

INSPECTION REPORT

STANVILLE PRIMARY SCHOOL

Sheldon

LEA area: Birmingham

Unique reference number: 103257

Headteacher: Susan Middleton

Reporting inspector: Joyce Taylor
4275

Dates of inspection: 18 – 22 September 2000

Inspection number: 224592

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

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Community
School category:	Primary
Age range of pupils:	3 – 11 years
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Stanville Road Sheldon Birmingham
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Appropriate authority:	The Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	Melanie Ashley
Date of previous inspection:	27 – 31 January 1997

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Jane Chesterfield 13874	Lay inspector		The pupils' attitudes, values and personal development The leadership and management Partnership with parents and carers Pupils' welfare, health and safety
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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Stanville primary school is bigger than most primary schools. There are currently 274 children on roll. Most of the children come from the Sheldon ward of Birmingham which is in the north east of the city. Thirty three per cent of children take free school meals and this is higher than the national average. Three per cent of the pupils speak English as an additional language and again this is higher than average. Thirty two per cent of pupils have special general learning needs, including statements, and again this is above average. The children enter the reception class at four years old with a wide range of abilities although the general level is below average.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

This is an effective school. The teaching is good overall although it ranges from sound to excellent in different classes. As a result of the very good teaching, the pupils' achievement grows steadily as they move through the school and is faster in some classes than others. By the time they reach Year 6, most of the pupils reach above average standards in mathematics and science but below average standards in English. The headteacher has been at the school for two terms and has already made several successful changes. Her style of leadership is thoughtful and clear. The cost of running the school is high but it gives satisfactory value for money.

What the school does well

- Standards at 7 and 11 years old are above average in mathematics and science.
- The very good teaching in Year 2 motivates the children to work hard and leads to good achievement. Good and very good teaching in some other classes helps the older pupils set a good pace to their learning. Good teaching in the nursery means that the children settle well in to their new routines.
- There is very good support for the children with special educational needs and these children make good progress.
- The school uses the community well to support the children's learning and provides well for their personal, social and moral development.
- The new headteacher has made a strong impact in the school through good financial control and by setting up arrangements to improve the teaching and learning.

What could be improved

- Standards in English in Key Stage 2, particularly boys writing and standards in information communications technology.
- The provision for design technology.
- The way the senior teachers and the subjects co-ordinators support other teachers in improving the teaching and learning.
- Assessment as a means of checking how well individual children are doing.
- The opportunities for the children to learn about people from other cultures.

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

The school was previously inspected in January 1997. It is now a better school in several areas. The standards reached by 11 year olds is higher in mathematics and science. This is confirmed by test results and the work seen in classes. There are more very good lessons than at the time of the last inspection and they are making the children enthusiastic and eager to learn. Long-term planning is in place but design technology has not been sufficiently improved. Standards remain low in information communications technology although the equipment and facilities are much improved. The provision for children with special educational needs is much better. The

headteacher has considerably improved the management of finances and has controlled the overspending which had taken place since the last inspection. Since the previous inspection the school has made satisfactory progress.

STANDARDS

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

Performance in:	Compared with:			
	all schools			similar schools
	1997	1998	1999	1999
English	D	E	E	D
mathematics	D	E	C	B
science	C	E	C	B

<i>Key:</i>	
very high	A*
well above average	A
above average	B
average	C
below average	D
well below average	E
very low	E*

The results show that by the time the children leave the school they have achieved the standards expected in mathematics and science. Results in English are well below average and too few of the pupils are reaching the expected level, particularly in writing. The results are better when compared with similar schools, especially in mathematics and science. Since these results were published there has been another set of tests which the children took in May 2000. In mathematics and science the results are higher than in 1999 particularly in science. The children's achievements are improving year on year because of the teachers' knowledge and experience in the subjects. In English the trend is of falling results and there are still too few children reaching the average National Curriculum levels, especially boys in writing. In Key Stage 1 the progress from year to year has been smooth and in the test results in 1999 the standards remained at a high level in writing and mathematics. In 2000 the children achieved a higher level in reading than in 1999 and kept up the above average achievement in the other subjects. These are very good test results for the seven-year-old children. This provides a firm foundation for good progress in Key Stage 2. The targets set by the school for this and future years in English and mathematics suitably reflect what the children are likely to achieve. They are high for mathematics but remain fairly low for English.

In most other subjects, including religious education, the children reach average standards. In information communications technology the standards are below average and in design technology the curriculum has not provided sufficient opportunities for the children to make satisfactory progress.

Most of the children in the reception class are not achieving what is expected of them in the early learning goals. Even though they made good progress in the nursery, their standards are still lower than expected in language and literacy, mathematics, knowledge and understanding of the world and social and emotional development.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Satisfactory overall. Very good in some classes but sometimes unsatisfactory in classes where the children do not keep up their concentration in the lessons.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Satisfactory. The children behave well in the playground and around the school. In most classes behaviour is good or very good but in others the children are noisy and sometimes naughty.
Personal development and relationships	Good. Most pupils respect each other and work well together. The children get on well with their teachers.
Attendance	Unsatisfactory. Attendance is improving but is still below average.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils:	aged up to 5 years	aged 5-7 years	aged 7-11 years
Lessons seen overall	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 is better than it was at the time of the previous inspection. Almost all of the lessons seen were satisfactory or better. Only four lessons were unsatisfactory. In 39% of lessons the teaching was satisfactory, in 34% it was good, in 12% it was very good and in 9% it was excellent. The teaching is almost always good in the nursery and in Years 5 and 6 and is usually very good or better in Year 2. In the Reception classes and in Years 3 and 4 the teaching is satisfactory with some teaching that is good or better, some more ordinary lessons and an occasional unsatisfactory one. In Year 1 it is generally satisfactory. Basic skills are taught well for mathematics but in several of the junior classes the children are not motivated strongly enough in English.

The teaching is good in science and there is some good teaching in mathematics and English. In mental arithmetic the teachers are good at helping the children improve their calculating skills. In English the teaching of reading is satisfactory but too little attention is given to improving the children's speaking and listening skills across the school. Writing is not taught well enough in most of the junior classes and the teaching of handwriting is unsatisfactory. The pupils with special needs are taught well both in classes and in groups. The special needs teacher and support assistants are particularly good at helping these pupils.

There were a number of particular strengths in the teaching and learning seen, most noticeably in Year 2 and Year 5 where the teachers' strong relationships with the children boost their confidence and fire their enthusiasm. In the nursery the good teaching is helping the new children settle into the class extremely well. In the best lessons across the school, much is demanded of the children and there is very good classroom management. Lessons are purposeful and no time is wasted. Activities are interesting and challenging and the teachers give clear instructions. The children are able to concentrate well and complete their tasks properly. Where the teaching is not so effective the class management is not always successful and the children become noisy and easily distracted from their work. On a few rare occasions they are unkind to each other.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Satisfactory. The new arrangement for teaching the foundation subjects is effective in most cases but information communications technology is not taught often enough to raise the standards and is not given enough importance as a core subject. The residential visits for the children in Year 2 and above bring great benefit.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Very good. The children are well provided for and make good progress.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	Satisfactory. The few pupils concerned are given appropriate support and make satisfactory progress.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Overall provision is satisfactory. The provision for social and moral development is good because the school trains the children to take responsibility for themselves and each other. The class rules are clearly displayed and the children know the difference between right and wrong. There is not enough attention given to introducing the children to cultural diversity.
How well the school cares for its pupils	The school cares for its pupils to a satisfactory level. The procedures for child protection and monitoring attendance are good. There is not enough information recorded about how well each child is doing in their work.

Statutory requirements for the curriculum are met overall apart from coverage of the programmes of study for information communications technology. In Key Stages 1 and 2 there is a strong emphasis on English and mathematics. The new arrangements to teach the foundation curriculum in blocks ensure that each receives an appropriate time but when core subjects are included in this arrangement it is less successful. In the Foundation Stage there is a suitable emphasis on most areas of learning but more attention needs to be given to speaking and listening.

The school has a satisfactory partnership with its parents. It tries hard to accommodate the wide views and opinions parents express and the formation of a Friends Association is a sensible development.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Developing well. The new headteacher has identified clear priorities for improvement in the standards and quality of the teaching and learning. She has made a strong impact in the short time she has been in the school. New administration procedures are effective. Key teachers advise and support the others but this is not developed enough.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	The governors fulfil their statutory responsibilities. They question and check reports and know what the school does well and what the weaknesses are.
The school's evaluation of its performance	The school has a clear view of what needs to be done and work has already started in some aspects. More needs to be done to identify the role of key teachers.

The strategic use of resources	The financial deficit inherited by the new headteacher causes the school concern as it limits developments. The headteacher and the local authority have controlled the overspend and returned the school to an even balance. Several successful bids for funding are supporting developments in the school.
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There are enough staff and resources are used efficiently and to the benefit of the pupils. There are not enough resources for science and design technology and there are too few library books. The accommodation is very spacious and clean. It is used well. The school applies the principles of best value to a satisfactory level.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The children are happy to come to school and they make good progress. • The teaching is good. • The school expects the children to work hard and achieve their best. • The school is helping the children become mature and responsible. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The amount of homework children are given. • The range of activities offered to the pupils beyond their daily lessons. • The closeness of the school's work with the parents.

Very few parents returned the questionnaire so the views are not truly representative. The inspectors agree with their positive views. However, the inspectors also agree that the range of activities outside school hours is small. There is a new policy for homework and parents have just received a letter telling them what their children will be doing. This is a good development as there was some uncertainty. The school works appropriately with the parents and provides a satisfactory range of information.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and achievements

1. Children who are in the Foundation Stage are likely to attain the early learning goals in mathematics, physical development and creative development by the time they leave the reception class. Their standards are lower in language and literacy, personal and social development and knowledge and understanding of the world. They enter the nursery with standards well below average, except in physical development which is average, and they make good progress in much of their learning but their standards are still below average when they enter the reception class. In the reception class the children make good progress in mathematics and satisfactory progress in the other areas of learning. In previous years more time has been given to English and mathematics and less work has been planned in the other areas of learning. The school has revised the planning and the learning for the reception children and this is giving them better opportunities to work in all the areas of learning through practical activities.

2. At the end of Key Stage 1, the 1999 test results for pupils aged seven give a mixed picture. The children's achievements were above average in writing and mathematics. In reading the results were below average. Compared with similar schools, results in writing and mathematics were well above average and reading was average. In 1997 and 1998 the results varied from subject to subject without showing any clear pattern although they were lower, overall, than in 1999. At the time of the inspection comparative data was not available for the 2000 test results but these show that standards have been maintained in writing and mathematics. In reading the standard has improved and is now the same as the other two subjects. This shows that over time the standards are improving in Key Stage 1. The work of the present Year 2 children seen during the inspection shows that their reading and writing are average and their mathematics is above average. The class has fewer children with well above average attainment than is typical but their very enthusiastic response to their lessons enables them to make good progress and it is likely that they will reach above average standards by the time they take the tests in May 2001.

3. The 1999 test results for the pupils aged eleven also give a mixed picture. The standards are average in mathematics and science but well below average in English. In 1998 the results in all three subjects dropped to well below average but have risen since then. In the 2000 tests the mathematics and science results have risen again but have fallen further in English. The school's very thorough analysis of the English results show that the boys scored very badly in the writing test with only 15% of them reaching the average level for their age. Compared with similar schools, results for 1999 are above average in mathematics and science and below average in English. The work of the Year 6 children seen during the inspection shows their English to be below average and their mathematics and science to be above average. The higher standards in mathematics and science reflect better teaching. For example the teachers show more confidence in choosing imaginative and stimulating activities which will stretch the children and quickly move them forward in their learning.

4. The targets set for the pupils in mathematics in 1999 and 2000 have been easily achieved and more challenging targets have been set for 2001. In English the targets have not been achieved and have been reassessed for 2001. The targets are now set by analysing what the children are likely to achieve if they are given the right support. They are now set in consultation with the teachers of the Year 6 children and truly reflect what the children can do.

5. The children's progress in English, mathematics and science in Key Stage 1 in 1999 was good and it was satisfactory in Key Stage 2, apart from writing which was unsatisfactory. In September 2000 the teachers in reception and Key Stage 1 were new to these age groups and their knowledge of what the children had already

achieved was hampered by the lack of an assessment system showing the attainments of individual children. This interrupts the children's progress. In Key Stage 2 most of the teachers are experienced at working with their year groups and build effectively on what has gone before in mathematics and science. In English they are less effective and this hinders progress. In 1999 the teachers in Key Stage 1 raised the children's attainment from below average in reception to above average in Year 2 in writing and mathematics. In 2000 the progress in reading showed similar success.

6. The pupils with special educational needs achieve well for their abilities and those with individual learning plans make good progress towards their targets. The range of very good provision ensures that the children's work is carefully monitored and evaluated and this is better than at the time of the last inspection. The children who need extra support in their literacy and numeracy lessons are helped effectively. The children with English as an additional language make satisfactory progress, they are given sound support and their standards are satisfactory. The higher achieving children are supported well in Key Stage 1 in mathematics and in Key Stage 2 in mathematics and science. In English there is lower achievement and fewer children are reaching the higher levels in the tests than is typical. In Key Stage 1 boys and girls achieve equally well. In Key Stage 2 the achievement of boys and girls is the same for mathematics and science but very different for English. The girls achieve high scores for reading (92% at the average level) and low scores for writing (38%). The boys achieve lower scores for reading (55% at the average level) and extremely low scores for writing (15%).

7. The children reach average standards for most of the other subjects of the curriculum. The standards for art, music, history, geography, religious education and physical education are in line with National Curriculum expectations. In information communications technology the standards are unsatisfactory although the school has recently fitted out its computer room and is ready to receive training for the teachers. In design technology too little work was seen to judge the standards but there have been few planned developments to improve the subject since it was found to be unsatisfactory during the last inspection in 1997.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

8. The school has continued to achieve sound standards in these areas of its work since the time of the last inspection. Most of the pupils have positive attitudes to the school. They enjoy being at school, they come to school eagerly and they settle quickly in their classes. Most are attentive and interested in lessons and many are keen to take up the opportunities and responsibilities offered by the school, as monitors, prefects, mediators or school councillors, for example.

9. The pupils' behaviour too is satisfactory. The majority of pupils obey instructions in class and around the school and do as they are told straightaway. There are often high levels of noise as pupils talk while they work or move about the building and this can disturb the concentration of themselves and others. Most of the pupils know the standards of behaviour expected of them and have the self-control to meet these standards. There are a small number of children in some classes who have difficulties doing this. Behaviour in the playground at break and lunchtime is also satisfactory. Although there are some arguments and disagreements between pupils, others show concern for one another or help resolve differences. There was no evidence of bullying or racist behaviour during the inspection and any instances of this are handled firmly by the school. There have been three temporary exclusions in the last year. The children concerned are receiving a great deal of specialist support to help them manage their behaviour.

10. The pupils' personal development and relationships are good. They are given an unusually wide range of opportunities to develop their social skills and sense of responsibility for the school community and they take these up enthusiastically. Mediators and litter pickers, for example, are committed to their tasks, while members of the school council mix easily with older and younger pupils and take their views seriously. Most of the pupils are polite and friendly and get on well with one another and with adults. They are pleased to hear about others'

successes and often show concern for the feelings of others. In the infant playground, for example, Year 6 pupils help the staff look after the younger pupils, bringing them in for treatment if they require first aid.

11. The level of the pupils' attendance at the school is below the national average, although it is higher than it was at the time of the last inspection. Most absence is caused by illness but some is due to families taking holidays during term time. Many families do not provide a reason for their children's absence and this has resulted in an above average level of unauthorised absence being recorded. The pupils' punctuality is satisfactory. Most arrive promptly every morning, although there are a number of persistent latecomers each day who disrupt the start of lessons.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?

12. Since the last inspection there has been a significant improvement in the teaching. It is now good overall and 20 per cent is very good or excellent. Only four lessons were judged to be unsatisfactory.

13. In the Foundation Stage the teaching is good overall although it ranges from unsatisfactory to good. The senior teacher, in the nursery, has a good understanding of the children's needs and this encourages them to have confidence. In the reception classes the teachers have less experience and are not always sure how to stimulate the children effectively. In the nursery the children were having their first session when the inspection started. The teacher and nursery nurse give them good encouragement and provide a wide range of equipment for the children to explore. This helps the children to experiment with resources and learn through investigation and sampling a range of new situations. In the reception classes the teachers share many sessions and both already know the children well. They work from a planning system based on the nursery style and this provides very good continuity for the children although it will not adequately support the higher attaining children for long. The teachers are good at much of the basic skills work. For example, in the nursery the children became very involved in a story and in reception they enthusiastically joined in a counting rhyme. The teaching of speaking and listening is underdeveloped and the children make too little progress in this area.

14. In Key Stage 1 the teaching is mixed in quality. It is good overall though it ranges from unsatisfactory to excellent. The Year 1 class contains a very high proportion of children with special educational needs, including some boys with behaviour difficulties. The supply teacher, who is with the class for this half term, has established good class routines and is developing satisfactory relationships with most of the children. There are a few occasions when the teaching and learning is interrupted by the bad behaviour of a few individuals. In Year 2, the teacher is new to this age group but has made an excellent beginning and is already enabling the children to make very good progress in almost all of their lessons. His manner relaxes the children and his very high expectations raise their pace of learning. In a literacy lesson, for example, the children struggled successfully with difficult levels of punctuation and the order of words in their sentences after an enthusiastic yet very effective introduction by the teacher. In both classes the basic skills of mathematics, reading and writing are taught properly but more attention needs to be given to handwriting.

15. Most of the teaching in Key Stage 2 is good though it ranges from unsatisfactory to excellent. In some classes the management is very good and the children listen and respond extremely well. In other lessons the children begin to chatter at every opportunity and in some cases they do not quieten properly when the teacher asks them to. Where the teaching is very good or excellent the expectations are high and, although the work is challenging, the children confidently tackle it and explain clearly what they are doing. This was seen in a science lesson in Year 5 where the children described the processes used in testing fabrics for durability and waterproof qualities. The teachers plan carefully, for example, in geography in Year 6, and this is used to inform the children about the lesson and ensure they are well motivated. When the teaching is good the children are questioned to help them understand what is happening. In physical education in a Year 5/6 lesson the teacher helped the children judge the quality of their work by asking careful questions. Interesting activities that build on earlier learning, for example, in the Year 3 history lesson, help the children deepen their understanding. In the lessons

that were satisfactory the class management was not always good enough and the children became noisy. In some lessons the teachers did not use interesting or challenging activities and the children did not make enough progress.

16. There are opportunities for the children to work collaboratively and they organise themselves well. In science the Year 5 children worked in small groups to test and evaluate the properties of various fabrics. They managed this task very efficiently.

17. The teachers are good at developing the pupils' skills in numeracy through mental arithmetic sessions and in many cases the lessons build accurately on the children's earlier learning. The teachers help the children use correct mathematical vocabulary and show them how to use the basic skills they are learning in new calculations. The skills of literacy are not always taught so well. The teaching of reading is better than writing. The group reading sessions support the children well and help them develop new word skills. In writing lessons there is sharply focused teaching in some classes which introduces new ideas or builds on earlier ones through lively discussions and interesting tasks. In other lessons the tasks are sometimes undemanding and the children are easily distracted. Some of the teachers do not provide the right level of work to challenge the children and speed their progress.

18. The pupils with special educational needs have a suitable curriculum in line with their individual educational programmes. These focus appropriately on aspects of literacy and numeracy and on the improvement of behaviour and concentration. The teachers work in collaboration with the special educational needs co-ordinator to provide appropriate work. The class teachers oversee this work, which is sometimes supported by the classroom assistants and sometimes by pupils being withdrawn to work with the co-ordinator or the special educational needs assistant. There is very good liaison between the class teachers and the special educational needs staff. The pupils receive very good support from the special educational needs staff and this allows them to gain in confidence and make good progress.

19. The higher attaining pupils' needs are often met well in both key stages but this is not always a successful focus in lessons. Many lessons have a good pace and challenging tasks are set to extend the learning of the higher attaining children. For example, in many mathematics lessons the tasks are different for groups of children depending on their earlier learning and this speeds their progress. In other lessons the pace drops and the opportunities to stretch the higher attaining children are missed. Occasionally opportunities are lost because the teachers do not build on the enthusiasm or the knowledge of the children.

20. Teaching that is good or better was seen in most subjects. High quality teaching occurs in English, mathematics, history, geography, science, physical education, design technology and information communications technology. Some of the teachers are good in many subjects while others are good in some subjects and weaker in others.

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

21. The school meets its statutory requirements and teaches all subjects, including religious education, although some programmes of study for information communications technology are insufficiently developed. The curriculum has been reorganised since the last inspection as the coverage had become less thorough during recent years. There were few schemes of work at the time of the previous inspection and these are now in place. The school fills out its own schemes with the schemes provided nationally. Although there are still some weaknesses to be managed, the overall quality of the curriculum is satisfactory and the needs of the pupils are met.

22. There is an appropriate emphasis given to the core subjects of English, mathematics and science and the rest of the curriculum is also given adequate time. The timetabling of literacy and numeracy lessons to follow

immediately upon one another, producing two solid hours of concentrated effort, is a factor in the flagging pace in some of the lessons. The other subjects are taught in short blocks of several lessons a week and then left for a number of weeks before being taught again. This system is working effectively for most of the subjects but does not provide frequent enough lessons in information communications technology for the unsatisfactory standards to be improved. The provision for information communications technology is much improved since the last inspection as a new computer room has been opened and there are sufficient computers for the children. The school is waiting to join the National Grid for Learning and this scheme will fund new resources. However, there are many children with below average skills and understanding in this subject who need regular and frequent opportunities to use the computers in order to raise their standards. The provision for design technology, which was unsatisfactory at the time of the last inspection, has not been sufficiently developed and remains unsatisfactory.

23. The school has successfully adapted the nationally recommended strategies for literacy and numeracy in Key Stage 1 and is providing an effective programme of activities to develop key skills in reading writing and number work. In Key Stage 2 the numeracy strategy is effective but the literacy strategy has had insufficient impact in writing. The activities used to teach all the core skills are particularly rich in Year 2 and in the teaching of numeracy in Years 5 and 6.

24. The foundation curriculum for the children in the nursery and reception classes has been reorganised to take account of the new early learning goals. The curriculum is challenging for the children although the style of learning, which is based on the nursery provision, may soon become insufficiently challenging for all the reception children as they gain in maturity and learning. The school's new early years department is planning many opportunities to build smoothly on the good nursery provision. The provision for language and literacy is sound but more attention needs to be given to speaking and listening. Personal and social development is provided for appropriately through the teaching. The provision for mathematics and physical development is good and it is sound for creative development and knowledge and understanding of the world.

25. The school provides a limited range of extra-curricular activities, almost all sport, but there is very good provision for the children before and after school in a club provided by the school and paid for by the parents. The range of extra activities is small and a number of parents expressed their concern through the questionnaires and at the meeting with the registered inspector. There are new plans for homework and parents have been informed of the work the children are expected to do. The plans include an appropriate range of work.

Personal development

26. The school makes sound provision for the pupils' personal, social and health education, as it did at the time of the last inspection. There is a good, new programme for citizenship and health education which has been introduced this term and circle time provides regular opportunities to discuss many topics. There is appropriate provision for sex education across the school and there are plans for work on drugs awareness.

27. There is a good range of links with the community, which are often of benefit not only to the children but also to those adults involved. Through the volunteer readers scheme, for example, the pupils gain valuable additional help with their reading and get to hear first hand accounts of the volunteers' experiences such as life during the war. Some volunteers too are able to use their work in school as part of courses to gain additional qualifications. The school takes advantage of local facilities and businesses as well as the cultural opportunities available in Birmingham to broaden the curriculum for its pupils.

28. The school liaises appropriately with receiving secondary schools to enable its pupils to settle smoothly into the next stage of their education. There is little communication between the nursery and the playgroup on the school's site but there are good links with the children's families and these enable the youngest children to

transfer easily. Good relationships have been developed with those colleges whose students work at the school, so that teachers are provided with a good source of support in their classrooms.

Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development

29. Overall the standards of the spiritual, moral, social and cultural aspects of the school are sound. The moral and social aspects are good and stronger than the spiritual and cultural aspects. The last inspection report indicated that there was good provision in all these areas.

30. Spiritual development is promoted appropriately through the daily act of collective worship. There is a programme for worship that effectively links the key stage assemblies with the classroom acts of worship. In some instances the pupils' recollections of previous acts of worship are used successfully to provide continuity and progression. There were few instances of spirituality observed during these sessions and generally the pupils were given insufficient opportunities to reflect. In one Year 3's collective worship session the children were given the opportunity to think quietly about opportunities to say thank you to someone during the day. The vast majority of assemblies are Christian in character and emphasise values such as belief, caring, sharing and respect. There are some instances of visitors leading assemblies, such as the clergy, who enable pupils to see how faith influences people's lives. The assembly programme shows very few references to other cultures or world religions. The effective links which the school has developed with some local churches make a positive contribution to the pupils' spiritual development. Some lessons provide opportunities for children to develop spiritual moments and opportunities to 'wonder' and there are examples of this in history, geography and religious education lessons.

31. The fostering of a moral code is well developed in most classes by an effective school code of behaviour that is promoted and reinforced consistently. Each class reflects upon the school's code and creates its own classroom code. Rewards and sanctions are also discussed by the classes and restated on classroom notice boards. In the classes of the older pupils, work relating to citizenship and personal and social education has resulted in the pupils devising rules for their own families. The rewards and punishments are fairly and consistently applied. The emphasis is upon positive reinforcement of good behaviour and pupils enjoy having good work and acts acknowledged by their teachers and their peers. This is undertaken within the classroom and at a weekly assembly which celebrates good work. Opportunities are also provided for the pupils to reflect on their behaviour and its effect upon others. The religious education and the personal and social education programmes are also structured to teach the children about moral issues, fairness and justice. Through their behaviour in class and about the school, as well as in discussion of moral issues, the children show that they understand the differences between right and wrong. They generally treat each other and adults with courtesy and respect. They co-operate well together. Some of the higher attaining pupils help other children spontaneously and show kindness. The school has also recently introduced a mediation project to give pupils the skills to reduce conflict.

32. The pupils' social development is promoted and developed through a broad range of school activities. They are given many opportunities to take on responsibilities, such as becoming a prefect or classroom monitor, mediating to improve playground behaviour, setting up assemblies and, in particular, through membership of the school council. The children take these responsibilities seriously and are pleased to discuss their roles and responsibilities with visitors. The school is currently developing further initiatives such as the anti-bullying policy. Some curriculum activities are used successfully to foster the pupils' social development. The Year 5 and 6 classes have created interesting displays to celebrate interests and aspects of 'About Me' which raises their self esteem. The school has an extensive programme of residential visits from Year 2 to Year 6 which help to develop independence. There is a small range of before and after-school clubs and activities, which are mainly sporting but include a computer club and reading support. The school runs various seasonal sports teams. The broad range of groupings employed by teachers in the classroom is used successfully to promote social and co-

operative skills. The school has developed good links with the community. The police and fire service visit school and there are links with senior citizens, who are visited and visit the school to share their experiences with the pupils. The community uses the school buildings and parents come to school to share educational activities through the 'Inspire' project. Each year the children are actively involved in supporting a wide range of charitable organisations through activities and functions to raise money. Staff relationships with the pupils are good. The school is a community where all children are valued.

33. The school has made sound provision for the pupils to develop their experience of the local cultural tradition through visits to the theatre and visits from peripatetic actors. Many visits to locations for learning are included in the curriculum, such as museums, galleries, historical locations and geographical field trips, both locally and further afield. Some opportunities are provided for the pupils to examine works of famous artists. They are introduced to the works of famous composers through listening to music in lessons and sometimes in assemblies and hearing live performances. Insufficient use is made of music in assemblies and some opportunities are missed. Some opportunities are provided for the pupils' wider cultural development through aspects of religious education where other world religions are studied but the children's awareness of the range of cultures represented in our society is under developed and opportunities are not provided for the children to develop their understanding. The school's resources for multi culture and other world religions are of good quality and are being extended but are not currently used to create displays in public areas to show the beliefs, traditions and religious artefacts from other faiths.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

34. Since the last inspection, the school has continued to work hard to ensure the well-being of its pupils and this is done effectively. One of its strengths in this work is the use of the special needs co-ordinator to oversee concerns and to call on the services of outside agencies when necessary. This is very successful. Many of the policies for pastoral care are outdated and no longer reflect nor guide practice in the school, but those which have been recently revised are good and helpful. The attendance policy, for example, is known to staff, parents and pupils and is closely followed in the school's daily life. This means that staff are able to monitor absence and lateness accurately and target the help of the educational welfare officer where it is most needed. The school is currently focusing on improving the management of behaviour in class and in the playground. It has introduced some good, imaginative new initiatives, such as the mediation scheme which helps pupils to help one another in sorting out their differences. At present most staff manage behaviour effectively and consistently, although in some classes the strategies used are not always successful in motivating and controlling all the children. The school responds quickly and firmly to any instances of bullying or racism and makes good use of specialist support such as the welfare officer to do this.

35. The school's daily routines run smoothly. Lunchtimes are efficiently organised and the young children in the reception class are given very caring and attentive support from the midday and kitchen staff to enable them to get used to the occasion. Similar concern for the youngest children in the school is also evident in the nursery. There are good induction procedures for the new children including staggered entry and home visits. This means that the children can quickly settle in and feel at home. The school has only just begun to build up files on all the pupils' personal and academic development but most of the teachers and support staff know their children and are aware of their strengths and weaknesses.

36. Procedures for child protection are satisfactory. There is a named responsible teacher and local guidelines are followed. The headteacher has also carried out training this term for all the staff. The children are taught about keeping safe through their personal, social and health education and in assemblies. Arrangements for administering first aid are appropriate. Good new procedures for health and safety have been recently introduced and the school is kept very clean and is well maintained by the caretaker and his cleaning staff. The types of locks and bolts on the outer doors in each corridor, while offering good security from intruders, present

problems if children need to get out of the building in an emergency.

37. The school has improved its procedures for the assessment of the pupils' attainment and progress but there are still weaknesses. There are effective systems to track the children's progress over time by comparing test results at the end of each year. The information collected is used in Key Stage 2 to place the children in sets for English and mathematics. The results of the national tests for Year 2 and Year 6 are closely examined and the school has recently drawn valuable conclusions from this. Detailed analysis has revealed that the low test results for English are due to serious underachievement by the boys. The school has acted quickly on these findings and secured funding to improve the standards reached by boys.

38. The mathematics co-ordinator has introduced an effective system to set the children targets in numeracy and check if the targets are achieved. This information is to be used to set further targets. It will also be used to check if the children understood their work and if more help is needed. The school plans to extend this system to support the literacy curriculum. There are no other strategies in place to assess the attainment and progress of individual children as they move through the school. As a result there is little information to help the teachers set work of the right standards at the beginning of the year. The reading records kept by the teachers give insufficient detail about how the children are learning to read and what they need to learn next. The teachers' marking is usually up to date but rarely gives the children advice on how to improve their work.

39. The school's provision for special educational needs is very good. Contacts with external agencies are very good and all the staff are very well informed about individual pupil needs. The documentation shows that the annual and transitional reviews are rigorously carried out. The parents are well informed by the school of their child's progress and the provision that the school makes. Parents contribute to assessments and attend annual reviews of statements.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

40. Since the time of the last inspection the school has maintained positive relationships with the majority of its parents. They feel that their children are happy at school, that they are making progress and that the school is approachable. These views are well founded. The pupils enjoy their lessons and the other activities offered by the school and they learn effectively. The teachers, support staff, administrative staff and the headteacher are all readily accessible to parents and deal with them cheerfully and sympathetically. Some parents have concerns about the use of homework and about the links the school has with them but these concerns are not found to be justified by the inspection evidence. Homework is used well to extend classwork in some classrooms and new information for parents about homework has just been made available. The school works hard to establish good links with its parent community. The worries expressed by some parents about behaviour, particularly in the playground, are partly upheld by the inspection but the school takes these worries seriously and is taking positive steps to eliminate unacceptable behaviour. A very small number of parents have very negative views about many aspects of school life but these were found to be unjustified by the inspection team and are unhelpful to the school.

41. The school has developed some good strategies to involve the parents in its work and in their children's learning. The 'Inspire' workshops are a very good example of this in which parents and children study aspects of the curriculum together, with the support of staff. The school also makes efforts to involve parents in initiatives such as its work on mediation and drugs awareness. The before and after school club indicates how the school tries to be of use to the parents. This facility is very valuable to those parents with jobs outside the home.

42. The school provides the parents with a satisfactory range and amount of information, although it is planning to overhaul a number of its documents, such as the prospectus and the governors' annual report. The prospectus contains all the details required by law, although there are a few minor omissions from the governors' report. The topic letters sent out this term are a good idea as they tell the parents what their children will be

covering and suggest ways they can help them. Reports to the parents on their children's progress are satisfactory overall. They explain in detail the skills the children have learned in each subject and make some suggestions for improvement. However, there is no consistent target setting and standards achieved are not made clear. Consequently, the parents do not know exactly how well their children are doing or what they need to do to improve. The parents of pupils with special educational needs are given every opportunity to find out how their children are progressing and to be involved in their future development.

43. The parents make a satisfactory contribution to the work of the school and their children's learning. A small core of committed individuals works regularly in classes, while a good number has volunteered to become involved with the newly formed Friends of Stanville School. Many attend parent teacher consultations, hear their children read and ensure that homework is completed. This supports the efforts of the teachers and helps the children to make progress. The negative influence of a very few parents is well deflected by the school, although this can be time-consuming and detracts from the school's everyday priorities.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

44. There has been a change in the leadership of the school since the last inspection. The new headteacher has been at the school for only two terms and she has already achieved much in this short period of time. She has a clear focus on improving the quality of teaching and learning and the recent emphasis on staff training and development in numeracy has already led to higher standards of attainment in mathematics. Despite the overriding problem of the school's financial difficulties, the headteacher has made a good start in improving management and communication structures. She has refined the school development planning process, monitored and evaluated the work in classrooms and managed the budget. She has been capably supported by the senior management team and by the governing body, who are committed and hard working. The governors successfully fulfil the responsibilities required by law, apart from aspects of information communications technology, and have an accurate picture of the school's strengths and weaknesses. They analyse the school's results with the headteacher, for example, and discuss the reasons for the under-achievement of boys. The special needs governor plays a very strong and supportive role in the school, working closely with the special needs co-ordinator. Special needs provision is very well led in the school. The co-ordinator focuses on raising standards of attainment and behaviour and liaises very well with class teachers about the pupils in their charge.

45. The role of the curriculum co-ordinators in the school has been partly developed since the time of the last inspection, when it was a key issue for improvement. They now all have their own budgets to manage and are required to contribute subject plans to the school development plan. The headteacher is keen to allow individuals to take on responsibility for standards and quality through delegation. She intends to strengthen the roles of both co-ordinators and members of the senior management team in this way. However, job descriptions and individual targets are not yet clear enough to enable key staff to take extra responsibility with confidence and in some areas, such as the structuring of the timetables or the composition of classes, this has not worked effectively. The headteacher has made a good start in evaluating the quality of teaching in every class and is now well placed to acknowledge some of the very good practice within the school. She is planning to share the best work throughout the school. The staff are committed to school improvement and the headteacher has begun to create a sense of unity and shared aims. There is now an effective system of staff briefings, staff meetings and senior management team meetings, providing an appropriate structure for communication. There is also a planned programme of training. The school development planning process has been successfully opened out for consultation amongst all members of the school community, including pupils, using the school council, parents and governors. The priorities contained in the school development plan are chosen well and are relevant to the school's needs, such as assessment, self-evaluation and behaviour management.

46. The school's financial management is now good. The headteacher, with the support of the local authority finance officer, has got to grips with the school's deficit and has brought spending under control. As a result the

school's budget is due to balance this year, with only the historical deficit to be carried forward. All expenditure is strictly monitored and all avenues of additional funding are fully explored. The standards fund and special needs funding are used well to help improve the standards and provision. The many recommendations of last year's audit report have been steadily and systematically tackled so that the school now has proper and workable financial systems and the staff involved are fully accountable. The governors are now kept very well up-to-date with the school's financial position to enable them to make informed spending decisions. Administrative staff provide good support to the school, liaising well with staff, pupils, parents and visitors. The school applies the principles of best value well. As a result of the budgetary difficulties, the school has become accustomed to considering the value for money obtained in every decision made. Results are compared with other similar schools, services offered by the school are assessed for feasibility and the parents are consulted on school matters such as the school development plan and the quality of the nursery provision.

47. The school is appropriately staffed by suitably trained and qualified teachers to meet the needs of the National Curriculum. Recent changes in staffing have resulted in some internal reorganisation and temporary appointments in which the teachers' expertise is not well matched to the pupils' needs. It has also been necessary to arrange temporary leadership of some curriculum areas. The temporary posts are due to be permanently filled soon. The teaching and support staff who work with pupils with special educational needs are experienced and well qualified and make a significant contribution to the pupils' progress. The number of classroom support staff hours for the size of the school is below average but these staff have a positive impact on the school's work. Both classroom support staff and special needs support staff are effectively inducted into the school's work by the special needs co-ordinator. The staff with responsibility for administration, caretaking and cleaning make very effective contributions to the running of the school.

48. There has been some training for lunchtime supervisors and more is planned. In line with performance management policy, the new headteacher has conducted classroom observations of most of the teachers and followed these with personal interviews and updated job descriptions. The newly qualified teacher has an induction programme that meets the requirements. Much of the recent inservice training for the teachers has concentrated on the introduction of the national numeracy strategy, to beneficial effect. There is a history of teachers and support staff undertaking substantial further training to enhance their expertise, for example, support staff who have undertaken national vocational qualifications and curriculum leaders who took part in leadership courses. The record of the school in encouraging parent helpers to study for qualifications and become classroom assistants is good. The school received an Investors in People award for its training programmes in 1998.

49. The school's accommodation is very good overall. It is spacious and provides rooms for specialist teaching. Some classrooms are cramped and sometimes made more so by the furniture arrangements. Neither the library nor the information and communications technology suite are timetabled for use by classes and as a result they are much under used. The under use of the library was criticised in the previous inspection report. Access to the hall is constrained by the allocation of too much time, by the catering managers, to lunchtime preparation and clearing up. The internal decoration of the school is in good order and it is kept very clean. Good use is made of classroom and corridor walls for displaying and celebrating the pupils' work and for recording events in the life of the school. The grounds are also spacious, providing ample hard and grassed areas for breaks and for physical education including an adventure playground for the younger children and some seats. A pair of temporary classrooms provides facilities for a pre- and post-school club for pupils and for a playgroup. The school has plans to improve upon the bleakness of the larger playground. The external decoration of the building is in a poor state and the surface of the larger playground is in need of attention.

50. There is a satisfactory range of resources for most subjects and these are mostly well organised. There is unsatisfactory provision for science and design technology. This restricts the children's access to the full range of activities needed for these subjects. The library has a barely adequate non-fiction collection for the size of the

school and some of these books are out of date. The fiction collection in the library and for more advanced readers is unsatisfactory. The information and communications technology suite is equipped with mostly second-hand computers but these are adequate until the school qualifies for grants under the national grid for learning scheme. Good use is made of external resources, for example, visiting sports coaches, the local swimming pool and library and educational visits that enhance the school's curriculum.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

51. In order to maintain the improvements already put in place by the school the following points should be included in their action plan by the headteacher, staff and governors:

- (1) raise the standards and improve the pace of progress in English in Key Stage 2 by:
 - expecting clearer and longer answers from the children and teaching them how to use subject terminology more accurately and confidently; (paragraphs 67, 81)
 - improving the teaching of spelling, grammar, punctuation and handwriting and ensure the children write at greater length and to a higher standard in the extended writing lessons; (paragraph 73)
- (2) improve the standards in information communications technology in Key Stages 1 and 2 by:
 - implementing the key issues for action from the last inspection;
 - ensuring all classes use the computer room and the resources regularly to learn and develop their skills, knowledge and understanding; (paragraphs 105,106)
 - providing training for the teachers in using the current resources; (paragraphs 105, 108)
 - developing ways of using information communications technology appropriately in the curriculum subjects; (paragraphs 84, 89, 106)
- (3) strengthen and clarify the role of key teachers by:
 - ensuring targets and timescales are included in job descriptions and pinpointing required developments; (paragraph 45)
 - providing increased opportunities for subject co-ordinators to disseminate the best practice throughout the school; (paragraph 45)
- (4) improve the assessment procedures by:
 - checking and analysing and recording the children's standards and progress as they move through the school, especially in the core subjects of English and science; (paragraph 38)
 - developing ways of informing the next teacher about each child's standards and progress. (paragraph 38)
- (5) improve the provision for developing an understanding of cultural diversity by:
 - widening the scope of assemblies to consider other religions as well as Christianity; (paragraph 30)
 - including greater opportunities in religious education lessons to compare world religions; (paragraphs 33, 121)
 - displaying more widely the range of artefacts that represent different cultures. (paragraph 33)

In addition to the issues above, the following are less significant weaknesses that should be considered for inclusion in the action plan:

- improve the provision for design technology and ensure satisfactory standards of attainment by:
 - providing a range of basic and essential resources to support the subject; (paragraph 97)
 - providing appropriate training and support for teachers to improve their subject knowledge; (paragraph 108);
- develop the provision for the children's social and emotional development, speaking, listening and writing in the reception classes; (paragraphs 55, 57, 58)
- improve the emergency exits in the school; (paragraph 36)
- improve resources in science (paragraph 90) and in the library; (paragraph 71)
- improve the children's attendance figures. (paragraph 11)

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	65
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	56

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
9	12	34	39	6	0	0

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

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	15	259
Number of full-time pupils eligible for free school meals	0	92

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	0	3
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	1	91

English as an additional language	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	9

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	18
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	18

Attendance

Authorised absence	%
School data	92.9
National comparative data	94.1

Unauthorised absence	%
School data	1.0
National comparative data	0.5

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

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 1

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	1999	23	20	43

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	19	19	20
	Girls	19	19	19
	Total	38	38	39
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	88 (72)	88 (81)	91 (72)
	National	82 (80)	83 (81)	87 (84)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	17	18	19
	Girls	19	19	19
	Total	36	37	38
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	84 (81)	86 (60)	88 (81)
	National	82 (81)	86 (85)	87 (86)

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

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 2

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	1999	22	21	43

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	8	10	16
	Girls	15	18	17
	Total	23	28	33
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	53 (47)	65 (43)	77 (56)
	National	70 (64)	69 (58)	78 (69)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	9	13	18
	Girls	17	18	18
	Total	26	31	36
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	59 (54)	70 (49)	82 (56)
	National	68 (64)	69 (64)	75 (70)

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

Ethnic background of pupils

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	5
Black – African heritage	0
Black – other	0
Indian	2
Pakistani	4
Bangladeshi	0
Chinese	0
White	218
Any other minority ethnic group	15

This table refers to pupils of compulsory school age only.

Exclusions in the last school year

	Fixed period	Permanent
Black – Caribbean heritage	0	0
Black – African heritage	0	0
Black – other	0	0
Indian	0	0
Pakistani	0	0
Bangladeshi	0	0
Chinese	0	0
White	0	3
Other minority ethnic groups	0	0

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

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers and classes: YR – Y6

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	13
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	20
Average class size	27

Education support staff: YR – Y6

Total number of education support staff	5
Total aggregate hours worked per week	100

Qualified teachers and support staff: nursery

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	1
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	32

Total number of education support staff	1
Total aggregate hours worked per week	30

Number of pupils per FTE adult	15
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FTE means full-time equivalent.

Financial information

Financial year	1999
	£
Total income	651582
Total expenditure	661533
Expenditure per pupil	2121
Balance brought forward from previous year	-11596
Balance carried forward to next year	-21547

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out

220

Number of questionnaires returned

26

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	65	23	8	4	0
My child is making good progress in school.	61	27	8	4	0
Behaviour in the school is good.	46	39	11	4	0
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	42	31	15	12	0
The teaching is good.	54	38	8	0	0
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	50	35	11	4	0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	65	23	8	4	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	50	23	8	4	0
The school works closely with parents.	35	42	19	4	0
The school is well led and managed.	35	39	11	4	11
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	38	46	11	0	4
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	46	31	8	11	4

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

AREAS OF LEARNING FOR CHILDREN IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

52. The overall attainment of the vast majority of the children in the Foundation Stage is unsatisfactory, as it was at the time of the last inspection. Although the children come into the nursery with a range of attainment, their overall level of ability is well below average except in aspects of physical development which is average. In the reception class the children's overall level is below average. They make good progress in both classes and leave reception with average attainment in mathematics, creative development, physical development, early reading and aspects of knowledge and understanding of the world. Their attainment in social and emotional development, speaking and listening and early writing is unsatisfactory and these areas do not receive enough emphasis. The main factor in the children's good rate of progress has been the good teaching they receive from the teachers and nursery nurses but their unsatisfactory attainment in speaking and listening reduces the children's success in the other areas.

53. At the time of the inspection the nursery children were beginning their induction into the school and had all arrived by the end of the inspection week. The reception children are in two classes with teachers new to the age group. The Foundation Stage curriculum is planned along identical lines for all three classes which includes a good balance of directed activities and opportunities for investigation and play. There is a draft policy that gives good guidance and clearly identifies the way the children will learn. There is insufficient information about how the older or higher attaining children will work towards the National Curriculum during the year.

54. There are good resources in the nursery class but the reception class has fewer resources and the children have less choice. There is little use made of natural or everyday objects, which would be familiar to the children and would usefully increase the range of resources. The teaching and learning in the outside areas is under developed and concentrates almost entirely on physical development.

Personal, social and emotional development

55. This area of learning is given appropriate attention but many of the children are unlikely to reach the early learning goals by the time they leave the foundation stage. In the nursery the new children play by themselves exploring the classroom. They usually play near others and watch each other but rarely work together. On one occasion however one boy helped another lift a pushchair over the train set in order for him to push his toy away. The nursery children have drinks and a biscuit together and almost all of them understand they can only have one biscuit. They wait so that they can all begin together and sit comfortably with the staff. In the reception class the children are interested in each other and play nearby each other happily but there is very little co-operation. The children tend to look after their own needs rather than consider others. For example, when playing together they sometimes take the nearest ball rather than run after their own and push each other off resources if they want a turn. They are aware of the classroom rules and routines but many of the children are slow in responding to instructions and show very immature behaviour. For example, in whole class sessions children try to concentrate but have difficulty in sitting still for many minutes and are very easily distracted. Some of the children in reception try to play together but do not know how to respond to the immature behaviour of others.

56. The teaching in this area is satisfactory overall with some good teaching in both the nursery and reception. The staff respond appropriately to most situations and show the children how to behave. They are encouraged to sit together and shown how to share. The teachers insist that the children listen and encourage them to contribute to lessons. Sometimes the teacher's questioning is not clear enough for the children to respond confidently and the children often remain silent or point rather than speaking. The reception children are not

expected to pour their own drinks or pass the biscuits round and so they lose this opportunity to develop their social skills.

Communications, language and literacy

57. The pupils' attainments in this area are mixed. The children's speaking and listening and writing development is below average and they are unlikely to achieve the expected goals. They are likely to reach them in reading. Many of the children in all three classes have unclear speech and it is hard to understand them. In play activities they usually speak confidently to the adults and a minority of them speak at length. However, many of the children communicate with very short statements or actions and often respond to questions with single words. When one boy was asked what he liked about the outside play area he was unable to respond but showed his preferences by running around a track repeatedly calling "See!" meaning, "Look at me because this is what I like." The children confuse tenses and use a small range of nouns and verbs. There are areas for the children to play write but they do not often choose to play there. In the nursery the children are able to use the pencils and make scribble patterns but there is little understanding of the purposes of writing. In the reception classes the children are beginning to copy their teachers' writing and attempt some of their own but this is still at a very early stage. They understand the meaning of writing and know that words are different from pictures. The children respond well to books. They enjoy stories and listen to each other's replies to questions. They are able to relate to the events in the story and link stories with their own experiences.

58. The teachers show good skills in telling and reading stories to the classes. The lessons are interesting and the children are encouraged to contribute. In the reception classes the children look at the words and learn to follow a storyline. The children are given many opportunities to speak and listen but this weaker area does not receive sufficient attention. The staff often accept single word answers and do not demonstrate longer responses. There are occasions when the children are not provided with clear enough questions and they become confused and reluctant to answer. Writing is taught systematically and the teachers provide work for the children to copy but there are few occasions when the teachers demonstrate and explain the processes of writing. The records for the children from the nursery have been mislaid so the teachers in the reception classes cannot identify the early stage of skill and understanding reached by the children.

Mathematical development

59. The children's overall attainment in mathematics is average and they are likely to meet the nationally expected goals. Most of the children arrive in the school with well below average development in mathematics but they make good progress during the Foundation Stage. In the nursery they listen closely when the teacher talks about how many biscuits there are and checks with them if enough drinks have been poured. During their play activities many of the children explore the mathematical resources such as shaped bricks which fit precisely into holes on a board and toy tape measures. Many children have poor spatial awareness. For example, they will try and push toys through gaps that are much too narrow. In reception the children try hard to match fingers to numbers in counting rhymes and a few are able to count forwards and backwards to five during the songs. They can copy repeating patterns of two colours but are unable to explain what they have done.

60. The teaching of mathematics is satisfactory and sometimes good. In the nursery there are many appropriate activities provided that challenge the children's thinking. There are fewer resources in reception and the teachers show less experience but the direct teaching challenges the children appropriately. The teachers question the children and show what is to be done, for example, in creating alternate patterns, but sometimes the resources are insufficiently stimulating. Good teaching was seen when the children were given colours to hold and asked to rearrange each other to form the correct pattern. This captured everyone's interest and good learning occurred.

Knowledge and understanding of the world

61. The children's attainment in this area is mixed but it is below average overall. Although some of the children arrive in the nursery with an appropriate awareness of the world around them, the majority of the children are unfamiliar with paint, crayons and construction toys and have little awareness of their own neighbourhood. They use a range of musical instruments to make and repeat sounds and find this interesting and exciting. In the reception class the children show an average understanding when using the computer and are able to control the mouse properly when making pictures. They can describe how they travel to school but have a limited range of vocabulary when talking about transport. During a story session the children understood that pictures of snow meant that the story was about a cold day but had little more to contribute. By the end of reception the children can draw pictures of plants they have seen and seeds they have planted but the range of work is limited.

62. The teaching in this area is satisfactory overall and it is good with the computers. Most of the learning in the nursery comes from the good discussions with the teacher and nursery nurse and the group sessions in reception. The staff draw information from the children through careful questioning and remind them about what has already been said. When the children work in smaller groups the learning is sometimes less successful as the groups are very small, sometimes two children, and there is little discussion. The teachers show sensitivity in encouraging the children and helping them to recall the discussion. The play activities support this area well in the nursery and the children explore and investigate the resources. In the reception classes there is unsupported play that sometimes does not extend the children's learning and the children repeat earlier activities.

Creative development

63. The children's attainment is in line with the expected standards for their age but the programme of activities is limited in the scope it gives them for individual expression. Much of the work in the nursery is directed by the staff and the children follow earlier designs or contribute small parts to a larger picture. When the children paint freely they show an interest in the colours and pleasure in using the resources but their attainment is below average. In the reception classes the children show a satisfactory control of the resources as they fill in their own shapes with blocks of colour. They concentrate well on these task but do not talk much about their work when the staff join them. The teachers support the creative tasks well. They ask questions and enable the children to increase the detail of their work. A computer program supports the children's art work but, as yet, the children are simply exploring the resource and making sweeping random patterns as they learn to control the mouse. In the nursery the children have free access to a range of musical instruments and they use these to investigate sound.

Physical development

64. The children have a satisfactory level of physical skills linked to their movements. They are active and use appropriate control. In their outside play they move with awareness of space and avoid collisions well. They move with care and precision. The nursery children can direct their bikes and scooters well and co-ordinated themselves effectively to use the toys with a partner. The reception children use the climbing equipment appropriately and they show satisfactory balance and poise. They can throw and kick balls and are beginning to learn how to catch them. When using small tools the children in the nursery show less skill than is typical but in reception the children have learned to use the resources confidently and to control them carefully. The staff provide frequent opportunities for the development of physical skills and offer a range of resources. The outside sessions in the reception classes focus entirely on physical development and are inappropriately regarded as extra playtime. This situation is under review and greater teacher intervention is planned.

ENGLISH

65. By the end of Key Stage 1 the pupils have made good progress and begun to catch up with national averages in reading and to exceed them in writing. When compared with similar schools, the 1999 figures show the pupils' attainments in reading to be in line with the average and in writing to be well above average. These are good results for the pupils, many of whom enter Key Stage 1 with well below average skills in English. At the time of the inspection, comparative data was not available for the 2000 tests but the indications are that the standards in Key Stage 1 have been maintained. The overall trend for Key Stage 1 is upwards but the percentage of pupils reaching the higher level 3 in reading is well below the national figure, especially for boys. Whilst the overall percentage of pupils reaching level 3 in writing is above average, this is not true for the girls. At the end of Key Stage 2, the 1999 national test figures showed well below national average attainments in the English tests, especially for boys. When compared with similar schools, the results are still below the average. The 2000 figures indicate some improvement upon 1999. Since the last inspection, standards in Key Stage 1 have been maintained but not in Key Stage 2 in writing.

66. As measured by the National Curriculum tests and supported by the evidence of this inspection, Key Stage 2 does not build well enough upon Key Stage 1, especially in writing. The test results at the time of the previous inspection were similar to those reported now for Key Stage 1 and better for Key Stage 2. The national trend is of annual improvement in the test scores but the school's results in Key Stage 2 have not kept pace with those improvements, especially for the boys.

Speaking and listening

67. The children's listening skills are satisfactory in both key stages. They mostly pay close attention to their teachers but are less good at listening to other children. This is often because the teachers ask most of the questions and the responses are directed at them, rather than the rest of the class. The children's speaking skills are mostly unsatisfactory. They too often communicate in one-word answers and are not often expected by their teachers to develop sufficiently accurate or extended speech. In lessons where the teachers demand fuller responses and correct speech, the children's speaking skills are much improved. When reading aloud, some children are developing an expressive tone to enliven the text, but this is not the expectation of all of the teachers. The school has recognised these weaknesses and introduced "circle time" in part to promote improvements in speaking and listening. The children do not lack confidence and are happy to participate in the lessons and in group work and to volunteer ideas and answers.

Reading

68. Most of the children make steady progress in their reading through both key stages. Reading skills are successfully taught during the daily literacy lessons and through the group reading sessions. Reading is supported by collections of group and individual reading books which, except for the final stages, are appropriately graded. The children's knowledge of phonics is satisfactory and they have good levels of confidence and interest. The overall picture is of many children reading at about the expected levels for their ages but of few exceeding those levels.

69. A reading programme encourages children to read at home and some parents give good support. There are very effective support structures for children who are reading at below average levels and need extra help. The special needs co-ordinator and her team of support staff are very well organised and skilled and their pupils make good progress. Some children cheerfully attend for extra help before school starts in the morning and several volunteers from a national organisation visit weekly to work with other individuals. Records of the children's progress in reading are sparse and the receiving teachers at the beginning of this academic year were not well enough informed about the levels the pupils have attained.

70. The school's higher attaining, older readers are not sufficiently challenged at the top end of the colour coding system which includes too few of the more demanding books that these pupils need. The fiction collection in the library does not support these readers because it is of poor quality and disorganised and with very limited access. The children do make regular visits to the local public library, however.

71. The school is fortunate in having space for a library. This is furnished with suitable book cases and the non-fiction collection is organised according to the standard Dewey system. The non-fiction collection is barely adequate for a school of this size and some of the books are out of date. It is augmented for some subjects by books in topic collections in the teachers' resources room but these books are not accessible to the children, other than when the topic is being taught. The fiction collection in the library is in a poor state. There is a computerised loan system for the non-fiction that has yet to be extended to include the fiction and which, reportedly, has not been in operation for some time. The library is not timetabled for use by classes in the school and, as a result, is rarely visited by pupils. The library co-ordinator has worked hard to ensure that the non-fiction is properly organised and there is no reason for the library to be so little used.

Writing

72. The standard of children's writing in Key Stage 1 is good. It is well above the average for similar schools. Writing is not well enough developed in Key Stage 2 and the standard reached by Year 6 is unsatisfactory. Few of the current Year 6 pupils appear to be on course for average levels of attainment in the National Curriculum tests in the summer 2001, unless they make considerable improvements in the time remaining.

73. In both key stages, the school has rightly built into its timetables extra sessions for the children to develop their skills in extended writing. These are more successful in Key Stage 1 than in Key Stage 2. In Key Stage 1, the purpose of the sessions is capitalised upon so that the children have more opportunities to write at greater length than can be provided in the daily literacy lessons. In Key Stage 2, some of these sessions are merely extensions to the literacy lessons, with too much instruction from the teacher and too little time for the children to write. Samples of extended writing from last year show some good examples but the extent of the teachers' intervention is not always clear. During the inspection, many of the Years 5 and 6 pupils, when unaided, demonstrated inadequate skills of spelling, grammar and punctuation. Their handwriting is often poor. Opportunities for extended writing in other subjects are not always grasped. There are some good examples from some religious education lessons but the work in history and geography from last year, reveals few examples of sustained argument, description or analysis. There is little evidence of word processing in the pupils' books from last year.

74. The standard of handwriting is satisfactory at the end of key stage 1 but the children are not taught a joined hand. In Key Stage 2, the teaching of handwriting is spasmodic and too few children adopt joined writing. Many are still at level 2 (the expected level for Year 2) in Year 6. Even where a class does some handwriting practice, the teachers do not insist on this better writing in everyday work, either by the pupils or, in some cases, by the teachers themselves.

General

75. Most children work hard and behave well in their English lessons and most teachers are able to maintain a reasonable pace. The quality of teaching in the literacy lessons ranges from satisfactory to excellent and the average overall is close to good. In these lessons the teachers are effectively implementing the strategies of the national literacy programme. In both key stages, the best lessons were characterised by high expectations of what the children should be able to do and the pupils responded by working hard and meeting their teachers'

expectations. The teachers introduce texts to the children in a stimulating manner and plan interesting activities. As a result the pupils are enthusiastic and make good progress. There are some weaknesses in some of these lessons, including not matching well enough the group tasks to the attainments of the pupils. In the more ordinary lessons there is a tendency for some teachers to talk too much in the opening sections which reduces the time available for the pupils to do their part of the work. The need for more accurately matching the work to the range of pupils' prior attainments is not always recognised in Key Stage 2 despite the sets containing wide differences in attainment. Homework is set regularly, including spelling and reading and, for the older children, tasks from a homework textbook. It has not been possible to judge the effectiveness of the homework as the inspection has fallen too early in the academic year.

76. The teachers' day-to-day assessments are not generally focused on National Curriculum levels so the extent of the children's learning needs as measured by National Curriculum expectations is not well enough known. The marking of children's work is done regularly but varies in quality between the teachers, as it did at the time of the last inspection. The best marking helps the children to see what they need to do to improve their work. The less helpful marking gives praise without explaining why. Records are adequate but not sufficiently used to inform the planning of lessons. During the inspection, several teachers in Key Stage 2 had no information on the attainments of individual children in their classes or sets.

77. The co-ordinator for English is a knowledgeable and expert teacher and a good model for her colleagues. She is keen to promote improvements but has had no non-contact time in which to observe and guide colleagues or to monitor and evaluate standards in the subject although this is planned for later in the term. She collects samples of work but these give but a limited view. There is a separate co-ordinator for the library who has put a great deal of time into its organisation. The two co-ordinators liaise with one another but the roles are too separate.

78. Resources for the teaching of English include a sound range of books for learning to read and an adequate collection of dictionaries and textbooks but a barely adequate non-fiction library collection and unsatisfactory provision of fiction for the more capable readers. The subject is enhanced by theatre trips and visiting authors.

MATHEMATICS

79. The standards achieved by the children at the end of both key stages are above average and they are above average in several of the other classes. Most of the children enter Key Stage 1 with average skills in mathematics. For example, they can count to ten and sometimes beyond and can write the numbers and are beginning early addition and subtraction. Most of them have completed work naming simple shapes and have completed early forms of measurement.

80. By the end of Key Stage 1 the children have made good progress. In the 1999 national tests their attainment was above the national average and well above the average for similar schools. The national trends, over the past four years, are upwards. The school's results in Key Stage 1 have fluctuated above and below the national picture but show an improving standard. In the tests for 2000 the high standards have been maintained with a larger proportion of the children reaching a higher than average level. In 1999 the boys did less well than the girls but the school has largely corrected this. There is still a tendency for the girls to do a little better than the boys which is different from the national picture in which boys and girls reach the same level. At the end of Key Stage 2, the 1999 national tests show a slightly weaker picture than in Key Stage 1, indicating a slower rate of progress. The results matched the national average and were above the average for similar schools. The overall trend in Key Stage 2 is of strong improvement. Until 1999 the results were below or well below average and they have risen sharply during the past year. In the tests for 2000 the results have risen again and are especially good for the higher attaining children but at the time of the inspection there were no

national comparative figures available.

81. The previous inspection reported that the standards of attainment were average in Key Stage 1 and above average in Key Stage 2. The current inspection evidence shows that standards are above average for both the Year 2 and Year 6 children and this particularly highlights the improvements in Key Stage 1. Throughout the school the children are developing confidence in identifying how to work out number problems and calculations and are able to explain what they are doing. In the Year 2 class the children are able to use their numeracy skills to arrange confidently two digit numbers in vertical and horizontal patterns representing parts of a hundred square. They can order random numbers according to value. They are less confident when using mathematics terminology and are just beginning to follow their teacher's example when making reference to terms such as digit, order, value. In the Year 6 class the majority of the children use numbers competently and can play complex games recognising the answers to calculations including fractions, decimals, squares and square roots. They choose a range of methods when deciding how to work out answers and most can use their times tables.

82. The quality of the teaching is satisfactory overall with particularly good teaching in Years 2 and 6. Where the teaching is very good the teachers are very clear about what the children are to learn and they know exactly how to teach it. They have very good knowledge of mathematics themselves and are able to see quickly any difficulties and help the children. The work is challenging and the teachers plan interesting ways of developing the tasks to keep the children well motivated. As a result, the children are becoming confident, particularly in Year 2, about explaining their calculations or number patterns and they work very hard to try to succeed with their tasks. In the more ordinary lessons the children are sometimes not managed so well and often begin chatting together, the work is not always designed for the range of ability groups in the sets and some of the children are not challenged enough. As a result, the children do not make fast enough progress and their standards are not as high as they could be. Where the teaching is unsatisfactory the management of the class is weak and there is too much noise, the children do not listen properly to the teacher and they miss some of the important information. In the lessons they do not work with appropriate attention and make slow progress.

83. All of the teachers prepare their lessons well and plan tasks that are appropriate for most children in the group. In Key Stage 2 the children work in mixed age sets. This means that there are wide age groups and levels of attainment in each set and the work does not always suit the needs of all the children. In addition there are high numbers of children with special educational needs gathered together in some sets and this creates difficulties on occasion. The support staff are very experienced and work very well alongside the teachers to help the children. This arrangement works very well. The children with special needs generally make sound, and sometimes good progress as a result of the careful support they receive.

84. The co-ordinator works well to support mathematics. She is knowledgeable and teaches the subject very well. She has introduced a detailed and useful assessment scheme for mathematics which ensures that there are targets for each class or set to work towards and these are checked regularly to find out how well the children are doing. The teaching has been monitored by both the co-ordinator and the headteacher as a means of raising the standards. The very good teaching that was identified has yet to be disseminated throughout the school. There is very little evidence that other subjects, including information communications technology, are used to support the mathematics curriculum and this is an area already identified by the school for development.

SCIENCE

85. By the end of both key stages, the pupils' attainments in science are above the nationally expected standards although they are less secure in experimental and investigative science in both key stages. The teachers have already recognised this and are working to raise standards in scientific investigation.

86. Analysis of the national tests results for the past four years shows that standards in science in Key Stage 2 have risen from very low in 1996 to above average in 1999. The test results for 2000 show that all the girls achieved the expected level and 30 per cent of them went on to achieve a higher than average level; 80 per cent of the boys achieved the average level with 50 per cent going on to a level 5. Performance at Key Stage 1 in 1999, based upon teacher assessment, indicates that the proportion of pupils achieving level 2 was at the national average but the proportion of children achieving level 3 was below the national average. This is an improvement on the last inspection but the pupils' written work is variable in quality and the presentation is often unsatisfactory.

87. Science is taught well in both key stages. The teaching is good by the end of Key Stage 1 and generally good or very good in Key Stage 2. A characteristic of the teaching of science in both key stages is the practical nature of much of the learning and the stimulating contexts that support the work. The pupils enjoy this approach. They concentrate well and work with an appropriate pace although in a few classes participation in practical activities is too noisy. A Year 2 class used data-capture software together with probes to measure the levels of sound produced by musical instruments. Years 5 and 6 investigated the properties of fabrics to select appropriate materials to make climbing wear. A Year 3 class ate some samples of food to test whether incisors, canine or molar teeth were used to prepare food for digestion. These contexts and others resulted in the pupils being very motivated in their learning. They generally collaborate well in practical tasks and the older pupils demonstrate an ability to organise themselves well in group activities.

88. The teachers have good subject knowledge. The scientific knowledge and understanding are taught securely and the detailed scheme of work ensures coverage of the National Curriculum. This is an improvement since the last inspection. The pupils are taught appropriate scientific language. The scientific recording of investigation methods and findings is generally well taught. The children are taught to use apparatus and equipment correctly and to measure with precision. In experimental and investigative science, the skills of observing, predicting, testing and recording are taught well but the task is frequently illustrative rather than investigative, with the teacher exercising too much control, for example, selecting equipment, structuring experiments and providing the framework for planning and recording the work. These practices limit the pupils' progress in exploring their own ideas, making choices and presenting information in different ways. The curriculum leaders are aware of this weakness and the development of investigative science is a current priority.

89. The lesson structure is based upon the literacy lesson's format and is proving to be effective. The knowledge and skills are clearly identified and the pupils know the purpose of the session. The activity is clearly defined with a time-target and the final session clarifies the learning and consolidates the children's understanding. As a result, the planning is sound and often good. This approach is contributing successfully to the raising of standards. Those pupils with special educational needs are effectively supported in class by well-targeted planning and good special needs teaching and they make good progress. Insufficient opportunities are provided in science for pupils to use computers for data handling and presenting scientific information. The school is now well resourced with data-logging equipment and the work seen in Year 2 illustrates how effectively it can be employed. There are also insufficient opportunities for pupils to use computers for information retrieval, for example, from CD ROMs.

90. The school is moving towards using the optional nationally provided science scheme. In those classes where the scheme has been adopted, the pupils are given more scope to write up accounts and present findings in their own way. Since the last inspection, planning for the long term has improved and is now satisfactory. The school is successfully using results from previous national and other tests to modify teaching and to raise standards. The resources for science are inadequate. This particularly affects the development of investigative science where pupils are expected to select and use resources independently.

91. The subject is currently led by two temporary co-ordinators following the recent departure of the science

subject leader. These co-ordinators have good subject knowledge, high expectations for raising standards and clear intentions for developing investigative science.

ART

92. The pupils' standards of attainment in art in both key stages are average. Displays around the school show that the pupils have developed satisfactory skills in a range of techniques and media. Standards overall have been maintained since the previous inspection, although there is still insufficient three-dimensional work. Only one art lesson was observed. Judgements on the children's attainment are based on teachers' planning, work on display and discussion with teachers and pupils.

93. In the one lesson seen, the activity was well supervised and timely interventions were made when the pupils needed advice. The children showed a sound understanding of the need to evaluate their work. Improvements were seen during the lesson as they learned to mix and blend colours straight onto the paper, producing different hues and tones of hot and cold colours which formed a background to their skeletal tree collages. A strength of the art curriculum is the range of work done in the style of well known artists. The pupils in Year 6 have produced good quality portrait work in the style of Picasso. In Year 2, the pupils base some of their work on that of Matisse and Warhol. This work is of a particularly high standard. Effective links are made with other curriculum areas, for example, pupils in Years 3 and 4 paint portraits of Tudor monarchs as part of their work in history. Younger pupils in Year 1 make prints using leaves and sponges. The pupils show a keen sense of colour and tone through their art work. There are, however, too few opportunities for them to use clay or to work in three dimensions. The children are introduced to the use of sketchbooks but there are inconsistencies in their use and in the quality of the work contained in them throughout the school.

94. The co-ordinator has recently revised the school's policy for art. The policy and the scheme of work give support to teachers when planning their work. The co-ordinator is beginning to make a collection of the pupils' work that is useful when checking the standards that the pupils achieve. There is not yet enough checking of the amount and variety of pupils' work to ensure both consistent progress and that levels of attainment are maintained as children move through the school.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

95. As only one lesson was observed during the inspection and very little work retained from the previous year, it is not possible to form a judgement on standards or on the quality of teaching and learning in design and technology.

96. The previous inspection reported that attainment in design and technology was below national expectations at the end of both key stages and the majority of pupils showed unsatisfactory progress. As other subjects have been given priority since then, the school has taken very little action to improve the provision for design technology.

97. The co-ordinator is able to lead the subject successfully. He has good subject knowledge, which was demonstrated in the one lesson observed. He has correctly identified the training needs for staff and the insufficient and poor quality resources for construction, food and textile technology. He has rightly replaced the school's inadequate scheme of work with the nationally provided scheme and has demonstrated in his own practice how it can be adapted to meet the needs of the school. The work undertaken on shelters, with Years 5 and 6, was well integrated into the history study of the Second World War. It was well planned to ensure construction skills, knowledge and understanding were developed in focused practical tasks. The pupils demonstrated enjoyment and understanding in this lesson. The use of the new 'blocked' timetable provides the

pupils with sufficient time to design, make and evaluate successfully. This is an improvement on the previous timetable and will ensure that the subject is taught regularly in all classes.

GEOGRAPHY

98. The pupils' standards of attainment have been maintained in geography since the last inspection. They remain average in both key stages.

99. Only two lessons were observed in Key Stage 2 and none in Key Stage 1. The inspection judgements are made from an analysis of the pupils' work, the teachers' planning and discussion with pupils and teachers. The pupils in Year 2 show a good knowledge of weather patterns and can use simple maps to find information. The Year 1 pupils make plans of their bedroom and an imaginary play garden. In their lesson on weather patterns in Year 3 and Year 4, the pupils learn to use appropriate vocabulary to describe climatic conditions. Through their study of India, the pupils in Year 5 have a good understanding of how the environment affects people's lives. By the time the pupils are in Year 6 they are able to extract information from brochures, atlases, ordinance survey and relief maps and postcards to form opinions about the climate, economy and activities of people working or living in a mountain environment. In this lesson the children applied their literacy skills well to produce posters and leaflets to promote safety awareness for visitors to the Lake District National Park. Good links are made with the mathematics and history curriculum, for example, when calculating distances from Birmingham airport to other major cities in the United Kingdom and when drawing a detailed plan of Tutankhamun's tomb. All the children, including those with special educational needs, make satisfactory progress.

100. In the two lessons observed the teaching was at least satisfactory and in one lesson it was very good. The pupils' responses also were at least satisfactory and in one of the lessons they were very good. In that lesson, in Year 6, the pupils were highly motivated, worked quickly and behaved very well. The teacher made high demands of the children to extend and accelerate their learning. Very good relationships contributed to the confident and positive atmosphere established in the class.

101. The policy and scheme of work are helpful to teachers in ensuring that each year's work builds on that covered the previous year. The co-ordinator is temporary and there is not yet sufficient checking of the standards that pupils attain as they move through the school. Overall there are sufficient resources to support the teaching of geography, except for the provision of globes. The pupils visit sites of interest, for example, Year 2 pupils visited Birmingham airport. From time to time pupils make residential visits as part of their environmental work.

HISTORY

102. The pupils' attainment and their progress are satisfactory. Since the last inspection, the standards have remained the same. Only two lessons in Key Stage 2 were observed during the inspection. In addition to lesson observation, judgements are based on a scrutiny of the pupils' work, resources, displays of work in classrooms and teachers' planning and on discussion with the teachers and pupils.

103. In the two lessons observed, the teaching in one was good and in the other, in Year 6, it was excellent. In that lesson the teacher had excellent subject knowledge and used resources well to maximise the pupils' interest. The pupils' learning was further accelerated by skilful questioning which both consolidated and developed their knowledge and understanding of what life was like during the second world war. The pupils enjoy their history work and are fascinated by the way the pattern of people's lives changes according to the period of time they live in. By the end of Year 2, through their work on the Victorians, the children are

beginning to develop a sense of chronology. Pupils in Year 3 and 4 can explain how the lives of people in the past are different from their own. Their studies of the Tudor period show the development of their skills of enquiry as they find out about laws, crime and punishment. Through their study of the Ancient Greeks, the pupils in Year 5 show good understanding of the development of democracy and know about legends and myths. The pupils with special educational needs participate fully in the planned activities and make satisfactory progress in both key stages. Some good application of literacy skills is seen in the work of Year 5 and 6 as they describe the Jarrow marches. Good links with the history curriculum are also made during the teaching of the literacy hour through studying the story of 'Friend and Foe' by Michael Morpurgo.

104. The co-ordinator for history is temporary. The policy and scheme of work support the teachers' planning. Currently, the quality of the teaching and learning is not monitored, therefore, there are no checks on the standards that the pupils attain as they progress through the school. This is an underdeveloped part of the co-ordinator's role. Good use is made of educational visits, for example, to Aston Hall as part of work on the Tudors. Resources are adequate overall, with good topic boxes to support the teaching and learning.

INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY

105. Standards in information communications technology are below the national expectations in both key stages. The current work of the Year 2 pupils is of a high standard but the pupils' records and previous work show that they have not learned enough overall to reach satisfactory standards. In Key Stage 2 the pupils' previous work and records show that not enough time is given to the subject and the requirements of the programme of study are not met. This is very similar to the findings of the last inspection. The school has not improved the unsatisfactory standards found in Key Stage 2 during the last inspection and the standards overall in Key Stage 1 have fallen. This is in part due to insufficient funds but information communications technology has not received proper attention and it is not identified with sufficient priority in the school development plan.

106. Only one lesson was seen in Key Stage 1 and none were seen in Key Stage 2. The quality of teaching in the Year 2 lesson was excellent. The teacher uses the recently acquired resources within the information communications technology suite to good effect. During the lesson the projector was used to show the class how to control the on-screen turtle within a Logo environment and then pairs of pupils collaborated to create control programs. They were well supported by additional adults. The pupils are very enthusiastic and make rapid gains in knowledge and understanding. Information communications technology is occasionally used to support learning in other subjects but the skill levels required to manage the resources are not demanding enough. The tasks for which the technology is employed could often be more easily completed using paper and pencils. The blocked timetable does not properly support information communications technology as the children do not use the resources often enough to improve their skills and understanding at a satisfactory rate.

107. The school is now in a strong position to make rapid headway in developing the information communications technology curriculum. The subject is led well. The co-ordinator has involved the school with several outside agencies, commercial organisations and information technology initiatives. The sensible purchase of some second hand computers and a projector means that the staff can now use the computer suite to teach skills knowledge and understanding to the whole class. Classroom based equipment is available to apply those skills in other subjects. The recent acquisition of some hand-held computers has meant that pupils have more access to keyboards and applications to develop their competence. The co-ordinator has good subject knowledge.

108. The record keeping system that was introduced last year is helpful in showing the frequency of use and the range of activities the children experience. The school has yet to include skill acquisition or standards of performance in these records. The scheme of work needs to include information retrieval, in particular the use of CD-ROM, and communication. Within the next year the school is due to receive new computers under the

National Grid for Learning project and will be linked to the Birmingham Grid for Learning. The staff are to receive training for the teaching of information communications technology in the following year. There are sufficient resources in place for some staff training to begin at once. There is urgency, as the criticisms of the 1997 inspection have not yet been corrected in this core area of the curriculum.

MUSIC

109. It was possible to view only three music lessons during the inspection, providing insufficient evidence upon which to judge the overall standards. One of these lessons, in Key Stage 1, was excellent, with such a high level of teacher expertise and enthusiasm that the pupils achieved above average standards of singing and knowledge of musical notation. Another lesson, in Key Stage 2, was successful because of the teacher's good subject knowledge which promoted satisfactory learning about rhythm, pulse and composition. The third lesson, involving three Key Stage 2 classes and a visiting pianist, concentrated upon the learning of songs for a harvest festival. This was satisfactory. There is no evidence in the pupils' work from last year of any written tasks in composition or about composers or instruments. Reportedly, the school's productions are very popular with parents.

110. Resources for music teaching are adequate, with a range of tuned and untuned percussion instruments available. The music room offers a useful space for lessons. The visiting pianist brings considerable skill to the accompaniment of singing.

111. Opportunities to enhance the cultural life of the school through music in assemblies are not grasped. There is no singing or playing of instruments and the recorded music played to children as they enter and leave is not always referred to.

112. In the previous inspection, music was described as satisfactory, with some good teaching. The few lessons observed this time indicate that this has been maintained. Since the earlier inspection, instrumental teaching has been organised for those pupils whose parents wish it. The school offers lessons in strings, brass and woodwind instruments. This is a good step forward.

113. The co-ordinator is keen to promote music in the school. Using tape recordings and teachers' evaluations, she seeks to keep in touch with standards. The co-ordinator has an inadequate budget from which to maintain the teaching resources.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

114. It was not possible to observe more than a very few physical education lessons during the inspection. These indicate that overall standards are satisfactory and that there is some good and very good work. Reportedly, about 90% of last year's Year 6 pupils could swim the required 25 metres, which, judged by the standards reached in schools generally, is a lower than average figure.

115. The lessons observed included indoor work, for example, to develop sequences of movement, a good session in which older pupils were required to solve problems that required teamwork and outdoor lessons incorporating games skills. In the best lessons, the teachers' expertise enabled them to lead at a good pace, making the pupils work hard and achieve sound and sometimes good standards with little or no time wasted on inappropriate behaviour. For example, in a Year 2 class, the above average attainments of the pupils resulted from the teacher's purposeful and demanding teaching which had very clear learning objectives. This lesson was aided by the enthusiastic participation of the support staff and the pace ensured that the pupils made full use of every minute. By the end, these pupils were well exercised. In the less good lessons, the pace was

sometimes slow because the teachers were unsure how to move the teaching forward. As a result, the pupils were insufficiently challenged and noise and behaviour problems surfaced.

116. There are two temporary co-ordinators for the subject until a new appointment is made. Meanwhile, the teachers are working from the school's scheme of work which considerably pre-dates the latest requirements. Current standards also reflect the reduction in attention the subject received in the recent past whilst the National Curriculum requirements were relaxed. The school's new timetable provides appropriate amounts of time for the standards to improve but the simultaneous scheduling of four classes at a time when the hall is not available produces unreasonable demands upon the available equipment and, during the inspection, three classes were disturbing one another on the playground.

117. In most lessons observed, both the staff and the pupils were appropriately and safely dressed for physical education but in some lessons this was not the case. In addition, some children did not have suitable kit and, as result, missed the lessons and therefore missed their entitlement to part of the National Curriculum.

118. Standards in physical education have been maintained since the last inspection when they were described as satisfactory. At that time, no out of school physical education activities were reported but there are now several, including visiting sports coaches, football for girls and some inter-school matches, which are temporarily curtailed until the new co-ordinator is appointed. The school is planning to set up an orienteering course in the grounds, which will be a good development.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

119. The pupils' attainments are in line with the expectations of the local Agreed Syllabus for both key stages. This is the same as at the time of the previous inspection. No lessons were observed at Key Stage 1 and judgements on the standards were made by talking with the pupils, looking at the teachers' planning, the pupils' earlier work and the school's scheme of work

120. The school uses the locally Agreed Syllabus and there is an effective scheme to support the continuity and coverage of work. The curriculum is, at times, enhanced by the classroom acts of worship, when these incorporate moments to wonder and reflect.

121. The teaching is sound. The knowledge of the Christian religion is taught appropriately but the knowledge and understanding of other major world faiths is taught less securely although this is better in Year 6. In a Year 4 class a pupil from the Sikh faith was intrigued to find a symbol of her religion and this prompted some research into the symbols to be found within the Gurdwara. This was insufficiently supported or developed by the teacher. The teachers generally have a sound knowledge of the Christian faith and are developing their knowledge of other major world faiths. In the Year 6 lesson the pupils compared different versions of the life of Mohammed and considered why he is regarded as a messenger and not a deity. The lesson was effective because of the teacher's sound subject knowledge.

122. In some lessons there is a tendency to impart the facts with insufficient time for pupils to reflect upon the content and there are some missed opportunities for wonder to be drawn from the content. When reflective time is allowed, the children have the confidence to consider deeper issues. In a Year 3/ 4 class a pupil wondered why God let Jesus get hurt and in a Year 3 class some pupils expressed wonder at the shape and beauty of a scallop shell. Pupils in both key stages enjoy their religious education lessons, especially when artefacts, symbols and illustrations are employed, and the work is presented in an interesting fashion. The pupils have a good attitude to the subject. They contribute readily to discussion. They can recount stories they have been told, restate information that they have been given and apply previous learning. The presentation of their work is varied and at times marred by poor handwriting. In those classes where the work is systematically

collated into a file, pupils are able to recall previous work and to build upon it.

123. The resources are used effectively to illustrate and illuminate lessons but insufficient use is made of the collections to create displays around school to develop pupils' awareness of the multi-cultural and multi-faith society in which they live. The resources for religious education are good with artefacts, photographs and posters of good quality and these are being further developed. Visitors to school, in particular representatives of local churches, and visits to places of worship enhance the resources for religious education.

124. The co-ordinator has provided sound guidance and a useful scheme of work that is firmly rooted in the agreed syllabus. She has created a good range of resources and a programme for the school's Act of Worship although this needs to take greater account of a wider range of faiths. After an absence from school for a sabbatical year, she is now re-establishing an overview of the staff's subject knowledge and how closely the scheme of work is being followed.