

INSPECTION REPORT

SOUTH GOSFORTH FIRST SCHOOL

Newcastle upon Tyne

LEA area: Newcastle upon Tyne

Unique reference number: 108439

Headteacher: Mr. P. Coles

Reporting inspector: Katharine Halifax
25439

Dates of inspection: 12th and 13th March 2002

Inspection number: 196427

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	First school
School category:	Community school
Age range of pupils:	4 to 9 years
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Alnmouth Drive South Gosforth Newcastle upon Tyne Tyne and Wear
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Appropriate authority:	The Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr. H. Elliott
Date of previous inspection:	July 1997

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

South Gosforth School serves a mixed residential area in the north east of Newcastle upon Tyne. Pupils generally come from homes where education is valued. With 222 pupils on roll, the school is of average size. There are similar numbers of boys and girls. Pupils are taught in eight classes. Two classes are for children of reception age. Pupils between the ages of five and seven, the infant department, are taught by age each morning for numeracy and literacy and in mixed age classes in the afternoons for other subjects. Pupils between the ages of seven and nine, the junior department, are taught in three classes. One of these classes has pupils of more than one age group. The number of pupils entitled to free school meals is below average. Ten percent of pupils originate from outside the United Kingdom. Some are Black African, some Indian and some Pakistani. Seven pupils are from other ethnic minority groups. The percentage of pupils who do not speak English as their first language is higher than average. The number of pupils on the register for special educational needs is low, as is the percentage of pupils who have a Statement of Special Educational Need. Prior to entry, some children have been to private nurseries or playgroups, some to community playgroups and some have had no form of pre-school education. As a result there is a variation in attainment on entry. Assessment on entry to the school shows attainment to be just above that expected of children of this age.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

This is a very effective school. The quality of teaching is good, with a high percentage of very good teaching. This is reflected in the quality of learning. Pupils achieve very high standards. Good improvement has been made since the last inspection. The school is led and managed very effectively. The headteacher, staff and governors are self-critical and know what needs to be done to improve further. The school was recently awarded an Achievement Award by the Department for Education and Skills for standards achieved. Challenging targets have been set to maintain the very high standards. The school provides very good value for money.

What the school does well

- Standards are very high.
- Teachers are hard working and dedicated. Their many skills are reflected in the quality of learning.
- The headteacher provides very clear leadership. He inspires his staff and makes sure best use is made of all available resources.
- Relationships are very good. All adults are very caring. Pupils of all races and abilities are valued and have the opportunity to take part in all activities.
- Pupils' attitudes, behaviour and attendance are very good. This creates a good climate for learning.
- Parents hold the school in high esteem. Strong links between home and school contribute significantly to pupils' progress.
- Provision for pupils' social and moral development is very good and prepares them well to be good citizens.

What could be improved

- Standards in writing.
- The use of information and communication technology to support learning in other subjects.
- The expectations of some staff in the junior department as to the quality and volume of pupils' work on occasions.

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

Good improvement has been made since the school was inspected in July 1997. The then high standards have been improved upon. There has been good improvement in the quality of teaching. The national strategies for numeracy and literacy have been adopted successfully and are contributing to standards. The provision of a computer suite has led to significant progress in information and communication technology. Satisfactory progress has been made against the key issue to improve the provision for music and religious education. The time devoted to each subject has been increased and staff are more confident in teaching the subjects. Resources have been improved, though more objects of educational interest are needed in religious education. Despite every effort by the headteacher and governors, and vast sums of money being used, the roof still leaks and presents a major problem. This is still being addressed by the Local Authority.

STANDARDS

The table shows the standards achieved by pupils at the end of Year 2 based on average point scores in National Curriculum tests.

Performance in:	compared with			
	all schools			similar schools
	1999	2000	2001	2001
Reading	A	A	A*	A*
Writing	A	A	A	A
Mathematics	A	A	A*	A*

Key

very high A*

well above average A

above average B

average C

below average D

well below average E

The achievement of pupils of all races and abilities is very good. Standards are very high. By the time children leave the reception class most achieve the required Early Learning Goals with the majority working within National Curriculum Programmes of Study. The school's results in national tests for Year 2 in reading and mathematics are in the top 5% nationally and when compared to pupils from similar backgrounds, that is schools with a comparable number of free school meals. Standards in writing are well above average but could be improved slightly, especially the number of pupils achieving the higher level 3. Pupils make very good progress in information and communication technology in lessons in the computer suite. However, pupils do not always have the opportunity to use their skills in other subjects. Pupils' rate of progress slows marginally in the junior department because teachers are not always quite as demanding as those in the infant department. Nevertheless, by the time pupils leave the school at the end of Year 4, standards are still high. Challenging targets have been set to maintain the very high standards.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Very good. Pupils are eager to come to school. They are confident, have very positive attitudes and are proud to discuss their work.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Very good. Pupils are courteous and polite. They are generous and open-minded, being very well behaved in lessons and at play.
Personal development and relationships	Relationships between pupils and with adults are very good. Pupils from different ethnic groups get on well together and have great respect for

	each other.
Attendance	Very good. Pupils are punctual. This makes a good start to the day.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils in:	Reception	Years 1 – 2	Years 3 – 4
Quality of teaching	Good	Very good	Good

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

The quality of teaching is good overall, with more than one lesson in three being very good. Teaching was never less than good in any of the lessons observed. The teaching of English and mathematics is very good. Numeracy and literacy are taught well. Pupils make very good improvement in these areas because teachers plan for them to develop their reading, and use their knowledge of mathematics in other lessons. Teachers plan for pupils to write in other subjects too, but occasionally the tasks lack imagination. Teachers are confident teaching all subjects. They plan their lessons conscientiously, taking care to match work to the different age and ability groups within each class. Though work is generally challenging to pupils of all abilities, on a few occasions teachers in the junior department are insufficiently demanding. Nevertheless, overall pupils make very good gains in the knowledge and skills they acquire.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Good. There is suitable emphasis on literacy and numeracy. However, some of these lessons are long. This means young children have to maintain concentration for a long time. A good number of visits out of school make learning more meaningful to pupils.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Very good. Pupils are identified early and receive very good support from staff at the school and from visiting professionals.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	Good. All adults take care to make sure pupils understand instructions and any new vocabulary. Support in class and in small group work is good.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Good overall. Provision for pupils' social and moral development is very good and a strength of the school.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Very good. All adults are very caring and safety conscious. Staff know their pupils well and maintain very good links with parents. This contributes to pupils' progress.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Good overall. The headteacher is a very good manager and leads the school very effectively. He is supported well by a conscientious deputy head. Subject co-ordinators manage their responsibilities well.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Good overall. Legal requirements are met other than in a lack of detail in some aspects of the Governors' Report to Parents. Governors use their skills well to support the school.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Very good. Pupils' achievements in school tests and national tests are analysed by gender, educational need and by ethnicity in order to identify weaknesses and set challenging targets for all groups of pupils. Staff and governors apply the principles of best value well, comparing the school's performance with that of other schools and constantly challenging themselves to do better.
The strategic use of resources	Very good. Staff and the accommodation are used to maximum effect to make teaching groups small. This is having a positive impact on standards. The work of the administration officer contributes significantly to the smooth running of the school.

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 standards the school achieves. • The progress their child makes. • Teaching is good. Teachers are hardworking, approachable and loyal to the school. • Each child is respected and treated as an individual. • Children enjoy attending school. • Homework aids progress and prepares pupils well for middle school. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A few parents expressed concern about the way classes for pupils of more than one age group were decided. • The range of activities out of lessons.

The inspection team agrees with the strengths identified by the parents. In response to their concerns, the headteacher and staff have spent a long time discussing how to decide the mix of children of different ages and believe they have reached the best solution. The range of activities outside lessons is good and better than many schools for pupils of this age.

PART B: COMMENTARY

WHAT THE SCHOOL DOES WELL

Standards are very high.

1. Standards in reading and mathematics have improved from above average to being in the top five percent nationally since the last inspection. Very good improvement has been made in science. At the time of the last inspection, standards were judged to be average; they are now very high.
2. Standards in speaking and listening are very high in all age groups. This is because staff take time to talk to pupils and show a genuine interest in what they have to say. Pupils of all ages and abilities listen intently to their teachers and to other pupils. Pupils develop a wide vocabulary because teachers take time to explain new words and often ask pupils for definitions of words, such as 'modest' and 'humble'. By the end of Year 2, pupils discuss their ideas with confidence and eagerly engage visitors in conversation. In drama activities in religious education, for example, pupils articulate their feelings as members of the crowd when Jesus rode into Jerusalem. By the end of Year 4, pupils are eloquent and express their opinions confidently, whilst taking account of the views of others.
3. Standards in reading are very high in all age groups. Young children love stories and are keen to learn to read. Pupils in the reception classes and infant department have acquired a good number of ways to help them read new words. Pupils read for pleasure and most read all kinds of texts, including poetry and non-fiction. By the end of Year 4, many read fluently, expressing their preference for various authors. They use their skills and knowledge of books well when finding new information from reference books.
4. Standards in writing are above average. Pupils write for many different reasons. All age groups write using a wide vocabulary. They write poems and accounts and recount early memories, such as their first day at school. By the end of Year 2, pupils invent characters and compose suitable dialogue. More able pupils know to use capital letters to emphasise aspects of their writing such as 'SPLASH, the frog had jumped into the pond'. Pupils' writing is most successful and imaginative when they write from experience or when their work is across subjects. This was the case in Year 2 where pupils have written play scripts for their own version of 'The Pied Piper of Hamelin' to use alongside the puppets and stage they have created in art, design and technology and the music they have composed. Most pupils write using a neat joined script. By the end of Year 4, pupils write using increasingly complex grammar and punctuation with most spelling complex words such as 'sausage' and 'rhythm' correctly and using their skills well as when compiling articles for their newspaper, 'The School Times'.
5. Standards in mathematics are very high. Pupils of all ages and abilities have a very good understanding of all aspects of the subject. They show increased confidence in using the four rules of number, in telling the time, measuring and working with money. Pupils work with speed and self-assurance. They use a wide mathematical vocabulary and are equally confident in solving numerical or word problems. Progress in mental mathematics is very good because of lively activities in counting and using numbers at the start of each lesson.

6. Standards in science are very high. Pupils have a very good knowledge of living things, especially how their body works. They are increasing their knowledge of materials and their properties at a very good rate and have a very good understanding of physical processes such as light and sound. Pupils of all abilities predict the outcome of their investigations and record their findings appropriately. Older pupils understand the need for their investigations to be fair.

Teachers are hard working and dedicated. Their many skills are reflected in pupils' learning.

7. There has been good improvement in the quality of teaching since the last inspection. At the time of the last inspection teaching was judged to be satisfactory in 29 per cent of lessons, good in 60 per cent of lessons and very good or better in 11 per cent of lessons. This has improved to good teaching in 64 per cent of lessons and very good teaching in the remaining 36 per cent.
8. Parents report that staff are very approachable and give unstintingly of their time. Teachers work hard to create a very good atmosphere for learning through their relationships and classroom organisation. Classrooms are calm and lessons are purposeful. Teachers plan their lessons conscientiously, clearly identifying what each ability group and age group will learn. All lessons begin with teachers explaining what pupils will be learning and highlighting any new vocabulary, such as 'numerator' and 'denominator' in mathematics. This means pupils have a good understanding of what is being asked of them. Tasks are explained carefully, with very good instruction, as in an activity using coins where pupils were expected to tender the exact money for a snack. Planning always includes additional tasks for more able pupils, so that when a few pupils completed their work quickly, the teacher immediately increased the price of the food to make them work harder. Activities are planned to match pupils' abilities and interests. This allows pupils to work at their own level whilst not becoming bored or frustrated. Where pupils lack confidence or need to improve a skill such as writing, staff work with a group to produce a shared piece of writing. This gives pupils confidence to make an attempt themselves.
9. Teachers plan interesting activities to gain and maintain pupils' interest. This was evident in a literacy lesson in a reception class. Attention was quickly gained by a game using three dice to build and read new words. Children waited patiently for their turn, eager to sound out new words such as 'sick' and 'bid'. In a Year 2 English lesson, pupils made very good progress in their understanding of possessive pronouns by playing a game using their 'possessive pronoun fan', choosing the correct pronoun to replace nouns in sentences such as "Why are Ali and Robi late?" and bursting to give the answer "Why are they late?" After reading a story about a mischievous monkey, pupils in another Year 2 group were thrilled at the thought of writing a letter hatching a plot with a fellow dog to trick Monkey. Pupils retain knowledge because learning is interesting and relevant to them. This was so in a lesson teaching division, when pupils were excited at the prospect of a party where they had to share the biscuits so that all had an equal number.
10. Teachers use resources effectively to make learning relevant. Pupils' interest was immediately captured in a history lesson by examples of linen pillowcases, fire irons and hankies from the past. These produced much discussion, improving pupils' speaking and listening whilst making history more meaningful. Pupils are expected to take an active part in all lessons to maintain their interest and concentration. To this end many teachers use dry wipe boards for pupils to be active learners, as was seen, for example, in a Year 1 English lesson.

11. Lessons are planned in careful stages to move learning on at a good pace. This was seen in a Year 3 lesson where pupils were recognising and generating compound words such as 'playground' and 'clockwork'. Following a very good introduction by their teacher, pupils played 'compound match' before being asked to think of their own examples. The lesson moved quickly to pupils working in pairs, using a dictionary to check whether their word existed, if so giving the definition before producing a sentence using the compound word correctly. Where teaching is most effective, lessons have a sense of urgency, and sparkle. Pupils are continually challenged, as when time targets are set. "You have ten minutes to complete this piece of work", then reminding pupils when they have only a couple of minutes left, so that pupils maintain concentration and produce a good volume of work.
12. Teachers plan for pupils to develop their numeracy and literacy in other lessons. This was the case when pupils in Year 1 were expected to research different source materials in history to compare homes 100 years ago with those of 50 years ago. Pupils used a range of strategies to help them recognise new words in the text, such as initial letter sounds and picture clues to help them. Other lessons made pupils think about their reading and the meaning of text. For example, in an information and communication technology lesson, using a 'decision program' to sort information about fruit and vegetables, pupils were expected to read new words. The teacher warned pupils he had included a 'trick' in their computer program to check reading accuracy. Pupils quickly found the trick, recognising and understanding the difference between the sentences 'is it orange?' and 'is it an orange'. Similarly pupils are expected to use their mathematical skills in other lessons. This was so in a reception class when children were making a book about pets. They used their knowledge of the order of numbers when compiling the contents page.
13. Standards are high because teachers have high expectations of pupils' attitudes, behaviour and learning. Teachers expect pupils to recall previous knowledge, for instance to recall examples of different types of literature. Pupils are set challenging targets which are written, for example, at the front of their English books and referred to in lessons such as "Good structure and organisation in your writing, now you need to use paragraphs".
14. Questions are used effectively. Pupils are expected to think and reason. An example of this was in a mathematics lesson putting large numbers such as 299, 380 and 407 in order. Pupils discussed the ways in which they had tackled the problem giving others ideas for their selection, one reporting that 299 must come first because it has the least number of hundreds. In English pupils recognise hidden meaning because of skilled questions such as "How do we know it was not the first time Monkey had played his trick?" This resulted in one pupil referring to a quote from the text 'Works every time', so others realised Monkey had played the same trick before.
15. All lessons end with a useful review of learning. Pupils of all ages and abilities are expected to comment on what they have learned in each lesson, to say what they have found interesting, or easy and what may have been difficult. In addition to allowing teachers to check pupils' understanding, this aids their planning for future work. Interesting and amusing ways are found to augment pupils' learning. For example, younger pupils improve their knowledge of initial letter sounds and alphabetical order when lining up for afternoon break. Pupils with first names starting with 'A' are allowed to go out first, followed sequentially by those with the other letters in the alphabet. Teachers give their pupils useful tips such as using 'checking mechanisms' when 'doubling' and 'halving'. Pupils know when 'doubling' the number must be greater than the original.

The headteacher provides very clear leadership. He inspires his staff and makes sure best use is made of all available resources.

16. The headteacher is dynamic. He transmits his enthusiasm to staff, having high expectations whilst not expecting them to do anything he is not prepared to do himself. He has successfully engendered a commitment to achieving the highest standards whilst maintaining a balance of what is taught. Parents report the headteacher is very approachable. He has a high profile around the school, regularly popping into classrooms, giving teachers moral support, checking on teaching and learning and catching up with events in pupils' lives. He uses his many talents to good effect for the benefit of pupils, such as refereeing football matches and playing the guitar in assembly.
17. Channels of communication are successful in making all staff feel valued. Formal twice-weekly meetings allow staff to keep in touch with what is happening in all areas of school and to keep abreast of new initiatives. Daily informal discussions help deal with issues before they grow and become overwhelming. Close liaison with the administrative officer helps the school to run smoothly. Classroom observations by the headteacher and his deputy are rigorous. Teachers appreciate the feedback they are given, commenting that has helped them to improve their practice.
18. The headteacher works closely with the governing body, talking regularly to the chair of governors to report everyday happenings. Reports to governing body meetings are thorough, giving a clear picture of progress towards targets in the School Development Plan, the school's strengths and areas for improvement. The initiative by the headteacher to introduce the annual School Self Supportive Review has been very effective in allowing staff and governors to identify and understand why the school is successful and what is needed to maintain that success. This has a positive impact on standards.
19. Results in national tests and formal school tests are analysed carefully. Recent results have identified a difference in the performance of boys and girls, with boys outperforming girls in some areas. To this end the headteacher has checked for differences in attainment on entry to the school and in pupils' attitudes. His next strategy is to check that pupils are not being taught in a 'boy friendly' way. In addition to checking the progress of pupils of all abilities and setting new targets, the analysis has allowed the headteacher to measure the effectiveness of systems and funding such as those allocated for additional learning support and for pupils from different ethnic backgrounds. The suggestion by the headteacher, supported by staff and governors, to use funds to provide additional teaching support for pupils with special educational needs and those with English as an additional language has contributed significantly to the confidence and progress of these pupils. The headteacher investigates all sources of funding to improve resources within the school. Funds from initiatives such as the Education Achievement European Families' Fund has resulted in the acquisition of a computer suite which is making a significant contribution to pupils' skills in information and communication technology.

Relationships are very good. All adults are very caring. Pupils of all races and abilities are valued and have the opportunity to take part in all activities.

20. Relationships between pupils and with staff are very good. The atmosphere in school reflects a happy environment where pupils and staff share mutual respect. Pupils of different races and cultures readily work together sharing experiences and striving towards a common goal. Teachers show great respect for differences in beliefs. This

was evident in a Year 2 religious education lesson when discussing the impact of the Easter story on Christians. The teacher and pupils showed much respect for beliefs of pupils of other faiths in their class. Pupils of all abilities are given the chance to succeed and all are encouraged to celebrate the achievement of others in the weekly presentation assemblies. All pupils have equal chances to take part in activities. In some cases this is on merit or skill as with the girls who play regularly in the football team. Staff and pupils watch out for each other. Pupils who start mid term have designated 'special friends' in their class to show them around and introduce them to others at breaktimes, helping them to feel part of the school.

21. Pupils with special educational needs are included in all activities. They receive very good support from their specialist teacher and skilled classroom assistants. Those with physical difficulties and hearing impairment receive additional very good support from visiting specialists. Similarly pupils who have been identified as having a specific learning difficulty, such as dyslexia and those with speech and language needs receive very good support from staff in school and from specialists. Very good communication between teachers, support staff and visiting specialists contributes significantly to pupils' progress. Individual education plans are of a good quality with focused targets against which it is easy to measure progress. Teachers have a good knowledge of individual needs and use targets from the individual plans in their lesson planning. Progress and individual difficulties are easy to identify in the detailed records, so that appropriate activities can be provided. The co-ordinator is currently adopting the requirements of the new Code of Practice for Special Educational Needs.
22. Pupils with special educational needs are dealt with sensitively so that they grow in confidence. Teachers make sure such pupils achieve success in front of their classmates. This was the case when pupils in Year 4 were discussing fractions. Carefully targeted questions allowed one pupil with special needs to glow with pride as she answered a question correctly and was congratulated because all the examples on her specially prepared worksheet were right. In the same lesson, the teacher successfully challenged more able pupils who had completed their work by moving them on to equivalent fractions and using the signs for 'greater than' and 'less than' when comparing fractions.
23. Pupils who have a particular gift or talent are identified at an early age and records are maintained in the back of class files. Where appropriate, work is set from a higher level of the National Curriculum. Talent in music and sport is brought to the attention of parents and suitable introductions made where necessary, for example to city and county sporting organisations.
24. The attainment and achievement of pupils who speak English as an additional language are recognised. Pupils are placed in groups which match their ability level rather than being kept all together and working at the pace of the slowest. This is possible because teachers check to make sure these pupils understand instructions and new vocabulary and that they receive additional support when required. As a result pupils are challenged and achieve highly. When working with pupils with special educational need and those with English as an additional language, staff are not afraid of silence in order to allow pupils to reflect what is being asked of them and to articulate their response.

Pupils' attitudes, behaviour and attendance are very good. This creates a good climate for learning.

25. Since the last inspection, there has been good improvement in pupils' attitudes to school and in their behaviour. Children in the reception classes settle quickly into school routines because staff create a warm friendly atmosphere where children feel happy and secure. Children are co-operative, playing happily together in large and small groups. They respond well to adults, willingly joining in all activities and clearing away when asked.
26. Pupils in the infant and junior departments are keen to learn. They listen attentively to adults and to their classmates, readily joining in discussions and being eager to answer questions to demonstrate their knowledge. Pupils settle quickly to activities and persevere, even when they find the work challenging. This was seen with pupils in Year 2 who had finished their computer activity and who were recreating their 'decision program' as a paper exercise. Pupils worked their way logically through the process, determined not to be beaten. Concentration is very good; pupils of all ages and abilities work industriously for relatively long periods of time. Pupils readily accept help and advice to improve their work.
27. Behaviour is very good in lessons, clubs and at breaktimes. Parents who accompany pupils on visits out of school report that members of the public often comment on the very good behaviour. Though a number of areas of the building are shared by more than one class, there is very little disruption to teaching as pupils move about or work sensibly in small groups outside the classrooms. Pupils play happily together at playtimes. They organise their own game of football and other ball games or choose to sit quietly and chat to their friends. No incidents of unkind behaviour were seen during the inspection. Racial harmony pervades. No pupils have been excluded for bad behaviour for many years.
28. Relationships are very good. Parents report pupils are eager to take responsibility and are bursting to be monitors or 'special friends'. They take an interest in visitors and are eager to engage them in conversation. Pupils have respect for each other and discuss their ideas in a very mature fashion. This was the case in a Year 4 art lesson, when, following their teacher's reading of a passage from the Big Friendly Giant, pupils talked to partners about the dreams they had had. Pupils listened thoughtfully, agreeing that nightmares are the most common dream to recall. Pupils show respect for property and equipment. They take great care when handling musical instruments or when working with the computer. On seeing a coat on the cloakroom floor, one pupil considerately hung the garment up instead of trampling it underfoot. Older pupils spontaneously help children in the reception classes and keep careful watch over younger pupils at breaktimes. They demonstrate a mature attitude when accompanying young children back to their classroom from assembly. Parents are pleased with the confidence and maturity their children acquire. Some parents attending the meeting initially felt concern that pupils in the infant department are taught in different groups in the morning and afternoon. However, contrary to their concerns, this, they remarked, has widened their child's circle of friends and has contributed to their growing confidence.
29. Pupils are eager to take advantage of the range of out-of-school activities, to the extent that some clubs have waiting lists. Pupils enter wholeheartedly into activities such as playing 'What time is it, Mr. Wolf?' in French club, maintaining a good level of physical fitness in gymnastics and football and playing the recorder tunefully.

Parents hold the school in high esteem. Strong links between home and school contribute significantly to pupils' progress.

30. Parents attending the meeting are very pleased with the information they receive, including the topics their children are studying. Detailed information is clearly displayed in the conservatory windows of each classroom so that parents can talk to their child and be involved in their learning. This was seen in the reception classes where parents encouraged children to take 'injured animals' to school. Several children arrived with new 'patients' each morning, explaining in hushed tones that their toy pony had 'broken its leg' or their 'cat' had eaten something nasty and needed urgent treatment. This made a significant contribution to children's use of language and to their knowledge and understanding of the world.
31. Many parents help out in classrooms each week, hearing pupils read and helping with artwork and with displays. Others help at specific times: for example, a mother who is a Hindu visited school wearing traditional Indian clothes and talked to pupils about Hindu gods, celebrations and festivals. This had a tremendous impact on pupils and made their study of world faiths in religious education more meaningful. A few parents give freely of their time each week to help with clubs such as French club and Recorder club, thus enriching pupils' learning.
32. Parents attending the meeting are very satisfied with the home-school diary and feel this is a useful channel of communication, for example about concerns raised at consultation evening. In addition, the diary provides a useful record of pupils' progress in reading. Most diaries seen gave evidence that parents hear their child read regularly, in the best cases writing comments about their child's thoughts about the book and any problems they might have experienced. Similarly the progress of many pupils is accelerated in mathematics because parents work alongside their child using 'fun' activities provided by the school.
33. Parents appreciate the twice-yearly consultation evenings when challenging targets are set for their children. They have found workshops to explain the structure and methodology of the National Numeracy and Literacy Strategies useful in helping understand what their child is learning and how they can help at home. The Parents' Association arranges a good number of social events where parents have the opportunity to exchange thoughts whilst raising useful sums of money for additional resources. The governing body is made up predominantly of parents and parents of past pupils, all of whom have a keen interest in school. This helps the headteacher measure the effectiveness of the school.

Provision for pupils' social and moral development is very good and prepares them well to be good citizens.

34. The provision for pupils' moral and social development has improved since the last inspection and is now very good. Detailed policies are in place to support pupils' personal development. All adults are good examples of how to conduct themselves appropriately, so that pupils mirror their behaviour. A sensible system of rewards and sanctions is in place and understood well by pupils. Classroom rules are prominently displayed so pupils have a clear idea of right and wrong. Older pupils are developing a good awareness of the need for rules and to play fairly through games and teamwork. Members of the soccer team are expected to be gracious in triumph and defeat, though they usually win. Team members readily acknowledge the skill of other players, transferring this to their art by producing pictures with captions like 'well played' and 'good pass'.

35. Assemblies often have a moral theme. This was so during the inspection when pupils listened to the story of the 'King's sick horse'. They heard how soldiers passed the responsibility of tending the creature in order to escape execution for having to tell the king his horse was dead. Pupils chuckled as they realised the clever soldier had tricked the king into making the statement himself and reflected how they need to apply thinking strategies to tackle jobs which at first may appear difficult. Very good opportunities are provided for pupils to discuss issues that are important to them through 'Circle Time'. Work in science and geography encourages pupils to consider the need to conserve natural resources such as water and to take care of the planet. Pupils know they can do their bit to help, even if only in a small way, such as recycling glass and paper and by putting orange peel and apple cores into the compost bin at breaktimes. Pupils are encouraged to have an awareness of the needs of others less fortunate than themselves. Generous sums of money have been raised for local and national charities through, for example, a second hand book sale and through the RSPCA challenge. Pupils sponsor a child in Russia, writing letters comparing her life at school to that in South Gosforth and appreciating how lucky they are.
36. Pupils make noteworthy improvement in their personal development. They have good opportunities to work in pairs or groups in classrooms. Teachers plan tasks that need pupils to co-operate. This was so in a Year 1 English lesson when pupils discussed how they could extend words such as 'fright'. Pupils discussed the possibilities with each other before deciding, for example, to extend the word to 'frightened' and spell it correctly on their dry wipe board. Pupils of all ages and abilities have the chance to work together in specially planned weeks such as Book Week and activity weeks where pupils play sport and take part in visits out of school. On these occasions, pupils adapt to working with those of different ages, acquiring skills such as leadership and patience.
37. Pupils are introduced to the wider community by visits to sites of local interest such as the Quays and the Millennium Bridge, where they are expected to behave appropriately and meet new challenges through experiencing the Metro train and using escalators and cafes. Pupils are proud to receive a wide range of achievement certificates presented in assemblies that recognise, for example, improvement in work, participation in special events and good attendance. At lunchtime, they are expected to have good table manners and use their cutlery correctly. As a result, lunchtimes are pleasant social occasions. Work in science and design and technology encourages pupils to think about a healthy lifestyle, to consider what they eat, to plan nutritious meals and to make healthy choices at lunchtime. Pupils gain an increased knowledge of how their bodies work, producing graphs showing the impact of exercise on their heart rate and breathing. Work in science and personal, social and health education prepares pupils well as they mature and alerts them to the dangers of substance misuse.

WHAT COULD BE IMPROVED

Standards in writing.

38. Though standards in writing are well above average those expected of pupils of this age, staff acknowledge that there is a mismatch between the achievements of pupils in reading and those they achieve in writing, especially in the number of pupils attaining the higher Level 3 in National Curriculum tests. Pupils write for a wide number of purposes, such as diaries, letters, poems and accounts. However, tasks sometimes lack imagination, so that pupils are not inspired to write creatively. Teachers provide opportunities for pupils to write in other subjects, but this is not as extensive as it might be in some lessons. The best examples of writing are where pupils are writing from experience and where the National Literacy Strategy has been used flexibly.

The use of information and communication technology in other subjects.

39. Since the acquisition of the computer suite, pupils have made very good gains in their skills when using new technology. Pupils of all ages and abilities have good mouse control and are confident when using the equipment to word process work, to use a database and to produce art work, for example in the style of Monet, Kandinsky and Mondrian. However, an analysis of a wide sample of pupils' work shows little use of information and communication technology in other subjects. Though all classrooms have a computer, few teachers plan for these to be used, preferring to teach specific skills when using the computer suite. As a result pupils have limited skills, for example, in producing graphs in mathematics or to record results of scientific investigations. Though pupils have used the Internet and are aware of the use of CD ROMs for research, they have little experience of using these tools.

The expectations of some staff in the junior department as to the quality and volume of pupils' work.

40. Though still good, pupils' rate of progress slows a little in the junior department. This is because the pace is slower in some lessons and the expectations of some teachers are not always high. Pupils produce a good volume of work, but occasionally, the presentation and structure of some work is not always their best. On occasions, letters are not always joined in handwriting and words that have previously been spelled correctly have careless errors.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

41. In order to improve the already very high standards, whilst maintaining the many strengths of the school, the headteacher, staff and governors should:

- (1) Continue to improve the already high standards in writing by
- further staff training
 - using the National Literacy Strategy more flexibly
 - providing more opportunities for pupils to write in other subjects especially in the junior department
 - providing more opportunities for pupils to write from experience
 - making more use of drama to inspire pupils
 - encouraging pupils to make greater use of dictionaries and thesaurus.

(Paragraph 38)

- (2) improve standards in information and communication technology by:
- further staff training
 - providing more opportunities for pupils to use computers and new technology in other subjects.

(Paragraph 39)

- (3) improve the already good teaching in the junior department by:
- staff developing higher expectations of the quality, volume and presentation of work;
 - injecting more urgency and pace in lessons.

(Paragraph 40)

All the key issues have been identified in the school improvement plan.

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	22
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	12

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Number	0	8	14	0	0	0	0
Percentage	0	36	64	0	0	0	0

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

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll	YR – Y4
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	222
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	5

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs	YR – Y4
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	2
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	15

English as an additional language	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	22

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	8
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	8

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	4.2

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.2

National comparative data	5.6
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National comparative data	0.5
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Both tables give the percentage of half days (sessions) missed through absence for the latest complete reporting year.

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 1 (Year 2)

	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	2001	23	22	45

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	22	23	23
	Girls	22	22	22
	Total	44	45	45
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	98 (98)	100 (98)	100 (98)
	National	84 (83)	86 (84)	91 (90)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	23	23	23
	Girls	22	22	22
	Total	45	45	45
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	100 (98)	100 (100)	100 (100)
	National	85 (84)	89 (88)	89 (88)

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

Ethnic background of pupils

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	0
Black – African heritage	3
Black – other	0
Indian	6
Pakistani	4
Bangladeshi	0
Chinese	0
White	202
Any other minority ethnic group	7

This table refers to pupils of compulsory school age only.

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers and classes: YR – Y4

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	9.8
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	22.6
Average class size	27.7

Education support staff: YR – Y4

Total number of education support staff	6
Total aggregate hours worked per week	100.5

Recruitment of teachers

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	0
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	1
Total number of vacant teaching posts (FTE)	0
Number of vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of a term or more (FTE)	0.3
Number of unfilled vacancies or vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of less than one term (FTE)	0

FTE means full-time equivalent.

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	0
Other minority ethnic groups	0	0

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

Financial information

Financial year	2000/2001
	£
Total income	431194
Total expenditure	433712
Expenditure per pupil	1945
Balance brought forward from previous year	63285

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	222
Number of questionnaires returned	121

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	69	28	2	0	1
My child is making good progress in school.	61	35	2	2	1
Behaviour in the school is good.	62	36	1	0	1
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	46	44	8	2	0
The teaching is good.	67	29	3	1	1
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	38	48	11	3	0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	69	26	5	0	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	68	29	1	0	2
The school works closely with parents.	46	40	10	2	1
The school is well led and managed.	64	30	2	0	4
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	58	38	1	0	3
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	43	43	12	0	2