

INSPECTION REPORT

STOW HEATH JUNIOR SCHOOL

Willenhall, West Midlands

LEA area: Wolverhampton

Unique reference number: 104324

Headteacher: Mrs J Riley

Lead inspector: Mr A Calderbank

Dates of inspection: 9 – 11 February 2004

Inspection number: 258048

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

© Crown copyright 2004

This report may be reproduced in whole or in part for non-commercial educational purposes, provided that all extracts quoted are reproduced verbatim without adaptation and on condition that the source and date thereof are stated.

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school. Under the School Inspections Act 1996, the school must provide a copy of this report and/or its summary free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the full cost of reproduction may be made for any other copies supplied.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Junior School
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	7-11
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
Number on roll:	353
School address:	Hill Road Portobello Willenhall West Midlands
Postcode:	WV 13 3TT
Telephone number:	01902 558820
Fax number:	01902 558821
Appropriate authority:	Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr. D. Simpkins
Date of previous inspection:	21/04/1998

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

Stow Heath Junior School is a larger than average sized junior school for boys and girls aged seven to eleven years. It shares the same site as Stow Heath Infant School and has a Resource Base catering for the needs of 22 pupils with moderate learning difficulties. The majority of the pupils who attend the main school live locally in an area consisting of mixed private and council housing. At the time of the inspection there were 353 pupils on roll. The percentage of pupils eligible for free school meals is broadly in line with the national average. Sixty-two pupils (17.5%) have been identified as having special educational needs, which is about the national average. These pupils receive support for a range of difficulties such as moderate learning difficulties, emotional, behavioural and communication difficulties. A well above average number of 17 pupils (4.8%) have a statement of special educational needs and include the pupils from the resource base. There are 76 pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds. Thirty-five speak English as an additional language but none are at an early stage of English language acquisition. The school received an achievement award in 2002 and is part of an Education Action Zone. When children start in Year 3, their attainment is below average.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
7979	Mr A Calderbank	Lead inspector	Science Physical education English as an additional language
9884	Mrs M Roscoe	Lay inspector	
2465	Mr G Yates	Team inspector	Mathematics Music
14732	Mrs E Korn	Team inspector	Information and communication technology Religious education Design and technology.
32159	Mrs B Remond	Team inspector	English Art and design
30044	Mr M Wright	Team inspector	Geography History Special educational needs

The inspection contractor was:

Nord Anglia School Inspection Services
 Anglia House
 Clarendon Court
 Carrs Road
 Cheadle
 Stockport
 SK8 2LA

Any concerns or complaints about the inspection or the report should be made initially to the inspection contractor. The procedures are set out in the leaflet '*Complaining about Ofsted Inspections*', which is available from Ofsted Publications Centre (telephone 07002 637833) or Ofsted's website (www.ofsted.gov.uk).

REPORT CONTENTS

	Page
PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT	6
PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE MAIN INSPECTION FINDINGS	
STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS	9
Standards achieved in subjects	
Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities	
QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL	13
Teaching and learning	
The curriculum	
Care, guidance and support	
Partnership with parents, other schools and the community	
LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT	19
PART C: THE QUALITY OF EDUCATION IN SUBJECTS	21
SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGE 2	
PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS	32

PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

OVERALL EVALUATION

Stow Heath Junior School provides its pupils with a satisfactory standard of education. The quality of teaching is good overall. Pupils achieve well in English and science and satisfactorily in mathematics. Their attainment in English and mathematics is below average but similar to that found in most schools in science. The new headteacher, with the support of staff and governors provides a very clear vision and is committed to promoting equality and higher standards. There is a sound level of care and parents value the school's work because it succeeds in offering a rich and broad curriculum. The good ethos and supportive working environment encourage good attitudes to work. There are very good links with the local community. The school provides satisfactory value for money.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- Pupils achieve well in English and science and very well in information and communication technology and art and design.
- Not enough opportunities are provided for pupils to use their number skills in solving mathematical problems and to write at length in English.
- Standards in religious education are below the expectations of the locally agreed syllabus.
- The new headteacher provides the school with very good leadership and management.
- Teaching is good overall.
- There is a strong commitment to meet the needs of all children resulting in, for example, good provision for pupils with special educational needs in the resource base.
- Pupils have good attitudes towards their work, they behave well and relationships are good.
- Innovative curriculum developments have enhanced the quality of learning.
- The school's links with the community are very strong.
- Attendance is below average.

The school has made satisfactory progress since it was last inspected in 1998. Good improvements have been made in some areas. The full range of National Curriculum programmes of study is now covered in English. Standards in science and design and technology are better and pupils are achieving well in these subjects. Pupils' attainment in information and communication technology (ICT) has improved significantly and is now higher than that found in most schools. Teachers with responsibility for special educational needs have been offered specialist training and the quality of teaching for pupils with special needs is good in the resource base. The school has reviewed its policy with regards to homework. However, more needs to be done to improve standards and pupils' achievements in mathematics and religious education.

STANDARDS ACHIEVED

Results in National Curriculum tests at the end of Year 6, compared with:	all schools			Similar schools
	2001	2002	2003	2003
English	C	E	D	B
Mathematics	E	E	E	E
Science	D	E	D	B

*Key: A – well above average; B – above average; C – average; D – below average; E – well below average
Similar schools are those whose pupils attained similarly at the end of Year 2*

Pupils achieve well in most subjects. Overall standards on entry to the school are well below average in reading and writing and below average in mathematics. Work seen during the inspection shows that attainment in English is below that found in most schools and in science is broadly average. Pupils are achieving well overall in these subjects. Standards in mathematics are now better than they were last year but are still below average. Pupils' achievements are satisfactory. Throughout the school standards are improving but there is a need to provide more opportunities for

pupils to use their number skills in solving mathematical problems and to write longer pieces of work in English and other subjects. Pupils achieve very well in information and communication technology and the work seen in art and design was above average. Standards in religious education are below the expectations of the agreed syllabus. Pupils with special educational needs including those from the Resource Base achieve well due to the effective support provided. Pupils who speak English as an additional language achieve in line with their abilities.

The provision to develop pupils' personal qualities, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural education is good overall. Though most pupils like going to school, attendance is below the national average. They are encouraged to enjoy their learning and to become aware of the differing needs of others. This results in most pupils behaving well, developing good attitudes and caring for others.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION

The quality of education provided by the school and the quality of teaching and learning are good overall. Teachers make use of a good range of teaching styles, including effective use of information and communication technology and practical activities to improve the quality of learning. This interests and motivates pupils, making them work hard and concentrate for longer periods. Pupils are given good feedback during lessons. However, teachers' written comments when marking pupils' work do not give sufficient targets for improvement. Assessment procedures and the use made of the information are satisfactory overall but the school does not gather sufficient information about pupils' attainment on entry in order to measure the educational value it adds. Teaching assistants make a good contribution to pupils' learning through the effective support they give to groups and individuals. Teaching for pupils with special educational needs in the Resource Base is good.

The school provides a good curriculum which meets national requirements. The enrichment provided by visits and extra-curricular activities adds much to the quality of education. Provision for pupils with special educational needs, including those in the Resource Base, is good and the individual education plans include clear guidance on how to meet the pupils' needs. Partnership with parents is good and very strong links have been established with the local community. The school provides a satisfactory level of care for its pupils and pays appropriate attention to their welfare. The school's procedures for seeking the views of pupils and acting upon them are good.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

The overall leadership and management of the school is **good**. The leadership of the new headteacher is **very good**. She is well supported by the deputy headteacher and other key staff carry out their duties **effectively**. The management of the school is **very good** and the part played by governors in shaping its direction is **good**. There is a common commitment to running a school where all pupils are included and helped to develop well both academically and socially.

PARENTS' AND PUPILS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

The majority of parents hold **positive** views of the school and would feel very comfortable in approaching the school with concerns. Most children like being at the school and feel they receive the help and support they need.

IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

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

- Raise standards in mathematics by providing more opportunities for pupils, especially the higher attainers, to use their numeracy skills to solve problems.
- To raise standards in English, ensure that pupils are given appropriate opportunities to write at length.
- Raise standards in religious education.
- Improve attendance.

PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS

STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

Standards achieved in subjects

Overall standards on entry to the school are well below average in reading and writing and below average in mathematics. By the end of Year 6, pupils have achieved well in English and science and very well in information and communication technology (ICT). Achievement in mathematics is improving and is now satisfactory. Attainment in science is broadly average but it is below average in English and mathematics. Standards in ICT are above those found in most schools. Pupils' attainment in religious education is below the expectations of the locally agreed syllabus and pupils' achievements are unsatisfactory.

Pupils with special educational needs, including those from the Resource Base make good progress and achieve well against the targets set for them. There is no significant difference between the performance of boys and girls. Pupils from minority ethnic heritages achieve just as well as other pupils overall.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Achievement in English, science and design and technology is good and very good in ICT and art and design.
- Pupils are not given enough opportunities to use their numerical skills to solve mathematical problems.
- Attainment in religious education is below the expectations of the locally agreed syllabus.
- Pupils do not write at length in subjects across the curriculum.
- Pupils who have special educational needs, including those from the Resource Base, progress well.
- The opportunities provided by the school to develop parents' talents are also helping to enrich children's learning.

Commentary

- 1 In the 2003 national tests, pupils in Year 6 achieved below average standards in English and science. Attainment in mathematics was well below that found in most schools. When the results are compared with those achieved by the same pupils at the end of Year 2, they show that the progress made by the pupils was above average in English and science but still well below average in mathematics. However, care must be taken when making comparisons with similar schools as the school's results include the performance of the statemented pupils from the Resource Base. This can have a detrimental effect upon the school's results. Last year the school did not meet the target it set for pupils' performance in English and mathematics. However, the trend in the school's results over the past five years has been broadly in line with the national trend.

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
English	25.6 (23.7)	26.8 (27.0)
Mathematics	23.9 (23.7)	26.8 (26.7)
Science	27.8 (27.1)	28.6 (28.3)

There were 102 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year

- 2 Inspection findings indicate that attainment is below average overall in English but broadly in line with that found in most schools in science. The school had already identified that standards in mathematics were not high enough and with help from the Local Education Authority (LEA) has put in place an action plan to rectify the situation. As a result standards are beginning to improve but are still below national expectations mainly because pupils do not use their numerical skills often enough to solve mathematical problems. Standards in English have improved since the previous inspection because of the successful introduction of the National Literacy Strategy. Pupils speaking and listening and reading skills are similar to those found in most schools. However, writing is a weakness and pupils do not write at length. Improved provision and better teaching have resulted in significantly higher standards in science. More pupils are now reaching their potential in English and science. For example, the percentage of pupils attaining the higher level 5 in the 2003 national tests was well above average when the results are compared with those achieved by the same pupils at the end of Year 2. However, this was not so in mathematics where the percentage was below average.
- 3 Standards in ICT have improved significantly since the last inspection and are now better than those found in most schools by the end of Year 6. Pupils make satisfactory progress in religious education but standards are below the expectations of the locally agreed syllabus and pupils are underachieving.
- 4 Pupils achieve very well in art and design and dance and attain standards that are above average. Attainment in design and technology is a lot better than at the time of the previous inspection when it was found to be well below national expectations and pupils were making poor progress. Standards are now similar to those found in most schools and pupils are achieving well. It was not possible to make an overall judgement about achievement or standards in geography, music and physical education because of insufficient evidence during the inspection. Pupils' attainment in history is in line with national expectations.
- 5 Sound procedures have been established for monitoring the performance of pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds to see how well they are doing. For example, the school noted that Afro Caribbean boys were underachieving in English and mathematics and decided to provide appropriate support for them in class. This is being successful and the work that these pupils are now producing is showing signs of improvement. During the inspection there was no noticeable difference in the performance of boys or girls or pupils from different ethnic groups.
- 6 Clear procedures in place to identify pupils with special educational needs. Effective provision is made and this allows them to make good gains in their learning and to achieve well. The work done in class is carefully matched to the pupils' prior attainment and the support of teachers and classroom assistants ensure that pupils make good progress. Pupils with special educational needs are fully included in all aspects of the life and work of the school.
- 7 The school has high expectations for pupils from the Resource Base. Challenging targets are set to ensure continuous progress. The targets are small and achievable so that pupils experience success and build self-esteem. The pupils are very well integrated into classes, receive good support from classroom assistants and achieve well.
- 8 A register of gifted and talented pupils has been recently set up and includes pupils who have particular skills in art and design and ICT. Appropriate provision is made for them in these subjects and as a result they achieve their potential. The school plans to improve further the provision it makes for these pupils in other subjects and to ensure they are identified as soon as possible.
- 9 The school is a popular venue for learning opportunities for adults. These participants make good gains in the modules of learning they undertake. Parents using the UK On-line Centre

spoke of increased confidence in their contacts with school and a willingness to become active partners in their children's learning. Weekly 'Family Learning' sessions bring together family members to work on mutually beneficial themes. Activities are creative and stimulating for pupils and parents and are linked to literacy and numeracy work. In the sessions adults and children work very well in pairs at their own level with support from the capable tutor. Activities help parents to recognise and nurture their own talents or gain knowledge and understanding of how they might use them to enrich their child's learning. Broader gains in achievement are made also when adults using the UK On-line Centre, complete their courses, and then progress into further education or more challenging jobs.

Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities

Pupils' attitudes and behaviour are good. During their time at the school pupils' social skills develop very well. Their spiritual and cultural awareness and moral standards develop well. Attendance levels and punctuality are unsatisfactory.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils' attitudes to school are positive. Most pupils are interested or excited by their work.
- Behaviour is good in almost all lessons. However, it can be less than good when pupils are not aware of what is expected of them in or out of lessons.
- The school promotes very good relationships which results in pupils developing high levels of tolerance towards others.
- Provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is ensuring pupils are maturing into confident individuals with a growing understanding of right and wrong.
- Levels of attendance and punctuality are unsatisfactory.

Commentary

- 10 The majority of pupils enjoy their lessons. They explained this in questionnaires and in conversation during the inspection. Pupils are very proud of what they achieve in school and take their homework seriously. School clubs are popular and well attended because they capture pupil's interest.
- 11 Pupils behave well in lessons because teachers insist on it. The rewards and sanctions system works well in encouraging confidence and self-esteem. Most pupils respond well to the rules although this is sometimes less obvious during the lunchtime period. Some parents and pupils expressed concerns about incidents of name-calling and other unpleasant behaviour. The school takes all instances of harassment very seriously and has effective procedures involving both the victim and the perpetrator. The incidents of a racist nature are reported to the relevant authorities in line with school policy. There have been a number of exclusions in the past year for pupils who have not been able to conform to the high standard of behaviour expected.
- 12 Staff promote very good relationships effectively. Because of this, pupils work and play happily together in mixed ethnic, age and gender groups. Teaching staff in particular ensure that individuals are valued and respected. Pupils eagerly respond to these good role models by doing likewise. This results in a friendly community of which 117 pupils, in questionnaires, described it as a 'perfect place' where 'nothing should alter except the toilets'. Junior pupils dine with younger pupils in a social environment, but noise levels at this time are often too high.
- 13 Pupils have daily opportunities to join others for breakfast before school, pray and sing beautifully with staff and exercise initiative as part of their personal development. Throughout the school emphasis is given to building good social skills. As a result most pupils know what is expected of them, listen to others' point of view and do not shout out answers in class. Responsibilities, such as older pupils acting as 'Study Buddies' to younger ones, are

undertaken conscientiously. There is a keenness to be involved in the school council and appreciation of its work in bringing about improvements in pupils' awareness of citizenship and democracy. Assemblies are thought provoking and help pupils to empathise with others through well-chosen stories and songs. Pupils are involved in rule making and most think these are fair except when a class is punished for the transgressions of individuals within it.

- 14 Pupils gain knowledge of their own and others' cultures through their studies and through visits to museums and galleries. Recently, 'Dare to be Different' days increased Year 4 pupils' understanding of music and poetry.
- 15 The pupils' understanding of the responsibilities of living in a community is very good. Representatives of the local community come into school on a regular basis to speak and work with the pupils. For example, during the inspection a local vicar, who also serves on the governing body took an assembly. Pupils raise money for a variety of charities.
- 16 The supportive ethos in the Resource Base enables pupils to settle quickly, feel secure and learn at a good rate. In particular, pupils' confidence and self-esteem develop well as they interact appropriately with adults and other children in the school.
- 17 Too many pupils arrive late each day and miss important introductions to their lessons. Effective monitoring ensures the school is aware of those pupils whose progress is affected by poor attendance. A range of initiatives are in place and attendance rates, although below the national average, show a 1 percentage point increase on last year's figures.

Attendance in the latest complete reporting year (%)

Authorised absence	
School data	6.0
National data	5.4

Unauthorised absence	
School data	0.2
National data	0.4

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

Exclusions

Ethnic background of pupils

Exclusions in the last school year

Categories used in the Annual School Census	No of pupils on roll	Number of fixed period exclusions	Number of permanent exclusions
White – British	277	2	
Mixed – White and Black Caribbean	15		
Mixed – White and Black African	5		
Mixed – White and Asian	4	1	
Mixed – any other mixed background	1		
Asian or Asian British – Indian	38		
Asian or Asian British – Pakistani	1		
Black or Black British – Caribbean	7		
Black or Black British – any other Black background	2	1	
Chinese	1		
No ethnic group recorded	2		

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

QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

The school provides a **good** quality of education overall. Teaching is generally **effective** and leads to a good quality of learning. Curricular provision is **good** and the care and the care and support given to pupils **satisfactory**. Links with the community are **very good**.

Teaching and learning

The overall quality of teaching and learning is **good**. Assessment procedures are satisfactory overall. Teachers and classroom assistants work well together to ensure that the needs of all pupils are met. However, there are inconsistencies in the marking of work and setting targets for pupils. As a result, pupils are not always clear about how to improve their work.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Most teachers have a good knowledge of the subjects they teach.
- Teachers do not provide pupils with enough opportunities to write long pieces of work or to use their numerical skills to solve mathematical problems.
- Teachers make good use of ICT in other subjects.
- Teaching is good for pupils with special educational needs in the resource base.
- The marking of work does not always make it clear to pupils how to improve.
- Teachers manage pupils' behaviour well.
- Classroom assistants make a positive contribution towards the quality of learning and pupils' achievements.
- The supportive relationships between pupils and staff give pupils confidence.

Commentary

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 49 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
0	9 (18%)	24 (49%)	14 (29%)	2 (4%)	0	0

The table gives the number of lessons observed in each of the seven categories used to make judgements about lessons; figures in brackets show percentages.

- 18 Overall the quality of teaching has improved since the previous inspection when only 8 per cent of the lessons seen were very good and the quality of teaching was judged to be satisfactory. The weaknesses identified in the teaching of science and design and technology have been addressed. The combination of good teaching and care for pupils provides a positive environment for learning. The majority of pupils respond well to this. Most lessons are usually prepared to a good standard and are interesting. The majority of teachers respond positively to the ideas outlined in the school's teaching and learning policy. This is especially evident in the variety of methods used and the focus on thinking carefully about responses and learning through practical activities. Consequently, learning is good and occasionally very good in the majority of lessons and most pupils are keen to extend their knowledge and understanding. The school does not formally assess pupils on entry, but data based on prior attainment demonstrates that overall, pupils make good progress during their time at school. The means of assessing pupils' achievements are sound overall and provide satisfactory information that helps the school to recognise where common improvements are needed in standards in English, mathematics and science, and to track pupils' progress.
- 19 Most teachers have good subject knowledge in English. Reading skills are taught thoroughly and pupils accurately apply these skills in other subjects. Writing skills are taught soundly but teachers do not provide pupils with sufficient opportunities to write extended pieces of work using complex sentences. This is also hampered by the fact that most pupils in Years

3 and 4 have not been taught cursive handwriting. Though standards are improving in mathematics, teachers do not provide pupils with enough opportunities to use their number skills to solve mathematical problems. In a minority lessons, especially mathematics lessons, teachers' planning is not precise about what different pupils are expected to learn. On these occasions, there is insufficient different work to meet the learning needs of individual pupils. This slows the pace of learning, particularly for the more able pupils. Without a clear view of what pupils are expected to learn in these lessons, the teachers' assessments of pupils' achievements are not always sharply focused and so have limited impact on the planning of future lessons. This also reduces the effectiveness with which subject co-ordinators can assess the quality of learning by checking teachers' planning.

- 20 Assessment practices, though satisfactory overall, are variable. Marking does not consistently help pupils to identify their individual strengths and weaknesses, and move their learning forward. At its best, it is good with clear direction on what the pupil needs to do to improve, and comments when this is achieved. In subjects where testing is not appropriate there is limited evidence of individual pupils' achievements over time. In some subjects, pupils' self-assessments provide a good opportunity for pupils to review their work and reflect on their achievements. The school recognises the need to consolidate and develop assessment procedures further.
- 21 Pupils are able to work well, both independently and collaboratively, because good behaviour management ensures a good climate for learning. The school encourages, and pupils benefit from, working collaboratively with their 'study buddies'. It enables them to discuss their ideas or make suggestions to help one another.
- 22 Staffing levels are good and in many lessons this enables pupils to have regular contact with an adult. When both teaching and learning have been planned to match the age and abilities of pupils, the positive staffing is particularly valuable. Additional adults offer good support when pupils are working on set tasks through further explanation and teaching, enabling good individual learning to take place. It also allows different activities to be undertaken in smaller groups; for example the art lessons with the visiting artist and the 'dare to be different', music day. Both extend pupils' learning skills well and help to provide a balance across the curriculum.
- 23 Some subject co-ordinators have opportunities to observe the teaching and learning in their subject and are able to offer advice and support to other teachers. Many teachers extend their knowledge and understanding through continuous professional development. At present, several teachers are developing their competencies in ICT by working towards the European Computer Driving License.
- 24 The school meets the needs of all pupils well, regardless of gender, level of prior attainment, ethnicity, special educational needs, or whether they are learning in English as an additional language. This is in part due to the way most teachers ensure all pupils are included in every lesson and feel valued, and also due to the significant impact made by the classroom assistants.
- 25 Pupils from the Resource Base are included in classes in the main school for some of their lessons and achieve well because of the support they receive from classroom assistants who make a very valuable contribution to pupils' learning and development. The teamwork between the resource base staff is good. The teacher in charge keeps the classroom assistants well informed and briefed through regular meetings. Several factors contribute to the good quality of teaching observed in the resource base. For example, lesson planning is responsive to the needs of pupils and teachers are able to maintain the pupils' attention throughout the lesson. As a result, behaviour is good and pupils are involved in what they are doing.

Curriculum

The school is successful in providing a **good** curriculum and a **good** range of enrichment opportunities. The resources and accommodation are also **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The curriculum is constructed in an innovative manner to emphasise creativity.
 - Insufficient opportunities are provided for pupils to write at length or use their numerical skills to solve mathematical problems.
 - There is some repetition in the curriculum for religious education.
 - The resources for ICT are very good.
 - Provision for pupils with special educational needs in the resource base is good.
 - There is a good range of extra-curricular activities.
 - The school has very good links with the community.
- 26 Recent innovative reshaping of the curriculum has taken place, following a detailed review, that included ascertaining pupils' views. The outcome is a curriculum that emphasises creativity and which the pupils enjoy. There is an appropriate emphasis on raising standards and meeting the learning needs of all the pupils, so that all have equal opportunities. The school is following government guidelines by linking subjects and is 'daring to be different' in the manner in which subjects are timetabled. For example, music is taught for a whole day every half term whereas art and design, design and technology, ICT, history and geography are taught for a full half-day each. This allows each subject to be studied in some depth and gives sufficient time for practical work. Pupils are effectively taught in ability groups for literacy and numeracy. The school recognises that its curriculum planning is not yet fully developed and issues of continuity in learning have still to be evaluated.
- 27 Improvements since the previous inspection are good and the identified curriculum weaknesses in English, ICT and design and technology have all been successfully addressed. However, there are insufficient opportunities for pupils to write at length especially in subjects other than English. Though standards are rising in mathematics, pupils don't use their numerical skills often enough to solve mathematical problems. The religious education curriculum is being remodelled on the new locally agreed syllabus but is not yet of a satisfactory standard. There is repetition in some of the work and this restricts the pace of learning, particularly of the potentially higher attainers.
- 28 Assemblies provide thought provoking, reflective and inclusive messages. Together with the religious education programme, they extend the personal and social education programme, effectively promoting the very good relationships found around the school. In addition, sex and relationships education is taught to Year 6 pupils.
- 29 The school provides a varied range of opportunities to enrich the curriculum; these include theatre groups, two residential experiences and visits to museums. Special enrichment days that combine many subject areas take place each term. All pupils participate in drama productions. A few pupils benefit from instrumental music lessons. There is a number of clubs, including a good range of sports, all taking place at various times outside of the school day so as to provide equality of opportunity to all. Reading support takes place at lunch times and after school. A good innovation that enriches the curriculum and which permeates the school is an emphasis on developing pupil's self-confidence through incorporating 'thinking skills'. These help pupils to organise their learning by being more aware of how they process information.
- 30 The accommodation is good and includes separate classrooms for pupils in the Resource Base and an art and music room. The large outdoor playing area, with concrete and grass surfaces provides a good facility for sports clubs and physical education. There are two

computer rooms, the smaller one being mainly used by the parents and community. The spacious library is well furnished and is electronically managed, but a small number of books is out of date. There are good resources for most subjects of the curriculum. A strong feature is the projectors linked to computers in all classrooms and this equipment is used extensively for teaching almost all subjects of the curriculum. There is a good quantity of audio and lighting equipment to support assemblies and school plays. The match of teachers to the curriculum is good with specialists in music and art and design and these skills are used as much as possible. All staff are very well trained in using computers and are studying, or have completed, courses leading to recognised qualifications.

- 31 The curriculum for pupils in the Resource Base is good overall. For most of the time the pupils follow the same programmes of work as the rest of the school but adapted to their needs. At the time of the previous inspection it was noted that when the pupils were integrated into classes within the main school the targets set for them did not sufficiently influence the teaching and on occasions the support was not effectively employed. This weakness has been addressed. For example, pupils are integrated well into the literacy hour and were observed writing their own fables during the inspection with help from the classroom assistants.

Care, guidance and support

The school involves pupils well in its work and development. Pupil care, support and guidance were judged to be good at the last inspection. Now these aspects are found to be **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils are consulted frequently. The school council participates strongly in decision making which brings about improvements for the common good.
- Pupils are soon made to feel part of the school family through good induction procedures and inclusive practices.
- Pupils' progress in the main subjects is assessed regularly. They do not receive enough feedback on how they might improve their work.
- Pupils feel safe and value the fact there is always an adult to turn to in time of need. There is not enough training however for midday assistants to ensure consistency in their work.
- School is a secure place where satisfactory attention to health and safety ensures statutory requirements are met.

Commentary

- 32 Pupils' ideas are listened to and widely sought. They contributed to the inspection process sensibly and always respond positively to other questionnaires. From these, the headteacher has learned that some pupils have anxieties about bullying. Action to address these concerns has already begun. Pupils are also encouraged to think of ways to improve facilities, and members of the democratically elected school council proudly explain the changes to the toilets they suggested.
- 33 The school effectively promotes a feeling of 'belonging' through assemblies, its ethos of equality and the welcome it provides to all of its pupils and their parents. Prior to transfer the pupils try 'taster' activities. Along with dining in a shared hall, these prepare pupils well for transfer from the adjacent infant school.
- 34 The level of support and guidance based on monitoring for individual pupils is satisfactory. Academic performance is tracked from Year 3 using the end of Year 2 test results as a baseline and the outcomes used to organise ability groups for some subjects. The setting of individualised targets with pupils however is under- developed, and pupils are not getting enough guidance to make them aware of how to improve.

- 35 Pupils are happy with the school. They say they feel valued and cared for well. They learn well within a family ethos and there are usually good trusting relationships between pupils and staff. The lunchtime period is not monitored effectively to ensure it supports pupils' best interests and emotional needs. For example, the behaviour policy is not applied consistently.
- 36 The site is diligently cleaned and work to enhance the environment and to improve pupils' self-esteem is carefully planned. Pupils have access to fresh water as part of the 'Healthy School' initiative and drink it sensibly during lessons. Safety is high on the agenda and some audits of the premises have occurred. Trips out of school comply with the health and safety policy. Assessments of risks for most other activities are done.
- 37 Provision for pupils' personal development in the Resource Base is good. The ethos is very good and pupils' needs and well being are given the highest priority by all the staff.

Partnership with parents, other schools and the community

Links with parents are **good** with some very good features particularly the family learning events. Community links are **very good**. The school has developed **satisfactory** partnerships with other schools.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Because of the variety of initiatives designed to promote effective parental participation in school life, parental confidence is high. However, not enough information is given to parents about the curriculum.
- Levels of parental satisfaction are sought on a range of issues and the school takes these views into account when reviewing its practices and policies.
- There are good communication channels with parents particularly through the effective meetings held to discuss their children's achievement.
- Some parents have shared their concerns about pupils' behaviour and instances of harassment within the school. It is acknowledged that the anti-bullying policy is in need of review.
- The school and its pupils are benefiting from the very good links made through the Educational Action Zone and from a substantial grant from the New Opportunities Fund.

Commentary

- 38 Parents showed through the questionnaire returns an increasing confidence in most aspects of the school. They appreciate the friendly staff and the welcoming atmosphere. Parents also have high satisfaction levels for the induction process, and the progress their children make. There are large increases in parents' satisfaction for the revised homework arrangements that were a key issue for action at the last inspection. Parents have good access to information evenings and to the UK On-line Centre for completing family learning projects. Not enough is done to inform and involve parents in what their child will learn each term in every class.
- 39 High priority is given to strengthening relationships with parents and their suggestions and concerns are seriously considered and valued. Views collated were incorporated into the homework policy, for example.
- 40 Feedback opportunities at parents' evenings and other reviews of progress have recently improved. This initiative is increasing parental take-up of these events and has been well received. The parents of pupils in the resource base are invited to annual reviews and these are usually well attended. There are good links between the school and outside specialists such as the speech and language therapist who draws up suitable individual programmes that are delivered by trained staff in the school.

- 41 Prior to the inspection thirty-five parents indicated they were not satisfied with the handling of bullying incidents. The school has a behaviour policy but inspectors agree with parents that there are some inconsistencies in its application. The concerns noted by teaching staff at playtime are carefully followed up. However, systems do not always operate as effectively at lunchtime and there is scope for improving communications and supervision of an extensive site. Work has already started on updating the anti-bullying policy because pupil and parent surveys highlighted this as a concern. Bullying was not seen during the inspection. Pupils themselves say that bullying is less of a concern than it used to be except for 'name calling'.
- 42 The school very successfully reaches out to the community. It organises government funded ICT courses for parents, grandparents and other members of the community, and local senior citizens attend school productions. Links as a result of the school being part of an Education Action Zone (EAZ) have led to satisfactory involvement with local schools and this has resulted in some shared professional development within the group. Liaison with the adjacent partner infant school is developing cordially yet not strengthening the school's curriculum provision. Frequent high quality outside visits and residential experiences enrich pupils' cultural and personal development.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

The leadership and management of the school are **good overall**. The leadership and management of the headteacher is **very good**. The leadership and management of other key staff is **good**. The governance of the school is **good** and all statutory requirements are met.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The headteacher provides very good leadership and management.
- Co-ordinators provide good leadership.
- The school does not have in place an effective system for assessing what pupils know, understand and can do on entry to the school.
- The governing body is ably led and has a good understanding of all aspects of school life.
- The school has made very good use of additional grants to improve the quality of provision.

Commentary

- 43 The headteacher in the short period of time she has been in post has built successfully on the school's strengths and implemented strategies to improve the quality of education and to raise standards. She receives good support from the deputy headteacher and the rest of the senior management team. The headteacher ensures that all pupils are fully involved in every aspect of school life and racial harmony is promoted positively.
- 44 Very good leadership by the headteacher has motivated staff and added enrichment to the curriculum. Discussions held with staff clearly show that they feel they are listened to, 'If you need training it does not matter how much it costs, you can have it'. Pupils have been consulted about what they would like to see changed. For example, the curriculum has been reorganised with subjects such as music now successfully being timetabled into 8 full day sessions per year. The school library has been transformed into a very attractive resource base.
- 45 A particular strength in leadership and management is the school's procedures for self-evaluation and the taking of appropriate action. For example, the headteacher is very aware of the fact that standards in mathematics are unsatisfactory and has taken appropriate action. The subject is now largely taught to classes based on pupils' prior attainment and inspection evidence demonstrates that this pattern of organisation is successful, with standards slowly beginning to rise. She rigorously monitors the quality of teaching and learning and evaluates how successful the school is by carefully analysing performance data.

- 46 At the time of the previous inspection the monitoring of teaching and curriculum developments by co-ordinators was found to be variable. This aspect has improved. Co-ordinators know their subjects well and are given time to monitor their curriculum areas. Satisfactory use is made of assessment information in English, mathematics and science with targets set for improvement. However, when pupils start school in Year 3 there is no co-ordinated system in place to find out what they know, understand and can do. As a result, for example, a weakness in pupils' handwriting is not picked up and time is lost in rectifying the matter.
- 47 The headteacher works very effectively with the governing body which is very well led by the chairperson. Together they have a very good understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses and what needs to be done to bring about improvements. They have identified the main priorities for development and have drawn up a very good strategic plan which clearly shows how the improvements will be brought about. The implementation of this plan is already leading to improving standards. Governors are very supportive of the school and they are kept well informed. They are not afraid to challenge judgements and initiatives when they feel it necessary. These findings are similar to those made at the time of the last inspection.
- 48 The leadership and management of the support for pupils who have special educational needs in the Resource Base are very good. The teacher in charge leads by example, presenting a good role model. As at the time of the previous inspection, staff involved meet regularly to consider issues relating to the pupils from the Resource Base. The headteacher has a clear over-view of the unit, and gives good support to the staff and its continued development and improvement.
- 49 The leadership and management for the provision of pupils who speak English as an additional language is satisfactory overall. The co-ordinator is knowledgeable but support is only targeted at pupils from Years 5 and 6. The school is currently reviewing its provision with a view to providing help for pupils in Years 3 and 4.
- 50 The school is clearly committed to its motto 'Learning for Life', but current planning does not pay enough attention to the further development of the UK On-line Centre. A management group oversees its work but there is no agreement yet on the criterion used to judge success for all users or a strategy for assessing the quality of the centre at regular intervals.

Financial information for the year April 2002 to March 2003

Income and expenditure (£)	
Total income	1,001,042
Total expenditure	995,770
Expenditure per pupil	2,573

Balances (£)	
Balance from previous year	30,765
Balance carried forward to the next	36,037

- 51 The school has successfully bid for and received additional grants from a number of sources and, for example, now has an excellent purpose built ICT suite and additional resources. As a result of external funding, older pupils have regular access to handheld computers that allow them to experience 'state of the art' technology. The school's involvement in the Education Action Zone initiative has brought many benefits including opportunities for the staff to get together with colleagues from other schools in the project to discuss their ideas.

52 The school's administrative officer manages day-to-day spending very well. She also ensures that day to day administrative systems are effective. Financial planning and control are efficient. The findings in the most recent audit report found the systems in operation to be well controlled. All the recommendations made have been attended to. The governors' finance committee has a good overview of financial affairs.

PART C: THE QUALITY OF EDUCATION IN SUBJECTS AND COURSES

SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGE 2

ENGLISH

Provision of English is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching and learning are good and pupils achieve well overall.
- Standards in writing are below average.
- The development of speaking and listening skills is good.
- The subject is led and managed well.
- The quality of on-going assessments of pupils' written work is variable.
- Handwriting skills are not sufficiently developed to support writing.

Commentary

- 53 Overall standards on entry to the school are well below average in reading and writing. The school has put in place satisfactory arrangements to provide the support needed by different groups of pupils in order to raise attainment. For example, extra support is being given to Black Afro- Caribbean boys to improve their performance in English. Standards seen in speaking and listening and reading are similar to those found in most schools but are below average in writing by the end of Year 6. More pupils are now reaching their potential in English. For example, the percentage of pupils attaining the higher level 5 in the 2003 national tests was well above average when the results are compared with those achieved by the same pupils at the end of Year 2.
- 54 Teaching methods are effective in the development of speaking and listening skills and this leads to good achievement by most pupils. Throughout the school, pupils are encouraged to participate in class discussions and are provided with a variety of social contexts in which talk takes place. Strategies, such as the 'Study Buddies', build up pupils' confidence and encourage participation in class discussions. A range of listening strategies is taught gradually, building up pupils' critical skills of analysis. By Year 5, some pupils are using words such as 'brigand' and 'torrential' with confidence and understanding. Teachers and peers value the contributions of all pupils.
- 55 The school is working hard to raise the standard of reading throughout the school by developing the reading environment and standards by the end of Year 6 are broadly average reflecting good achievement. Confident readers in Years 5 and 6 read fluently, with expression and attention to punctuation. They can read silently, demonstrating satisfactory skills of recall and understanding. They recognise when a story is told within a story and how authors sometimes 'take what is happening in real life into the story'. Higher order skills are seen when pupils make use of the evidence in a piece of text to justify a viewpoint and skim to obtain information. For pupils in Years 3 and 4, who still use the school reading scheme, there is insufficient exposure to a variety of texts and styles; limiting pupils' reading experiences at their level. The new school library, with its wide range of fiction and factual books and the accessibility of the library beyond the school day, provides a good resource for pupils to use. A small number of books are out of date and do not reflect current experiences.
- 56 Achievement in writing is satisfactory. The school has recognised the need to improve pupils' writing skills and amongst other initiatives have established links with a beacon school. Standards of writing seen in Year 3 are well below national expectations. In Year 5, the higher attaining pupils are using language to good effect; for example, 'As I looked around

I saw two men, they may not have been men, they were holding their heads in their hands.....'. By the end of Year 6 the majority of pupils have made satisfactory progress and some high attainers have made good progress. Writing is usually structured satisfactorily, imaginative and clear and there is evidence of the main features of various writing forms being used appropriately. Words are sometimes used for effect and can be quite expressive. In Year 6, pupils use phrases such as 'nocturnal predator' and 'venom squirter' in their poetry. In other writing, ideas are not adequately sustained because pupils are not given sufficient opportunities to write at length or practise their skills in other areas of the curriculum. Spelling is usually accurate. Most pupils can delineate sentences using the common forms of punctuation and some pupils are able to use more complex forms to clarify meaning. From Year 3, handwriting skills are not sufficiently developed to support writing. The quality of marking is variable from being appreciative and constructive, moving learning forward, to just a single, general phrase or statement.

- 57 Overall, there has been satisfactory improvement since the last inspection, with improvements in pupils' speaking and listening skills and reading, but standards in writing are still not high enough.
- 58 Strategic planning ensures pupils' needs in Years 4, 5, and 6 are well catered for through setting (the placing of pupils into classes based on their prior attainment). There is usually sufficient challenge to keep them working independently and productively.
- 59 The management of English is good. Work is evaluated, pupils' books are monitored and members of the leadership team observe lessons. The assessment of writing is in the early stages of development and has not yet been embedded across the school. Records are kept and passed on to the receiving class. In some classes, individual writing objectives are written up, helping pupils when self-evaluating their work. Leadership is good; having focused on developing speaking and listening skills the school has now turned to raising standards in writing.

Language and literacy across the curriculum

- 60 The school provides enriching experiences for pupils by bringing specialist visitors into school to support the development of English across the curriculum. During the last academic year there has been an author, poet, theatre group, illustrator and storyteller working with different groups of pupils in school. The use of language across the curriculum is developing satisfactorily in practice, including opportunities in drama, dance, art and an increased focus on oral work. However, more opportunities could be provided for pupils to write at length in subjects such as history and religious education.

MATHEMATICS

Provision in mathematics is **satisfactory overall**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards of attainment are rising but are still below average.
- Pupils, especially higher attainers, are not challenged enough to use their numerical skills to solve mathematical problems.
- The teaching of pupils in groups based on prior attainment is successful in helping to raise standards.
- The co-ordinator is well aware that standards of attainment need to rise and carries out her duties very well. However, there is no co-ordinated approach to assessing pupils' mathematical skills on entry to the school and using the findings to address areas of weakness immediately.
- Good use is made of ICT.

Commentary

- 61 The previous inspection found standards to be average but these findings were not supported by the Year 6 test results at the end of the inspection year when standards were found to be well below the national average. Pupils enter the school with skills that are below average and for the past three years have been making unsatisfactory progress, resulting in levels of attainment well below average by the end of Year 6. Inspection evidence shows that there has been some improvement in standards but they are below average. During the inspection there was no significant difference in achievement between different groups of pupils including those with special educational needs and those who speak English as an additional language. The school has rightly identified problem solving as a key area for development but as yet has not ensured that enough is being done so that pupils are consistently challenged in lessons to develop their problem solving skills. This is especially so for higher attainers.
- 62 Standards of attainment are rising slowly. There are three main reasons for this improvement. The school has benefited from the support of the local education authority and, as a result, the teaching of the National Numeracy Strategy has improved. Secondly, the teaching of mathematics in classes organised on prior attainment is beginning to work well in that teachers are able to target work more effectively at pupils' actual levels of attainment. However, in general pupils are not given enough opportunities to use their number skills to solve mathematical problems. Thirdly, good use is made of ICT in allowing pupils to develop their skills, for example, in shape identification.
- 63 Pupils of all attainment levels are being suitably challenged in developing their basic number skills and achieve soundly. They enjoy manipulating numbers but take too long to apply known number facts. For example, a group of Year 5 pupils knew the formula for calculating the perimeter of a rectangle but took too long to work out the correct answer. In Year 6 they can calculate the answers to problems, for example, percentage discounts, but many lack the necessary speed in doing so. Classroom assistants support individual pupils with special educational needs well. As a result they make the same progress as other pupils.
- 64 The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory overall. However, opportunities are missed in getting pupils to use their numeracy skills. For example, pupils enjoy playing 'number bingo' but this activity does not challenge the pupils who already have a satisfactory command of basic number. Teachers have a very good relationship with the pupils and pupils' confidence is bolstered so that, when given the opportunity, they willingly tackle problems. During the week of the inspection a group of lower attaining pupils in Year 4, including pupils from the Resource Base, were very keen to offer answers to questions related to compass points because the teacher knew her class very well and made the lesson interesting as well as fun. However, occasionally teachers do not allow pupils time to work out how to do things for themselves and over-direct them. As a result teaching is occasionally unsatisfactory and pupils become disinterested. They do not listen to what the teacher is saying and fail to make satisfactory progress. Potential higher attaining pupils are sometimes asked to complete the 'easier' questions in a workbook rather than being challenged to have a go at the harder questions.
- 65 The co-ordinator is conscientious and provides good leadership. She has good subject knowledge and has undertaken training on how to monitor her subject. She has used this knowledge well to monitor and evaluate learning. The school has in place a satisfactory assessment system overall with targets set for individual pupils. However, the language used in writing targets is not 'child friendly' and as a result pupils do not always fully understand what is intended. Assessment procedures on entry to the school are unsatisfactory and the co-ordinator accepts that this is an area that needs to be addressed. There is a good range of equipment that is readily available.

Mathematics across the curriculum

- 66 A survey of pupils' work shows that they are provided with a satisfactory range of opportunities to use their mathematics skills in most other subjects. Good links are made with a historical topic based on Ancient Greece. Pupils use 'Eratosthenes' findings with regard to the properties of prime numbers. In ICT pupils produce their own spreadsheets to record statistical information. There are some satisfactory examples of timelines being used in history. Pupils in Year 4 accurately use the formula to calculate the speed traveled per second by their controllable vehicles. However, more opportunities could be provided for pupils to use their mathematical skills in science.

SCIENCE

Provision in science is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils make good progress and achieve well.
- Teaching is good overall and lessons are made interesting.
- More opportunities could be provided for pupils to use their mathematical skills.
- Leadership and management of the subject are good.

Commentary

- 67 Standards achieved in science are broadly in line with national averages. The results achieved by pupils in national tests in Year 6 in 2003 showed that their performance was only just below the national average. The proportion of children working beyond the standard expected was similar to that found in most schools. When the test results are compared to those achieved by the same pupils at the end of Year 2, they show that they made good progress and achieved well.
- 68 Standards have improved significantly since the previous inspection when it was found that though pupils were making satisfactory progress, standards were below national expectations. Inspection evidence shows that pupils are now making good progress in learning key scientific facts and in their understanding of how to carry out an investigation. Girls do slightly better than boys in the end of Year 6 tests, but no difference in attainment was observed in lessons. Pupils with special educational needs and those who speak English as an additional language make good progress overall and achieve well. There is no significant difference in the performance of pupils from minority ethnic groups.
- 69 Pupils from the Resource Base are included in classes in the main school for science. They receive good support and achieve well. This contributes effectively to all aspects of their personal development as well as their learning and academic skills.
- 70 A scrutiny of work shows that pupils cover a broad range of science topics and learn scientific skills of enquiry. The youngest pupils study different rock formations and use correct terminology when describing them such as 'sedimentary' and 'igneous'. Pupils in Year 4 extend their understanding of materials and their properties by practical research into the viscosity of different liquids such as syrup, water and washing up liquid. Older pupils construct experiments to find out what effect exercise has on the heart. However, pupils are provided with too few opportunities to use their mathematical skills when engaged in experiments and, as at the time of the previous inspection, they still have difficulty interpreting graphs accurately.
- 71 Pupils make sound use of their literacy skills in science. They write up their own accounts of investigations and use the correct terminology. The quality of pupils' science books reflects

their positive attitude to the subject. Activities are usually carefully recorded, to show what has been found out, and neatly presented.

- 72 Teaching has improved since the last inspection and is good overall. Teachers are more confident with the subject matter. They explain clearly at the beginning of each lesson what the class is going to do and what the learning objectives are. The lessons observed were well structured and included a strong practical element that helped pupils' understanding and enhanced the quality of learning. In a very good lesson with Year 6 pupils about the heart, the teacher used questioning well not only to make pupils think more clearly about what they were doing but also to challenge those with good existing knowledge. Teachers give pupils useful verbal feedback during lessons but their written comments in pupils' books rarely identify ways to improve and sometimes books are left unmarked for too long.
- 73 The subject co-ordinator leads the curriculum and manages resources effectively. Pupils' work is reviewed and an analysis is made of test results to identify strengths and weaknesses in the subject.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

The provision for information and communication technology is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards in the school are above average and pupils are achieving very well.
- Teaching is good.

Commentary

- 74 The majority of pupils in Year 6 are already meeting nationally expected standards and by the end of the year they should be exceeding these. Pupils are achieving very well. They are very confident in their own ability with a mature attitude towards learning. They work well in pairs, supporting each other, and individually. They have good attitudes and enjoy their work very much.
- 75 All pupils in Year 6 retrieve and refine their work confidently. All but those with special educational needs construct a PowerPoint presentation, with sound and imported graphics. They have controlled a moveable object upon a screen and can change data in spreadsheets. They send messages and access the Internet confidently as a research tool, but they are not yet phrasing questions precisely when searching for information. Pupils have good word processing skills, but they only use their forefinger when typing and this is not good practice as it restricts the speed with which they can write. There are special programs for pupils with special educational needs, who also benefit from very good teaching in small groups, and these pupils achieve very well. A select few pupils in Year 5 have hand held computers that they use at home and at school. These pupils are very confident in transferring information from one machine to another and are reaching very high standards for their age.
- 76 The co-ordinator provides a very good role model of teaching, with challenging questions and clearly explained instructions in order to extend and consolidate the pupils' learning. Lessons have a well-planned structure comprised of teacher demonstrations, practising tasks and undertaking small assignments. In this manner considerable new learning takes place.
- 77 There has been considerable increase in the range of resources since the previous inspection and the ratio of computers to pupils is above the average. The curriculum is well planned, following national guidelines. The assessment systems follow national guidelines but the information needs to be used more precisely to ensure that each pupil is making appropriate progress.

Information and communication technology across the curriculum

- 78 Computers are used very well to promote and consolidate learning in all subjects of the curriculum. In most classrooms, pupils practise their computer skills as they learn to manipulate a range of programs. The school is piloting the use of hand held computers and is finding that access to these machines improves pupils' English writing skills.

HUMANITIES

History and religious education are reported in full. It was not possible to form a judgement about provision in geography as the subject was not being taught during the inspection.

Geography

Commentary

- 79 A scrutiny of work done in geography and discussions with teachers show that National Curriculum requirements are being met. Pupils keep a record of their progress in geography that moves with them from year to year. This good system shows the skills that they have learnt and also shows satisfactory coverage of the curriculum.
- 80 Subject leadership for geography is satisfactory. The co-ordinator is new to the post and has drawn up an action plan to raise standards. It includes the future incorporation of the 'thinking skills' that are being taught in the school. These are helping pupils to focus their thinking in lessons and raise standards by improving the quality and detail of their work. The nationally recommended scheme of work provides sound guidance and teachers' planning reflects the needs of all pupils including those with special educational needs.

History

Provision in history is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teachers use a good range of strategies to develop pupils' understanding.
- Good use is made of ICT to find information.
- Visits to places of interest improve the quality of learning.
- Pupils are not provided with opportunities to write at length.

Commentary

- 81 Pupils' levels of attainment in history are similar to those found in most schools by the end of Year 6. Evidence from lessons and a scrutiny of pupils' work indicate that most pupils have a sound understanding of important events related to the topics they have studied, such as life in Tudor times and in Ancient Greece. These findings are similar to those made at the time of the previous inspection.
- 82 The quality of teaching is satisfactory overall. In the best lessons, teachers show good subject knowledge and use discussion effectively to share ideas. They make use of challenging questions to probe pupils' thinking and help the pupils' understanding of the reasons for people's actions. The pace of these lessons is good and the presentation imaginative. Such effective teaching enabled pupils in Year 3 to learn about Boudicca's revolt. In this lesson, the pupils were interested, relationships were good and they made good progress. Some of this work makes a significant contribution to the rate of pupils' learning in literacy and ICT. For example, in a lesson in Year 4, the teacher made use of a

variety of activities including, for example, very good use of the internet by a group of four pupils to gather information about life in Ancient Greece. The pupils were then able to compile a diary of their imagined visit to the original Olympic Games. However, pupils are not provided with appropriate opportunities to write longer pieces of work. The teachers make good use of educational visits, for example, to Mosely Old Hall to enrich their teaching.

- 83 Subject leadership for history is satisfactory. The co-ordinator is new to the post and has clear plans to raise standards in the subject. Her plans include the future incorporation of thinking skills and this aspect is already taking place in lessons where various 'coloured hats' are referred to that require specific types of thinking such as thinking for information. The nationally recommended scheme of work provides satisfactory guidance and teachers' planning reflects the needs of all the pupils including those with special educational needs.

Religious education

The provision in religious education is **unsatisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The subject makes a good contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
- Pupils are not achieving as well as they could because the taught curriculum is narrow and time is lost in lessons.

Commentary

- 84 Standards by Year 6 do not meet those identified in the locally agreed syllabus for religious education. Although higher attaining pupils have retained their learning well over their time in the school there are considerable gaps in their basic knowledge of the religions taught. The higher ability pupils state that the subject is repetitive, whereas the lower achieving pupils find the subject interesting.
- 85 Pupils have a satisfactory knowledge of visual signs and symbols of Christianity, and of the Hajj as an example of pilgrimage, but they have not covered in suitable depth the full range of learning in the syllabus. They are unsure of basic aspects of the Christian religion, which is the main religion being taught and of the other religions.
- 86 No unsatisfactory teaching was seen during the inspection, but the impact of the teaching over time is unsatisfactory. Teachers use visual prompts such as artefacts and computer generated recordings well as a stimulus for the pupils' learning and they plan interesting activities. However, too frequently the religious message is not being emphasised as clearly as it needs to be. There is repetition in some of the work provided, which restricts the pace of learning, particularly of the potentially higher attainers. In some lessons, time is lost as pupils practise other skills. Teaching is effective on the occasions within lessons when pupils are given clear and interesting explanations, so that they learn why members of faith groups act as they do and what is important to members of the faith. The local vicar makes a good contribution to pupils' learning and the experiences of pupils who are members of the faith group being studied are used to emphasise information.
- 87 Two newly appointed and enthusiastic co-ordinators have appropriate priorities for development, but there has not been time for them to have an impact on standards. They are rapidly developing the curriculum to meet the requirements of the new agreed syllabus. The new planning currently lacks assessment statements to help the non-specialist teachers focus upon the important aspects that pupils need to know. There has been little staff training in the recent past. The subject has a low profile around the school with only loose links to the assembly themes. There is a lack of planning to visit places of worship and too few members of faith groups come to visit the school in order to enrich the learning. The

subject contributes well to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. There has been a decline in provision since the previous inspection.

CREATIVE, AESTHETIC, PRACTICAL AND PHYSICAL SUBJECTS

Art and design

Provision in art and design is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards are above average and pupils achieve very well.
- The resources to support learning are good.
- Good links are made with other subjects and visits to museums and galleries enrich the curriculum.
- Pupils' work is not assessed to ensure skill development.
- The leadership and management of the subject are good.

Commentary

- 88 The standard of work produced by pupils in Year 6 is above nationally expected levels. Achievement over time is very good. Pupils in Years 3 and 4 are involved in using colour mixing to produce vibrant, abstract patterns, creating revealing self-portraits which explore relationships and feelings in an imaginative way. They also learn about Aboriginal art. In Years 5 and 6, pupils have used natural objects to create effective textile designs, have produced good observational drawings using pastels and have designed and created tiles in the style of William Morris. These have been fired in the school's own kiln, a process the pupils understand, and will form part of a whole school display. Good cross-curricular links have been established. Visits to the Blists Hill Museum and the Wolverhampton Museum provide opportunities for further curriculum enrichment.
- 89 Although only a few lessons have been observed during the inspection, the evidence is that teaching is good because the teachers' knowledge and understanding of the subject is secure. Teachers use a variety of methods to challenge the pupils. Clear guidelines on methods of working, are given by the teachers so that pupils handle materials confidently. The school art club provides pupils with additional opportunities to develop their knowledge, understanding and skills.
- 90 A visiting artist helps to enrich the curriculum and provides additional expertise as some pupils in Year 4 work creatively to make a 'Stow Heath Junior School' chair. Utilising their sketchbooks to good effect, pupils develop designs for the whole chair and, smaller designs for decoration. They base their designs on ideas what they consider representative of their school. Pupils are supportive of each other, discussing ideas and making improvements. All pupils in Year 4 are designing and creating chairs and their models demonstrate they have a clear understanding of balance and support.
- 91 The subject is well lead and managed by a co-ordinator who has a good knowledge and understanding of the subject. She monitors teachers' plans and pupils' work in order to ensure that pupils have an appropriate range of experiences. A portfolio of work showing progression has been developed to help staff recognise the sequence of skills that can be developed and the quality of work produced by different ages and abilities. There is no assessment of individual skill development although pupils complete their own annual self-evaluation, reviewing their progress and deciding which techniques they would like to focus on in the future.

Design and technology

The provision in design and technology is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- There has been considerable improvement since the previous inspection and standards are now in line with national expectations.
- Pupils are achieving well, particularly in their evaluation skills.
- The relationships between pupils as they work is very good.

Commentary

- 92 Pupils from Year 3 are introduced to the full design process and by Year 6 their skills, knowledge and understanding are meeting the nationally expected standards. Pupils are achieving well, through predominantly good teaching, and they feel a sense of satisfaction and pride in their work. They particularly enjoy the practical elements of the subject.
- 93 Year 6 pupils feel confident in their designing skills. As part of this process they use computer generated information and observe manufactured objects. They also make simulation models to see how systems work. There are considerable differences in the standards and achievement of pupils in their practical skills. Higher attaining pupils construct models accurately. The majority do not transfer their careful measuring to the accurate cutting of materials and they do not have the understanding to make patterns to help them. As the pupils work, teachers constantly support them, enabling them successfully to complete their tasks. Health and safety issues are carefully controlled by the classteacher and the learning support assistants make a good contribution as pupils undertake their practical work.
- 94 Pupils have a mature approach to evaluating their own and others work. They make suggestions and modifications as they work and confidently evaluate the appearance and the construction of the final product. However, in this process they do not refer back to their original design or thoroughly evaluate the performance of their products.
- 95 The subject has been well led. The curriculum is suitably planned using national guidelines and there are sufficient resources. Much of the work effectively reinforces pupils' scientific learning. Pupils are accustomed to assessing their own work and teachers maintain separate assessment systems. The planning for the three classes in each year group is the same, but frequently teachers add their own ideas to this. These important additions are not yet shared to become part of the curriculum improvement and development process. There has been good improvement since the previous inspection when standards were judged to be very low and the full design and make process was not taught.

Music

Commentary

- 96 The school has developed an innovative approach to the teaching of the subject. All age groups have eight full 'Music Days' per year to develop their skills. During the inspection week all pupils in Year 4 achieved well in all aspects of the subject during one of their assigned music days. They developed their performing, music appreciation, composing and listening skills effectively because teaching was good and the activities challenging and interesting. The development of pupils' singing skills is not neglected with weekly lessons provided. During assemblies pupils sing tunefully with a very good sense of beat and dynamics.
- 97 Pupils are given the opportunity to learn to play a keyboard instrument or a guitar. The school has a particular musical strength in that four teachers are music specialists.

Physical education

Commentary

- 98 Three lessons were observed in dance and one in games. It is not possible, therefore, to make an overall judgement about standards or provision in physical education. Attainment in dance is above average and pupils, including those with special educational needs and who speak English as an additional language, achieve well. In the lessons seen the level of challenge was realistic and pupils were able to extend dance sequences by effectively linking together a range of movements demonstrating precision and control in their movements. In Year 6, for example, pupils responded well to a piece of music as they worked effectively in groups to present a dynamic interpretation of a journey into space. Pupils in Year 5 caught and threw a ball with satisfactory accuracy when practising games skills. Swimming lessons are available for pupils in Year 4 and school records show that most pupils can swim 25 metres by the end of the year.
- 99 As at the time of the previous inspection the quality of teaching and learning is good overall. Teachers plan well and include all pupils; for example a disabled pupil played a full and active part in a games lesson. Most teachers have good subject knowledge and by modelling specific skills and movements effectively demonstrate expected outcomes. Close attention is given to warming up and cooling down before and after activities. The management of pupils is good and care is given to ensuring safe working practices. However, in the lessons observed, teachers did not provide pupils with enough opportunities to evaluate their own performance and that of others in order to suggest how they might improve.
- 100 The subject is well led and managed. Extra-curricular provision is good and includes competitive matches with other schools. The hall is spacious and equipment is of a good quality.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP

Personal, social and health education and citizenship were sampled, as not enough lessons were seen to support an overall teaching and learning judgement. The school provides good opportunities for pupils to learn respect for the values and beliefs of other pupils and adults, and to develop their own self-worth and confidence. Planned discussion sessions (circle time) highlight the need to be aware of people's feelings. For example, pupils in a Year 5 class identified closely with the theme of 'Prejudice' during circle time and showed good awareness of this in the world today.

The school views pupils' personal development as important and addresses it well in several subjects such as science. The outcomes of the school's approach are clearly seen in the good attitudes, behaviour, relationships and personal development of pupils. Examples were seen in a number of lessons during the inspection, especially in physical education, when pupils' health and safety were highlighted as well as values and other qualities. During the inspection an assembly on the theme of 'belonging to' made a good contribution to Personal Social Health Education. Sex education and education about drugs are addressed appropriately. Work in this area helps pupils to develop an awareness of a healthy lifestyle and to learn how to relate to others.

PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

<i>Inspection judgement</i>	<i>Grade</i>
The overall effectiveness of the school	4
How inclusive the school is	3
How the school's effectiveness has changed since its last inspection	4
Value for money provided by the school	4
Overall standards achieved	5
Pupils' achievement	3
Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities	3
Attendance	5
Attitudes	3
Behaviour, including the extent of exclusions	3
Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	3
The quality of education provided by the school	3
The quality of teaching	3
How well pupils learn	3
The quality of assessment	4
How well the curriculum meets pupils needs	3
Enrichment of the curriculum, including out-of-school activities	3
Accommodation and resources	3
Pupils' care, welfare, health and safety	4
Support, advice and guidance for pupils	4
How well the school seeks and acts on pupils' views	3
The effectiveness of the school's links with parents	3
The quality of the school's links with the community	2
The school's links with other schools and colleges	4
The leadership and management of the school	3
The governance of the school	3
The leadership of the headteacher	2
The leadership of other key staff	3
The effectiveness of management	2

Inspectors make judgements on a scale: excellent (grade 1); very good (2); good (3); satisfactory (4); unsatisfactory (5); poor (6); very poor (7).