacher, senior management team and governors should:

- (1) ensure more rigour in assessment procedures in order to enable teachers to plan more effectively and help pupils to understand how they can improve even further; (paragraph 35)
- (2) make sure that the few curriculum shortcomings are addressed; (paragraphs 20, 125)
- (3) improve the accommodation to meet the demands of the GCSE courses and improve the facilities within the autistic resource. (paragraphs 51, 52)

The management of the school could be improved further by ensuring that costs are written into strategic planning documents. This is a minor issue (paragraph 44)

## PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

### Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	81
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	35

### Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very Good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very poor
Number	1	21	44	14	1	0	0
Percentage	1.2	25.9	54.3	17.3	1.2	0	0

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

### Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll	No of pupils
Number of pupils on the school's roll	98
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	24

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

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	9
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	5

### Attendance

#### Authorised absence

	%
School data	6.0

#### Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	1.6

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

**Attainment Key Stage 1 (6 pupils)****Teacher assessment**

Subject	No of pupils Level W	No of pupils Level 1	No of pupils Level2
Speaking and Listening	3	3	
Reading	4	2	
Writing	6		
Mathematics	4	1	1
Science	3	3	

**Task and Test Results**

Subject	No of pupils Level W	No of pupils Level 1	No of pupils Level 2C	No of pupils Level 2B	No of pupils Level 2A
Reading task	4	2			
Writing task	6				
Spelling	6				
Mathematics	4	1		1	

**Attainment Key Stage 2 (9 pupils)****SATs Tests**

Subject	No of pupils Level 2	No of pupils Level 3	No of pupils Level 4	No of pupils Level 5
English	1	1		
Mathematics	1	3		
Science				

**Attainment Key Stage 3 (7 pupils in Year 9)****Year 7 Progress Tests (6 pupils)**

Subject	No of pupils Level 3
Mathematics	2

**SATs Tests**

Subject	No of pupils Level 2	No of pupils Level 3	No of pupils Level 4	No of pupils Level 5
English		1	1	
Mathematics	3	2		
Science		3	1	1

### SATs Teacher Assessment

Subject	No of pupils Level W	No of pupils Level 1	No of pupils Level 2	No of pupils Level 3	No of pupils Level 4
English		1	4	2	
Mathematics		1	2	4	
Science			1	4	2
Design and technology	2	1	6		
Information and communication technology		1	7	1	
History	1	2	5	1	
Geography	1	2	5	1	
French		3	6		
Art and design	3		1	5	
Music			2	5	2
Physical education	2	1	2	3	

### Attainment Key Stage 4 (6 pupils)

#### Entry Level Certificate

Subject	No of pupils Entry Level 1	No of pupils Entry Level 2	No of pupils Entry Level 3
English (AQA)	0	0	4
Science (OCR 3970)	1	3	2

### ASDAN Bronze Award

5 pupils achieved the required 2 credits to pass.

### City & Guilds NVQ Level 1 Catering & Hospitality

3 pupils successfully completed Level 1.

### AQA ACHIEVEMENT TESTS IN LITERACY/NUMERACY (Level2)

Subject	30 %	35 %	40 %	45 %	50 %	55 %	60 %	65 %	70 %	75 %
Literacy				1	1			2		1
Numeracy	1		1		1	1	1			

### ***Ethnic background of pupils***

<b>Categories used in the Annual School Census</b>
White – British
White – Irish
White – any other White background
Mixed – White and Black Caribbean
Mixed – White and Black African
Mixed – White and Asian
Mixed – any other mixed background
Asian or Asian British - Indian
Asian or Asian British - Pakistani
Asian or Asian British – Bangladeshi
Asian or Asian British – any other Asian background
Black or Black British – Caribbean
Black or Black British – African
Black or Black British – any other Black background
Chinese
Any other ethnic group
No ethnic group recorded

### ***Exclusions in the last school year***

<b>No of pupils on roll</b>	<b>Number of fixed period exclusions</b>	<b>Number of permanent exclusions</b>
97	8	0
0	0	0
0	0	0
0	0	0
0	0	0
0	0	0
0	0	0
0	0	0
0	0	0
0	0	0
0	0	0
1	0	0
0	0	0
0	0	0
0	0	0
0	0	0
0	0	0
0	0	0

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

### ***Teachers and classes***

#### **Qualified teachers and classes: YN – Y11**

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	12.55
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	7.8
Average class size	8.2
<b>Education support staff: YN – Y11</b>	15

Total number of education support staff	15
Total aggregate hours worked per week	479

*FTE means full-time equivalent.*

### ***Financial information***

Financial year	2001/2002
	£
Total income	1,017,677
Total expenditure	1,055,278
Expenditure per pupil	12,415
Balance brought forward from previous year	75,110
Balance carried forward to next year	37,509

### ***Recruitment of teachers***

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	2.9
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	0
Total number of vacant teaching posts (FTE)	0.55
Number of vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of a term or more (FTE)	2.35
Number of unfilled vacancies or vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of less than one term (FTE)	0

*FTE means full-time equivalent.*

## Results of the survey of parents and carers

### Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	98
Number of questionnaires returned	19

### Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	58	37	0	5	0
My child is making good progress in school.	58	32	5	0	5
Behaviour in the school is good.	32	63	0	0	5
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	26	53	16	0	5
The teaching is good.	74	16	5	0	5
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	47	42	11	0	0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	84	16	0	0	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	58	42	0	0	0
The school works closely with parents.	47	37	11	0	5
The school is well led and managed.	42	37	5	0	16
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	53	42	0	0	5
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	47	16	21	11	5

## **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**

55. Provision for children under five is appropriate and promotes the desirable outcomes in the six areas of learning. Children are generally admitted when they are four years old. Nursery age children attend part-time. Reception aged children attend the nursery in the mornings and join Year 1 pupils in the afternoons. This is beneficial to them as they are well supported in very basic skills in the morning and helped to develop them when working with older pupils.
56. Those with more complex difficulties start off their school career in the nursery, but move into the autistic resources area at reception age. These children then benefit from more specific teaching.
57. The temporary nursery teacher had been in the school only four weeks prior to the inspection, but has been ably supported by the nursery nurse, who was responsible for the weekly planning, which is comprehensive, appropriate and offers a good range and pace of activities.
58. The progress made by under five-year-olds in the desirable outcomes is good in five areas and satisfactory in physical development. Assessment is detailed and constructive for children with moderate learning difficulties. The school is planning to adopt a different system to assess the progress of those with ASD, which will better suit the detail of progress made.

### **Personal, social and emotional development**

59. The quality of teaching and curriculum for promoting social development of under fives is very good and children respond well, making good, often very good progress during their time in the Foundation Stage. There are three children who are under five years of age and they all attend part-time. They are made to feel secure and valued.
60. Children play uninhibitedly and interact happily with each other for short lengths of time. With some guidance they are learning to share and take turns. They share their own achievements with others and are beginning to understand that they need to celebrate others' achievements too. Most are confident enough to try new experiences. All make their own choices and are increasingly mature in this aspect, as shown in small group collaboration on building a track and railway stations and role play in their home area.
61. Their relationships with adults in the school environment are very positive and happy. This is evident in the soft play area where the play is structured, but relaxed. Children respond well to instructions.
62. In the autistic resources centre good progress is being made in establishing clear eye contact and communicating needs and emotions. The children learn to take responsibility for their own hygiene and most can dress themselves with very little help.
63. Children with complex learning difficulties are making good progress in using a 'wait' card to help to mark the passing of time in games, i.e. to encourage turn taking. Those with limited play ideas and a restricted communication repertoire are developing appropriate gestures and slowly beginning to take some interest in what other children

are doing. There are times, however, when children are expected to remain seated for too long. They become restless and lose concentration as a result.

### **Communication, language and literacy**

64. Children make good progress from a very low baseline in language, literacy and communication skills. Many children are beginning to be more confident in talking to the teaching staff and to each other in role play and small group work. Their theme work activities, mainly based on nursery rhymes, successfully contribute to extending their vocabulary as teachers continually reinforce key words and phrases in varying contexts. Good examples are the development of language about nature in 'Hey Diddle' in the nursery and 'Goldilocks' in Class 1. For much of story time children are fully involved in listening to the teacher read. Higher attaining children recall many aspects of the stories and rhymes that they hear.
65. The speech therapist attends school for two days per week. Those children who have speech disorders are making good progress in listening to and repeating words and phrases with increasingly clear pronunciation and appropriate intonation. They know the sounds and forms of letters and are fully familiar with books; most read simple words and take pleasure in reading to adults. Higher attaining children are making good progress in their reading, using phonics to familiarise themselves with the text.
66. Children with ASD use a satisfactory range of symbols and objects of reference to communicate their needs and wishes. Overall, they are making satisfactory progress in writing. Many can write their own name. All write to Father Christmas. The under-five children with ASD follow a recognised Perceptive-Motor programme and make evident progress in pencil control.
67. Under-five children use the library regularly and demonstrate a respect for books, which they handle carefully and with interest. Most children hold books and turn pages correctly. They interpret pictures in some detail deriving some meaning from the texts in front of them. They can match objects to pictures and symbols and know that marks can have meaning. They are beginning to trace and overwrite model writing; they can form different shapes and lines.

### **Mathematical development**

68. Children enjoy reciting number rhymes. They can count up to at least five, match objects up to five, identify the numeral and match to the objects. They can identify a missing number in the sequence.
69. They can, with minimal help, sort objects into sets, according to size and/or colour, and can describe an object's size in terms of 'big' and 'small'. They are working on the concepts of 'more' and 'less', 'same' and 'different'. Two children were confidently able to demonstrate when a bucket was full of sand and when it was empty. Sand and water play is very well planned to promote mathematical development.
70. Children know a number of basic shapes and quickly slot such shapes into the correct aperture. Their enjoyment of number work is encouraged by the use of attractive and colourful workbooks. Teachers make detailed records of their progress so that children are continually challenged and supported in their number work. Those who use the pictorial timetable have increasing understanding of the passing of time.

## **Knowledge and understanding of the world**

71. Through their construction play; for example, setting up a railway, and through listening to stories, children learn about the jobs people do and various geographical features of the area. They describe weather conditions correctly and know that they wear suitable clothes according to the season.
72. When they explore the school grounds collecting leaves, nuts and twigs they are also learning to orientate themselves and can find their way around areas of the school with little help.
73. Children are beginning to understand how things and people change, that they are growing and that there is a difference between 'old' and 'new'. Their computer skills are developing satisfactorily. Children use the mouse to click and drag stars for their project.
74. They enjoy learning about different animals in their work on 'Noah's Ark', and in their work on building, choose whether to make 'high' or 'low' doors and windows. In preparing for a picnic visit they make sandwiches with a variety of fillings.

## **Physical development**

75. Children are not, generally, well co-ordinated in activities involving fine motor control when using small equipment, which is a clear reflection of their special educational needs. They make better progress in larger movements such as jumping and landing, rolling, stamping, sliding and running in soft play or gymnastics work. They have good control of their bicycles, using space well. In the hall they respond satisfactorily to tambourine signals to stop. Children are familiar with the activities and are learning the rules and routines. They move quietly and in an orderly fashion around the school.

## **Creative development**

76. The creative development curriculum is constructed on the concept of children choices and 'blocked' for at least a morning per week. Activities include singing, dancing, listening to music, painting, cutting, sticking and role play.
77. Children develop their creativity by making their own music, using a variety of un-tuned percussion instruments and in artwork, where children experiment with a range of media including printing with hands, leaves and sponges. They make imaginative use of colour.
78. Full vent is given to the children's desire to experiment and explore their ideas and feelings through lengthy, dressing up role-play activities such as 'Wee Willy Winky'. They respond very positively to the lively input and involvement of teachers and support staff.

## **ENGLISH**

79. Overall, progress in English is good. Pupils enter the school with limited literacy skills and approximately 50 per cent of pupils have complex communication disorders. Standards of achievement at the ages of 11 and 16 are higher than those in comparable schools. This is clearly evident in the data collected by the acting headteacher through consultation with government departments.

80. Pupils make good progress in developing their speaking and listening skills. They are encouraged to listen attentively to the teacher and to each other. In one class the pupils achieve well in paired discussion. Their contributions are sensible and well considered.
81. Pupils listen carefully to stories and videos, they respond accurately and, often, promptly to instructions. Many ask and answer questions confidently and relevantly. A particular strength in Years 1 to 6 is the continual reinforcement by teachers and support staff of language within a topic so that most pupils understand and are acquiring a wide range of vocabulary.
82. Standards of achievement in speaking have improved in Years 7 to 11 since the last inspection. Some pupils are explaining themselves clearly and at length. In Years 7 to 9, speaking and listening skills are developed well in English lessons during the oral starter sessions when pupils respond to carefully targeted questioning. Pupils in Years 10 and 11 made valid contributions in a careers lesson when discussing the meanings of words and what they needed to do to impress employers.
83. Pupils articulate their ideas well to adults and other pupils. Most older pupils work independently and follow the directions they are given correctly.
84. The ASD pupils make erratic, but positive progress in communicating with staff and signalling needs and ideas. Older pupils are able to speak at a mature level on a number of subjects. They are attentive listeners to stories and can recall the plot in sequence, but immediately lose interest once discussion begins. However, not all pupils who are capable of doing so speak at length and participate in role-play or other strategies to develop fluency. There are occasions when teachers tend to monopolise the lesson and expect pupils to listen for long periods rather than contribute to the lesson.
85. Pupils of all abilities make good progress in reading. Their teachers ensure that the reading repertoire is broad and varied. Pupils with moderate learning difficulties in Years 1 and 2, and those with more complex learning difficulties, make good progress in pre-reading skills. Younger pupils make slow, but steady progress in using phonic strategies in their reading and spelling especially in consonant blending. Some pupils are achieving well in shared reading of 'big books'. They are beginning to recognise initial and final letter sounds.
86. In their visit to the library, ASD pupils demonstrate an interest in books; they all turn pages correctly, spend time over print and pictures and interpret what they see at different levels of understanding. Their reading progress and borrowing of books is well monitored. Both teacher and support staff use language and symbols continually to stimulate vocabulary acquisition. Pupils communicate their enjoyment clearly and, albeit for short bursts, co-operate well with adults.
87. Younger pupils make at least satisfactory progress. In their topic work on 'Goldilocks and the Three Bears', they listen with interest to the story read by the teacher, and have good recall of the events and characters involved. They respond well to the well judged questioning from the staff.
88. Good progress is made by older pupils in the use of phonics. Pupils in Years 7 to 9 know the difference between fiction and non-fiction, and can identify the author and illustrator. They try hard to improve their reading skills.

89. In Years 10 and 11, pupils engage well with a range of challenging texts. In 'Macbeth' many pupils paraphrase extracts correctly and, in 'The Hound of the Baskervilles', pupils demonstrate detailed knowledge of plot, setting and characters. The ensuing personal writing demonstrates good understanding. Higher attaining pupils compare and contrast details of the 'Bermuda Triangle' and the puzzle of Alderley in their unit on 'Mysteries and Legends'.
90. Pupils, especially in Years 7 to 11, make satisfactory to rapid progress in computer assisted learning; they work well independently and strive hard to achieve their targets. In Years 10 and 11, pupils are highly motivated when they plan and create a poster for their 'Leisure and Tourism' unit. They read competently from the screen.
91. Throughout the school the rate of progress in writing skills is satisfactory, and is often good in Years 3 to 6, where pupils write at length on their experiences of getting lost in a zoo. They express their feelings and write sensibly about how the problem is resolved. Many use speech marks or 'bubbles' correctly. Younger pupils copy and underwrite the teacher's writing with some success, indicating developing hand/eye co-ordination. Lower attaining pupils understand that various marks can be meaningful. Most pupils have difficulty in spelling, but many make good use of a variety of strategies and concrete aids; progress is steady, but slow.
92. In Years 7 to 9 pupils work as a class to create a story. The higher attaining develop their ideas, writing neatly; the less mature write simple words and, with support, can put them in sentences.
93. In Years 3 to 11, there are examples of good drafting of work to improve spelling, punctuation and content. Older pupils do not use paragraphs without prompting. Pupils write in a satisfactory range of styles including letters, advertisements and comic strips. In story writing, pupils sequence the events well and make good attempts to vary sentences.
94. Pupils' attitudes to work are good. They get down to their tasks promptly and many, especially those with MLD, can focus on their work for some time. They respond very well and produce their best work.
95. The quality of teaching is good overall. In Years 1 to 6, teachers maintain a brisk pace, moving quickly on to integrated activities, continually reinforcing the use of language. They question pupils in a clear and structured way ensuring that all pupils are involved and make a contribution. Teachers receive good support from support staff, who have good knowledge of the pupils' needs. Resources are appropriately used, including listening stations and computer software, which help to develop pupils' independent learning skills.
96. Throughout the school, teachers manage the pupils well in English lessons, maintaining a standardised approach. In Years 1 to 6, teachers make every effort to encourage confidence and competence in their pupils' speaking skills. Tasks are well planned, organised and appropriate to pupils' different learning needs and teachers have high expectations of pupils in Years 3 to 6. No Years 10 and 11 pupils have been entered for GCSE even though 100 per cent of pupils entered for the Certificate of Achievement attained a distinction.
97. Relationships between staff and pupils are positive and supportive. Staff manage the pupils sensitively. There is good practice in the preparing of clear and precise work schemes for pupils in Years 7 to 11.

98. Assessment procedures are accurate, but teachers are aware that they need to be more specific and formal in using assessment information to formulate future planning for individual special educational needs. This is especially important when a number of staff are employed on a temporary supply basis and depend on detailed assessment records.

## **MATHEMATICS**

99. Pupils make good progress in mathematics throughout the school. Pupils achieve well in basic number skills, shape and space work and handling data, but there is little evidence of mathematical investigation.
100. In Year 1, pupils count and order numbers up to five and identify common shapes – square, rectangle, triangle and circle. By the end of Year 2, pupils can describe the properties of these shapes using everyday language. They understand the terms ‘bigger’ and ‘smaller’ and can count and order numbers up to twenty. They use simple programs in ICT to support learning.
101. By the end of Year 6, most pupils understand the concepts of the four rules of number and practise simple examples. Lower attaining pupils add and subtract using a number line. All pupils recognise three dimensional shapes – cube, pyramid, cone and sphere. They construct squares and rectangles and know how to find the perimeter. They identify coins and can add and subtract money. Much of this work is based on practical activities using real coins. In one lesson in the ASD unit, pupils went to a ‘shop’ where they bought marked items and then worked out the amount of change. They collect data using a tally chart and displayed the information on bar graphs.
102. By the end of Year 9, pupils can round numbers up or down to the nearest ten or one hundred. They become familiar with a range of words with the same meaning as + and -. They understand that addition is the inverse of subtraction, but only higher attaining pupils can apply this concept. They recognise numbers in words. They use rulers accurately to measure and convert units of length such as centimetres to millimetres. They are able to plot and interpret coordinates in all four quadrants.
103. During Year 11, pupils are following an accreditation course for General Certificate of Secondary Education. They know how to multiply and divide by ten, 100 and one thousand. They understand the equivalence of fractions. They find percentage of quantities, and higher attaining pupils understand the relationship between fractions and percentages. Pupils interpret and display data in various forms – bar charts, pie charts and straight-line graphs. Pupils are able to identify line symmetry, and higher attaining pupils can translate simple shapes in all four quadrants.
104. Teaching in mathematics is good. Lessons, based on the numeracy strategy, have clear objectives and are suitably paced. In the oral starter sessions, teachers target differentiated questions to individual pupils to ensure that all pupils are fully included in the lesson. Written activities consolidate teaching and are planned to suit individual need. Pupils are supported in their learning by the effective use of a variety of appropriate resources, sometimes using ICT, and by the significant contribution of support staff. Plenary sessions, where pupils discuss what they have learned, are less well developed, but this aspect is the subject of teacher training.

105. Pupils' behaviour in lessons is very good. They have a good attitude to learning, show perseverance to overcome difficulties and respond well to praise and encouragement. They take pride in their achievements and are happy to discuss their work. Older pupils appreciate working towards GCSE and take great interest in the lessons. They even devised a number line to help younger pupils. This runs from minus ten to plus 100 around the mathematics room, with each number represented by a sportsman, pop singer or film star.
106. Assessment is thorough and continuing. Informal comments during lessons and written observations on exercise books are designed to encourage pupils and to help them to improve the standard of their work. Teachers set group targets, and individual pupil targets are based on the numeracy targets in IEPs. Evaluation at the end of each topic forms the basis for future planning for the next stage of work. The recording systems provide information for annual reviews and annual reports to parents.
107. Mathematics makes a good contribution to the development of pupils' literacy skills. The oral starter activities provide the opportunity for listening and speaking. The plenary session helps to develop communication skills when pupils discuss the work they have done in the lesson. Key words for the lesson are clearly displayed and all classrooms have wall displays with mathematical vocabulary.
108. ICT is used to support learning. Pupils use calculators appropriately and correctly. Secondary age pupils receive the benefit of teaching using an interactive board, which maximises the effectiveness of the classroom computer. Pupils use computers to practise mathematical techniques such as measuring angles with a virtual protractor and to display data in bar graphs and pie charts.
109. The department is very well led and managed. The subject co-ordinator, now the acting headteacher, organises, but does not teach the subject. However, planning and assessment procedures are very well organised and the subject co-ordinator monitors teaching. Accommodation for the subject is good, teaching staff are appropriately qualified and teaching resources are effectively used. The subject has a high profile in the school with attractive wall displays of mathematical material in classrooms and corridors.
110. There has been very good improvement in the subject since the last inspection. ICT is now more consistently used to support learning, teaching is monitored by the subject teacher and pupils are studying for the General Certificate of Secondary Education. All these factors have had a beneficial effect on the standards achieved by the subject.

## **SCIENCE**

111. The school's provision for science is good. Pupils in Years 7 to 11 achieve well in lessons and make good progress. This is evident in their success in national tests at the end of Year 9. One pupil's attainment this year was broadly in line with national expectations. In the past the school has not provided these higher attaining pupils with the opportunity of taking a GCSE examination, but it is aware of this shortcoming and the course has now been developed for the current Year 10. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 achieve satisfactorily in lessons and those in Years 3 to 6 achieve well, but pupil progress over time is unsatisfactory in the primary department because timetable arrangements do not allow sufficient time for science to be taught.

112. During their time in the primary department pupils begin to develop a growing understanding of themselves and the world around them so that by the age of seven they identify items of rubbish that can cause damage to rivers. They also examine physical processes so that they understand how different musical instruments produce sound and know the dangers associated with electricity. By the age of 11, pupils have extended their understanding of the living and non-living worlds. They know the positions of some of the major organs of the body, such as the heart and lungs, and name some parts of the skeleton like the ribs and skull. Pupils put common objects into groups according to the material from which they are made, such as metal and plastic, and identify simple forces like 'pushing' and 'pulling' with the higher attaining ones showing developing understanding of concepts such as 'friction' and 'gravity'. By this age, pupils also make predictions prior to carrying out investigations and record their observations during activities like a minibeast survey.
113. Increasingly, pupils are given opportunities to carry out experiments in Years 7 to 9, such as investigating the strength of different magnets. Therefore, by the age of 14 they have developed a number of skills. They use simple laboratory apparatus and read scales accurately when taking measurements of volume, temperature and length. Higher attaining pupils understand the requirements of a 'fair test' and predict outcomes, making simple hypotheses and communicating their ideas using some appropriate scientific vocabulary. Pupils also extend much of their scientific knowledge and understanding. They know about energy changes associated with food chains and webs, understand physical processes like magnetism and sound, and relate their knowledge of materials to everyday situations such as the link between detergents/cleaning products and pollution.
114. The curriculum in Years 10 and 11 further develops pupils' scientific skills by placing an increasing emphasis on investigations as they work towards accredited examinations. Therefore, by the age of 16, pupils have developed and refined their scientific skills. Higher attaining pupils have a clearer understanding of the concept of a 'fair test' and can apply this in experiments, such as investigating the depth of craters made in damp sand when a marble is dropped into it from different heights. They approach these experiments systematically, analysing and tabulating results and using new technology to display them graphically in different forms. Pupils also make good progress in extending their knowledge and understanding of living things, materials and their properties, and physical processes. They name the components of cells and appreciate the relationship between different cell structures and the functions they perform, understand how materials can be separated using techniques, such as chromatography and petroleum cracking, and know about magnetism and how its properties are used in instruments like a compass and loudspeaker.
115. Science is taught well and some teaching is very good. In the secondary department a very knowledgeable subject teacher ensures that pupils are provided with a good variety of suitable activities that meet their needs by being interesting and suitably challenging. There is a good mixture of direct teaching and questioning that involves pupils well and encourages them to explain their thinking. As a result, pupils work diligently and very enthusiastically and with good understanding of what they are required to do. They are able to discuss their views when working collaboratively and are very keen to show what they know. For example, a class of 14-year olds became very involved in considering the implications of an electrical power cut in New York. A well-managed discussion enabled them to identify the direct implications, such as the lack of entertainment facilities, but they were also able to draw perceptive inferences like the increase in burglaries being due to the non-functioning of alarm systems. Equally good teaching takes place in the primary department when teachers provide

activities that require pupils to investigate by using their existing knowledge to predict outcomes, things such as the distance cars travel when they roll down ramps made from different materials. However, at other times teaching is too prescriptive and pupils are told what to do rather than being given the opportunity to find out for themselves.

116. Science is managed by a very well organised and capable subject co-ordinator who has a very good grasp of the areas that need further development. Good quality planning ensures that pupils follow a broad and balanced subject curriculum that is strongly referenced to the National Curriculum. In addition, good use is made of the immediate environment through activities like pond dipping, and the wider community, such as Alton Towers, when pupils visited and collected information about the different rides to extend their understanding of physical process such as forces and acceleration. Assessment procedures are satisfactory in the primary department, but there are particularly effective systems in use with the older pupils, including the phased introduction of self-assessment sheets. However, pupils' work is not always marked in a way that tells pupils what they need to do in order to improve. The specialist science accommodation is barely adequate for pupils in Years 10 and 11, although there is a good range of learning resources including the use of new technology, such as sensors and equipment for data logging. However, neither the learning resources nor the accommodation will be satisfactory when the increased demands resulting from the introduction of GCSE begin to take effect.

## **ART AND DESIGN**

117. Pupils achieve very well throughout the school. They make very good progress as they move from Years 1 to 11. This is because the teaching is very good and the co-ordinator provides very strong leadership. Artwork is very prominent in displays throughout the school and this gives the subject and pupils' achievements a very high status. The provision and outcomes are, therefore, a strength of the school. Improvement has been good in that the high standards previously reported have been maintained and subject leadership has improved significantly.
118. Pupils in Years 10 and 11 achieve particularly well in relation to their needs. They complete a wide range of works using a good range of media, skills and techniques. Sketchbooks are used very well in the secondary department and pupils always produce a series of sketches or designs before starting any substantial piece of artwork. These sketchbooks clearly illustrate a steady development of knowledge, skills and understanding from Years 7 to 11. Good amounts of consistently very high quality work were examined in Years 9, 10 and 11 in particular. Pupils in Year 11 use colour, pattern, line and form very well and employ techniques such as shading, blending and smudging well. For example, they have produced striking pieces using rollers, printing inks and bold colours and very good drawings of boots and fruits using shading in a sophisticated way. Pupils in Year 10 have produced exciting work based on cartoon characters. Pupils in Year 9 have paid great attention to detail and produced very colourful, highly finished works using pastel crayons, acrylic paints and collage techniques. In addition, there is an abundance of completed artwork on display around the school illustrating pupils' finished work from the nursery to Year 11. These displays include a substantial amount of good quality, expressive three-dimensional work largely, but not only ceramics. The co-ordinator makes good use of a local potter in helping with the glazing and firing of pupils' pieces in the school kiln to assure consistent high quality. Work in the primary department includes some very effective group work, such as the large pieces on the theme 'Bluebell Wood' completed by the Years 5 and 6 group, as well as a good range of individual work.

119. Teaching and learning are very good throughout the school. They are consistently very good in the secondary department and are always good or very good in the primary department. Lessons in the secondary department are characterised by pupils working for long periods of time with great interest and perseverance. In the three lessons seen the pupils' attitudes and behaviour were excellent and this contributed significantly to their learning. For example, in a Year 10 lesson pupils worked with great concentration and considerable precision, including two painting old boots and two working on large cartoon designs as part of a 'Pop Art' theme. The teacher spends the minimum amount of time possible in whole-class discussions at the start and end of lessons. However, because he effectively explains the purpose and content of the lessons and evaluates the pupils' work through individual and class discussions, there is a clear sense of purpose at all times. In the primary department the teachers appropriately give more time to explaining the lesson activities and objectives. The lessons seen in both art and design and design and technology were appropriately seasonal and effectively promoted the development and consolidation of basic skills such as observation, choice of materials, threading, cutting and sticking.
120. Good links are made between art and design and the key cross-curricular skills of literacy, numeracy and ICT. In the secondary department, pupils regularly write, albeit briefly, about their sketches and designs, including the techniques and materials they have used, the artists who have inspired their designs and their opinions of their own work. Activities often include estimation and sometimes, precise measurement. Pupils in a Year 9 ICT lesson created designs based on the work of Kandinsky. In a Year 10 art and design lesson, a pupil used available computer software to search for and print out examples of 'Clip Art' that were relevant to his study of 'Pop Art' and two pupils used an overhead projector to enlarge their drawings of Bart Simpson. Lessons observed in the primary department made good contributions to the pupils' speaking and listening skills and understanding of the seasons of the year and celebration of Christmas.
121. There are, nevertheless, three areas for development. The school has not yet provided opportunities for the higher attaining pupils in Years 10 and 11 to gain recognition for their achievements through GCSE or other accredited courses. In the secondary department, the subject is still taught in a room that has no water supply. There are clear plans in place to address these issues. The current Year 10 pupils are receiving additional lessons and the co-ordinator is preparing for them to enter GCSE next year. The school has started work on refurbishing the old workshop as a joint art and design and design and technology facility. In addition, although good use is made of the work of famous British, European and white American artists, opportunities are missed to use art from around the world to inspire and stimulate pupils. Although practice in this area is less effective than other aspects of the subject it is still satisfactory. For example, pupils in Years 5, 6 and 7 have completed very good work based on African masks, jewellery and fabrics. In a Year 7 lesson good use was made of African music and tasting exotic fruits to enhance the learning experience.

## **DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY**

122. Pupils' achievement is satisfactory. Progress since the last inspection is unsatisfactory.
123. By Year 2, pupils are beginning to recognise small equipment when making models of houses, puppets and kites made out of basic materials. They have experience of cutting and joining when making basic toys.
124. By Year 6, higher attaining pupils use scissors purposefully to cut around shapes and curves with increasing control. They are learning to evaluate their work. Higher attaining pupils are beginning to join materials using a range of devices such as glue and sticky tape. Lower attaining pupils learn to join pieces of construction kits.
125. By Year 9 pupils' skills develop appropriately through experiences of using basic equipment; for example, they cut plastic when making signs for their bedroom door. They learn how to make a suitable design for a T-shirt. Their manipulative skills are developed well through cooking activities. Other pupils have been introduced to recipes and developing their business enterprise skills by selling their products at a Christmas fayre. Pupils do not make the progress they should in the use of resistant materials and have no access to an appropriately equipped wood or metal workshop. This limits the further progress pupils make and does not meet statutory requirements. Most pupils in Years 10 and 11 are disapplied from design and technology to enable them to spend extra time on their literacy and numeracy skills before they leave school and to pursue vocational qualifications at Further Education Colleges. However, the school is committed to teaching a modern foreign language to all pupils in Years 7, 8 and 9.
126. Too few lessons were seen to make a judgement about teaching and learning overall. However, in the few lessons observed, teaching is good, particularly in food technology, where subject knowledge was a very good feature. The subject co-ordinator has a good vision for the development of the subject, which needs to be implemented by the management of the school.

## **GEOGRAPHY**

127. Pupils make good progress in geography between Years 4 and 9; in Years 1 and 2, achievement is satisfactory. It was not possible to observe a lesson in Years 1 and 2, but, from scrutiny of pupils' work and evidence of teachers' records, achievement is satisfactory.
128. Between Years 3 and 6, pupils make good progress. In Years 3 and 4, pupils observe and record the weather using symbols. They study the local environment using basic geographical vocabulary. An information and communication technology program was used for pupils to express their views on the local area. They investigate the differences between living in the town and the countryside. In Years 5 and 6, pupils study the changes that have taken place in Wolverhampton, and are finding the differences between their hometown and Bridgnorth. This topic is being carried out on a cross-curricular basis involving literacy and numeracy skills. Pupils are familiar with Ordnance Survey maps, have well-developed map reading skills and can normally locate places and physical features.

129. In Years 7, 8 and 9, pupils achieve very well. In Year 7, pupils continue their work on plans and maps. They understand the reason for symbols and why we need them. They draw plans of places in the local environment using appropriate symbols. They can locate the major cities of Britain on a map. In Year 8, pupils study settlements from the Romans onwards and they learn about the services in different types of settlement; for example, hamlet, village, town and city, and they compare these services with their hometown. They study the reasons for the siting of these settlements. They further develop their map reading skills by finding and interpreting four-figure grid references. In Year 9, they understand the major features of weather, including types of cloud. They have compared the rainfall in Britain with that of Singapore and the reason for the differences. They know the main points of the compass and understand wind direction. Pupils are studying the topic of water, where it is found and the different forms it takes.
130. Teaching was good in all lessons observed. Lessons are well planned and teaching instruction is clear. Teachers know the subject well and provide different activities according to pupils' attainment. A variety of appropriate learning resources is available in each lesson, and support assistants make a good contribution to pupils' progress. Pupils behave very well and show a positive attitude towards the subject.
131. The department is very well organised by the subject co-ordinator. Medium-term planning is good, assessment procedures are in place and teaching is monitored and evaluated. Assessment is continuing. Teachers record attainment for individual pupils, and an overall group assessment sheet provides information for future planning and reports to parents. The subject co-ordinator has been involved in a project 'Forest of Mercia' to produce a work package and CD-ROM for special schools on the local environment; for example, the woodland environment. This should prove to be a valuable resource for the work of the department.
132. The subject has shown good improvement since the last inspection. Teaching is good throughout the school and the subject co-ordinator monitors colleagues' planning and teaching. To develop further, more consistent use of ICT should be made.

## **HISTORY**

133. Pupils achieve well in Years 7 to 9. This judgement is based on the observation of three lessons, in which teaching and learning were good, and the examination of Year 9 pupils' work. No lessons were timetabled in the primary department during the inspection. Examination of Year 6 work indicates that teaching and progress are at least satisfactory, but there is insufficient evidence to make reliable judgements.
134. By the end of Year 9, pupils have a good understanding of many key points in British history and some insight into aspects of European history. This term they have been focusing on Britain from 1750 to 1900. They have a good understanding of changes in agricultural practices, the move from cottage industries to large mills and factories and the ways in which towns and cities have grown and changed. These judgements are supported by lesson observations. For example, pupils in Year 9 demonstrated good insight into the different working conditions and the feelings of the women and children workers in different mills and factories in Victorian times. Pupils in Year 8 have a good recall of facts about Henry VIII and make gains in learning about 'Bloody Queen Mary' and the Tudor 'Protestant-Catholic see-saw'.

135. By the end of Year 6, pupils develop a reasonable understanding of the passage of time beyond their own lives and acquire some historical facts. For example, they know that Romans, Anglo-Saxons and Vikings were all invaders of the British Isles and draw a related timeline. The higher attaining pupils have compared transport in the past and today by drawing a horse and carriage and a car and writing a couple of sensible sentences. Good use has been made of the Internet and newspaper articles to promote the pupils' understanding of local history such as the closure of a 160- year-old tea shop in Wolverhampton and facilities in Bridgnorth.
136. Teaching is consistently good in Years 7 to 9 in the secondary department and the mixed Years 7 and 8 class for pupils with ASD. Lessons are planned well and there are good opportunities for pupils to contribute to whole-class discussions. Pupils are generally interested and behave well in history lessons, and minor incidents were managed well by the staff. The teachers make good use of the skilled support staff when available. Through reading and writing, activities appropriately matched to the pupils' needs and abilities, all these lessons made a substantial contribution to the development of the pupils' literacy skills. Lessons in the secondary department are further characterised by the teacher's good knowledge of the subject and effective use of well-chosen commercial materials including books and worksheets. Occasionally the teacher misses opportunities to stimulate the pupils' interest in historical events or to explore ideas such as the nature of different forms of historical evidence. In the class for pupils with ASD the teacher very effectively developed the pupils' understanding of rationing in the 1940s. This is a difficult concept for these pupils to grasp, but the teacher used real food and clear, repetitive language well to help them.
137. Improvement since the previous inspection has been satisfactory. Standards have been maintained at about the same level. Leadership is very much 'in transition'. The previous co-ordinator left the school recently. The new co-ordinator has taken responsibility very recently and has not yet had time to carry out an audit of the policy, planning guidelines or resources. Inspection evidence is that long and medium-term planning are at least satisfactory, although the co-ordinator's file is rather disorganised. Resources in terms of books and other paper materials are good and there are some good educational visits during the course of a school year. However, the school's collection of historical artefacts is rather limited in both quantity and quality.

## **INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY**

138. The schools provision is satisfactory overall. It is good in the ICT suite. Pupils make good progress over time. Standards have improved since the last inspection and in many ways the subject has been enhanced and developed, so progress since the last inspection is good.
139. By the end of Year 2, pupils name items of computer equipment, such as the mouse, keyboard and printer. Most use a keyboard to type simple text, producing short sentences. They place gaps between words, using the space bar. Using the program, about 'Goldilocks and the three bears', pupils are learning to use the mouse to move objects on the screen. Some pupils with additional special educational needs are well catered for.
140. By the end of Year 6, most pupils have good skills in word-processing. They change the font, colour and size of their work and move portions of text from one place to another. Most pupils use the mouse accurately to merge pictures into their text. They have produced illustrated verses relating to some poetry they studied. Most pupils are independent in printing the work they have produced. Pupils continue to have good

experience in using a programmable robot toy, either to follow a set course or to produce their own patterns.

141. By Year 9, pupils know how to select a graphics program that they are familiar with and create a new file. They use a variety of methods to create a piece of artwork in the style of the artist Kandinsky. They learn how to use tools to create different colours and shapes and compare their work to that of the famous artist. Pupils save their work onto their own floppy disk.
142. By Year 11, pupils learn how to design an information leaflet as part of their English coursework. They use simulations and are familiar with locating information on CD-ROMs and the Internet. Some pupils can access the Internet, as well as a range of computer programs, to gain information for subjects such as geography.
143. The overall quality of teaching and learning is good. Teachers are generally keen and enthusiastic and communicate this to pupils. Through careful preparation of lessons and ongoing training, teachers are providing pupils with good learning experiences. They provide clear and careful instruction on how to use equipment and computer programs. As a result of these aspects of teaching, all pupils make good gains in their knowledge and understanding.
144. Where teaching is good, the teacher has very secure subject knowledge. The pace of the lesson is very brisk and keeps pupils involved and concentrating. Expectations of pupils are high and they make good progress as a result. However, in weaker lessons instructions are not always clear enough for pupils to fully understand what they are to do. In the best lessons they listen carefully and, even though a number lack confidence, settle well to all tasks. All teachers provide help and advice throughout lessons as pupils work on practical activities.
145. Resources for ICT have improved since the last inspection. The school has introduced national guidelines into its scheme of work and these are being systematically implemented. The co-ordinator is enthusiastic and knowledgeable. He supports his colleagues informally as well as holding training sessions for them. The co-ordinator keeps records of the assessment of pupils' skills and this information is used to provide support for individuals when required. Through the work in word-processing, the subject is beginning to make a contribution to the development of pupils' literacy skills. The collection of data and its presentation for example, in the form of graphs, is having only a limited effect on the development of numeracy skills. Overall, computing is not fully exploited across some curriculum areas and, as yet, there is no external accreditation at the end of Year 11. Nevertheless, many pupils find the use of computers exciting and the excitement generated, such as when adding sounds to text, helps to enhance pupils' enthusiasm to learn.

## **MODERN FOREIGN LANGUAGE**

### **French**

146. Overall, the provision of French for the pupils in Years 7 to 9 is very good. The school is very fortunate in having the services of a very good supply teacher who works very well with the pupils. Unfortunately there is no teaching of a modern foreign language to any pupils who are in Years 10 and 11.
147. From discussion with the co-ordinator and through scrutiny of the school's documents, it is clear that the provision is of very high quality, but is not securely embedded within

the school structure. The curriculum is carefully planned to meet the needs of the pupils with moderate learning difficulties and autistic spectrum disorders based upon the National Curriculum, and has been modified appropriately. The essence of the teaching is one of conversational French and common vocabulary.

148. For example, the pupils in the classes learn to greet each other in French by saying 'Bonjour', they also learn to say or recognise their name in French with 'Je m'appelle ...'. Pupils also describe their home town or village and tell each other how old they are. They show high levels of confidence and competence as they enjoy their lessons a great deal.
149. There is little formal marking of their work, but the teacher keeps records about how successful they have been during the lessons. The achievements of the pupils are recorded and celebrated through the termly reports that are sent home. The information is also presented as part of the education report at their annual reviews.
150. The overall planning is good and the content of the Programmes of Study makes a very strong contribution to pupils' social and cultural development. The subject is well managed to ensure that appropriate Programmes of Study are provided. There is a good selection of resources for the pupils to use and these include some programs that can be used on the computer.
151. The weakness in the subject is its insecurity in the curriculum as it can only be presented by a supply teacher who has no safeguard or guarantee for the future.

## **MUSIC**

152. Pupils achieve very well from Years 1 to Year 9. They make very good progress as they move from year to year. This is because the teaching is very good and the co-ordinator provides very strong leadership. Pupils with ASD are fully included in lessons with their peers. Improvement since the previous inspection has been good. Four lessons were seen involving pupils from Years 3 to 9.
153. Pupils make very good progress in composing and performing. Learning was very good overall and in three of the four lessons seen. Discussion with the co-ordinator, examination of documentation and video and audio evidence show that this learning is sustained over time. Pupils in Years 8 and 9 play electronic keyboards and percussion instruments very well in relation to their needs. Higher attaining pupils play songs such as 'The Drunken Sailor' using both single notes and chords very well. Pupils with ASD play recognisable tunes and read an appropriately simplified 'score'. Pupils show high levels of interest in music lessons, and in the secondary department they are acquiring a good musical vocabulary, developing a good understanding of the different elements of music and gaining some insight into more sophisticated concepts. For example, pupils in Year 9 recognise the recurring 'promenade' theme in Mussorgsky's 'Pictures at an Exhibition' and pupils in Year 8 recognise the differences in feelings between two contrasting tunes.
154. Two lessons were observed with primary pupils. Planning was appropriately seasonal and it was intended to practise up to four Christmas songs in both lessons. However, the teacher gave a very high profile to the quality of singing, the playing of percussion instruments and developing the pupils' skills and their understanding of the key elements of music. Consequently, pupils made very good gains in these terms. However, time passed quickly and in both lessons only two songs were practised.

155. The school employs a music specialist for one day a week. She teaches all pupils from Years 1 to 9 during the day. In addition she makes a very significant contribution to assemblies and major productions at Easter, harvest time and Christmas. Long, medium and short-term planning are all extremely detailed and based on a good policy and National Curriculum requirements and entitlements. This planning does not clearly show how the pupils' different needs and abilities will be met. However, this is not a weakness in practice. Teaching and learning were judged to be very good in three lessons and good in the fourth. In all these lessons, the needs of all pupils were met effectively by the lesson activities and input by the music teacher and support of other teachers and qualified support staff. Significant strengths of the teaching are the teacher's very good subject knowledge and tremendous pace and variety of the learning activities. The teacher has very high expectations that all pupils will succeed in composing and performing music. She uses her own knowledge and skills and the very high quality resources and other adults very well to promote the pupils' learning. At times, the teacher's use of language, both in her verbal instructions and written prompts on the board, appears too complex and long-winded for the pupils in this school. However, evidence from lessons is that all pupils, including those with ASD, learn well and some do so extremely well. They know and understand the tasks set for them and most get on with them with interest and effort.

### **PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION (PSHE) incorporating citizenship**

156. Pupils achieve well throughout the school. Good provision is made for the pupils through discrete lessons, in which teaching and learning are good, and many other aspects of the school's work. These include lessons in English, history, careers and citizenship and the organisation of activities such as work experience and college placements, assemblies, lunchtimes, break times and educational visits. There has been satisfactory improvement since the previous inspection.
157. The work of pupils in Years 11, 9 and 6 was viewed. Pupils in Year 11 have completed a very good amount of work specifically in PSHE covering a wide range of issues including personal hygiene and care, leisure activities, community services and rights and responsibilities. Pupils in Year 9 have similarly completed a good amount of work including learning from mistakes and putting things right, concerns of a 13-year-old, caring for versus damaging the environment and the nature of democracy. Pupils in Year 6 have done a reasonable amount of work specifically in PSHE relating to rules and friends and making good links with their studies in religious education. A weakness in the work seen was that too much of it was completed using commercial worksheets and very little of the pupils' work had been marked in a constructive way.
158. The school has adopted a commercial scheme for the citizenship teaching and this is proving successful. Pupils learn to discuss their feelings through the interpretation of different situations. Much of this is done through role play and the pupils enjoy these sessions. The work helps pupils to develop communication and inter-personal skills. They discuss antisocial behaviour and the consequences of such action. They also learn about taking responsibility within their homes as well as at school.
159. The pupils are ambassadors for the citizenship cause as they display very good manners and are polite and welcoming to visitors to the school. They show due regard for each other and relate well with their peers as well as with the adults in school. They certainly show attitudes of responsibility when moving around the school, are prompt in arriving at lessons and are enthusiastic about work. Citizenship also adds value to their social and moral development as many issues are discussed and investigated that concern laws, rules and the difference between right and wrong.

160. Two lessons were seen in PSHE and one in careers. Teaching was good in two of these and satisfactory in the third. Examination of pupils' work supports a judgement of good teaching overall. In the careers lesson, Year 11 pupils showed that they were very keen to get on in life and prepare for adulthood when taking a task on writing a letter of application very seriously and trying very hard within their limited writing skills. Pupils in Year 8 made good gains in understanding the harmful effects of smoking because the teacher gave them accurate information and provided good opportunities for all pupils to participate in a discussion and a written task. In the satisfactory lesson in the primary department, planning and the introduction were good, but the teacher allowed the discussion to become too broad when showing the pupils a picture of a public park and, therefore, lost the focus on 'fire danger'. The deputy headteacher is a good co-ordinator for PSHE, careers and citizenship.

## **PHYSICAL EDUCATION**

161. The standards identified in the previous inspection have been maintained, as the school's provision for physical education remains good. Overall, pupils achieve well and make good progress except very occasionally when their learning is restricted by disruptive behaviour that is not dealt with effectively. Pupils benefit from a comprehensive, broad and balanced subject curriculum that is delivered through a variety of activities.
162. By the age of seven, pupils listen to spoken instructions and copy movements such as making their body 'tall' and 'very small'. The higher attaining pupils have good hand/eye co-ordination and throw beanbags underarm into a hoop some distance away. Pupils have developed their listening skills very well by the age of eleven. They listen to single-word utterances involving the colours of traffic lights and comments like 'diversion' and respond accordingly. Consequently, they stop and start when they hear the relevant colour and change speed and direction, in response to 'diversion', avoiding other pupils as they move around the hall. The more skilful pupils bunny hop along a bench, walk along a low beam unaided and require minimal support to hold a low bar and forward-roll over it. These higher attaining pupils also follow a simple circuit of different activities, moving independently from one to another. Many pupils swim independently by the age of 11 and are beginning to develop a recognised stroke and efficient breathing technique, and they surface dive and retrieve a brick from the bottom of the pool.
163. As pupils move through the secondary department they have opportunities to acquire and practise new skills in ball games, such as football and basketball, and to understand aspects of health and fitness such as the benefits and effects of exercise. Therefore, by the end of Year 9 they bounce a basketball while moving in and out of cones and the higher attaining pupils do this with either hand. They receive and pass a basketball accurately using a chest pass and shoot from a standing position, although the more skilful pupils are also developing the skill of jump shooting. At the age of 16 pupils use exercise machines properly and with minimal support, including how to change weights to suit their own exercise regime, and follow their individual exercise schedules independently.

164. Physical education is generally taught well and some teaching is very good. The most striking feature of all lessons is the way in which pupils of all ages follow very well established routines with a good understanding of what they are expected to do. This means that time is used well and pupils are fully engaged in all activities because teachers are enthusiastic and have high expectations. In addition, there are very good relationships between staff and pupils and teachers manage pupils very effectively so they behave very well in large and potentially difficult surroundings. Consequently, activities that match pupils' needs are used well to stimulate them and extend their learning and confidence. For example, a very skilfully planned dance lesson enabled a class of 13-year-olds with autism to further their understanding of the work they were doing on World War II by developing a simple routine to the song 'Pack up your troubles in your old kit bag'. Swimming is taught particularly well by staff who have very high expectations of behaviour, including pupils' acknowledgement of water safety rules. Therefore, pupils work in a very well ordered, organised and safe environment and, as a result, they make very good progress because very knowledgeable teachers provide individually targeted coaching.
165. Physical education is co-ordinated by a subject specialist and the overall management of the subject is good. The co-ordinator has not had the opportunity to observe the teaching of physical education by colleagues, but this is planned to take place. The school makes satisfactory use of local facilities, such as the all-weather batting strip at Wolverhampton Cricket Club, but there are good relationships with other schools particularly through the West Midlands Special Schools Sports Association. Links such as this enable pupils to participate in competitive matches and tournaments that make a good contribution to their social and moral development. The annual residential visit to the Standon Bowers outdoor centre is particularly effective in promoting these skills as well as providing excellent opportunities for pupils to experience a variety of outdoor pursuits.
166. The school's own learning resources are good within the context of the accommodation that is currently available, but this accommodation is unsatisfactory. Although the pupils have the benefit of an indoor swimming pool, other indoor accommodation is inadequate to meet the needs of older pupils and outdoor facilities are also restricted. There is no football pitch that allows 11-a-side matches and the hard play area is small.

## **RELIGIOUS EDUCATION**

167. Pupils make satisfactory progress in religious education up to the end of Year 2. They know the story of the birth of Jesus from the Annunciation to the visit by the Magi. They listen to and sing Christmas songs accompanying themselves on percussion instruments. Pupils experience the sights and sounds of Christmas. They begin to understand the meaning of signs and symbols especially those associated with Christmas. They learn about the people who help us, for example, policemen and nurses. This is related to ways in which they can help each other.
168. Between Years 3 and 6, pupils make good progress. They study aspects of Sikhism and Hinduism. They have an understanding that Sikhs believe in helping others, respect everyone and regard all people as equals. They look for meaning in religious imagery such as the lighted candles at Diwali and the Advent wreath at Christmas. They know about famous people such as Mother Teresa and their contribution to society. They develop moral awareness by acting out situations and discussing the possible outcomes, and how to make the right choice.

169. Between Years 7 and 9, achievement is satisfactory. Pupils study the story of Creation from the Bible and discuss the question of the existence of God. They know the stories of those who brought Christianity to England. They appreciate why there are different types of Christian cross. They have applied the story of the Good Samaritan to their own lives and understand the significance of different ways in treating other people. Much of the work is done in storyboard form and displayed in the classroom.
170. During Years 10 and 11, achievement is satisfactory. Most of the work is discussion based on themes involving human emotions. They know that speech can be for good, or otherwise, and understand the consequences of the way in which we speak to each other. This topic was covered with graphical representation. They study ways in which Man's behaviour is affecting the planet by deforestation, pollution and over-use of natural resources.
171. Teaching in religious education is good throughout the school. Lessons are well planned, classroom management is good and very good resources are effectively used to enhance learning. In one lesson with 6-year-old pupils, a teacher used a video of the story of the Magi and supported the learning by re-telling the story using a board with magnetic figures. Finally, the sequence of the story was reinforced by using a storyboard in poster form. Support assistants make a good contribution to the subject by helping those who have difficulty with understanding. The older pupils have the benefit of an interactive board in the classroom. This use of information and communication technology helps to sustain interest by providing pictures and text at the touch of the screen.
172. Pupils have a positive attitude to the subject and all show interest in the topics. They have a willingness to participate in activities both oral and written. Behaviour in lessons is very good.
173. The curriculum is based on Staffordshire County Agreed Syllabus with topics adapted to the needs of the pupils. Weekly assemblies make a contribution to the subject with occasional visitors from local churches. Assemblies are mostly Christian in character with hymns and prayers. However, there are some assemblies on themes from other major religions. There are number of attractive wall displays of pupils' work in classrooms and corridors.
174. Leadership in the subject is satisfactory. The subject leader has provided good resources and there are a number of interesting artefacts available. A policy statement, schemes of work and a policy on methods of teaching are all of a good standard. However, the quality of assessment is variable, which is unsatisfactory.
175. There has been satisfactory improvement in the subject since the last inspection. The quality of teaching is good throughout the school and resources are of a good standard. However, assessment procedures are not consistently applied. In order to develop the subject further, a more rigorous approach to assessment is required and the subject leader, for whom time has been allocated, must begin to monitor teaching.

## **RESIDENTIAL PROVISION**

176. There have been significant improvements in leadership and in the accommodation in the residential provision. These were previously found to be unsatisfactory. They are now good in respect of formal management procedures and the quality of the bedrooms, social areas and facilities and arrangements at mealtimes. There are some

very good features to day-to-day practice, notably the relationships between the staff and pupils.

177. The head of care and the deputy headteacher, who has overall responsibility for the residential provision, provide good leadership. Since the previous inspection a good common policy and guidelines for practice have been produced by the head of care and colleagues from other special schools in the local education authority. In addition, a new school-specific policy and detailed written guidelines have greatly clarified daily practice in the school. There are good opportunities for pupils to express concerns or discuss personal difficulties with school staff or an identified and readily available 'counsellor' who is not directly employed by the school. A pay phone is available for pupils to call home and two pupils took calls from their mums when an inspector was present.
178. Organised activities in the evenings contribute significantly to the academic progress and personal development of the seven boys who currently attend the residential provision from Monday to Friday during school terms. During the inspection, the pupils and staff went to see the latest Harry Potter film and an inspector observed a very good session in the school swimming pool. The residential social worker states that swimming is top of the list for all the boys when they are given a choice. This session featured some rather boisterous but safe free activity and an organised obstacle course, which encouraged healthy competition 'against the clock'. Pupils encouraged each other to beat their previous best times. Country walks are another regular activity, contributing to their physical and social development. Staff support the pupils in completing their homework. During the inspection the residential social worker listened to pupils reading and one boy told an inspector that he has homework three times a week, which takes him between 30 minutes and an hour to complete.