

## **INSPECTION REPORT**

### **KIRK IRETON C of E PRIMARY SCHOOL**

Kirk Ireton, Ashbourne

LEA area: Derbyshire

Unique reference number: 112832

Headteacher: Mrs P B Dunn

Reporting inspector: Mr M H Cole  
3369

Dates of inspection: 21<sup>st</sup> – 22<sup>nd</sup> May 2001

Inspection number: 196609

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

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school: Infant and junior  
School category: Voluntary controlled  
Age range of pupils: 4 to 11 years  
Gender of pupils: Mixed

School address: Main Street  
Kirk Ireton  
Ashbourne  
Derbyshire

Postcode: DE6 3LD

Telephone number: 01335 370351

Fax number: 01335 370351

Appropriate authority: The governing body

Name of chair of governors: Mr D Smith

Date of previous inspection: 30<sup>th</sup> April 1997

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

### **INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL**

Kirk Ireton C of E Primary School is a very small school which educates 45 boys and girls aged four to eleven. Pupils enter the reception class in the school year of their fifth birthday, some having previously attended private nurseries or the village playgroup while others have had no pre-school education. On entry to the school, individual pupils' attainment varies considerably but, overall, pupils show a broadly average profile of attainment. Most pupils come from the village of Kirk Ireton, a few from other nearby villages and a very few from the nearby town of Wirksworth. Some parents are in traditional rural and agricultural employment locally while others, with professional or managerial positions, travel to nearby urban centres like Derby. Census data suggests that, overall, the area is one of above average social and economic circumstances. This is seen in the fact that a very small proportion of pupils qualifies for free school meals. At the time of inspection, a very low proportion of pupils had been identified as having special educational needs and no pupil had a statement of special needs. All present pupils are of white British ethnic origin.

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

This is a very good school. Pupils achieve good standards of work and excellent standards of behaviour and attitudes. Very strong leadership of a very hard-working staff promotes very good teaching and the provision of stimulating and challenging opportunities for pupils' learning. Taking account of the school's level of funds, it provides very good value for money for a school of its size.

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

- Pupils achieve well; standards of work are good and results in national tests of English, mathematics and science are above average.
- Pupils are extremely enthusiastic about school and show excellent behaviour and relationships; they are highly independent and responsible for their ages, thanks to very good provision for their moral and social development.
- Teaching is of very good quality and provides pupils with broad and stimulating opportunities to learn.
- The school is very well led and managed; the headteacher shows great commitment and industry and is very well supported by a strong staff team.
- The school watches very carefully over the care, welfare and progress of each of its pupils.
- The school has a very close relationship with parents and the local community, and parents think very highly of the school.

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

- Opportunities for pupils to extend and practise their skills in information and communication technology across the curriculum, as set out in the school's plans for improvement.

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

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

Since the school was previously inspected in 1997, it has shown a good measure of improvement. Numbers of pupils at each age are too small for trends in academic standards over the last four years to be reliably identified. However, the limited evidence that is available suggests that standards of work are at least as good as they were judged to be in 1997. Improved provision for music and physical education has raised standards in these subjects. Standards in pupils' behaviour and

attitudes have improved: they were previously considered 'good' but are now judged to be excellent. Teaching, too, has improved from a good to a very good quality. Management of the school continues to be very good but it has improved the value for money the school offers from a good to a very good level.

Good improvement has been achieved in relation to the 'key issues for action' recommended following the previous inspection. Previous concerns about insufficient accommodation and resources for physical education and for the youngest pupils' education have been energetically tackled so that matters are now satisfactory. Good plans for still further improvement in provision for physical education are soon to take effect.

The school's strong leadership and highly committed staff provide the school with very good prospects for achieving further improvement.

## STANDARDS

In recent years, the number of eleven-year-old pupils taking National Curriculum tests in English, mathematics and science has been too small for their results to be compared with national averages in a reliable way. However, a reliable comparison can be made if the results in tests over the last four years are put together:

Aggregated test results of pupils aged eleven for the last four years (total 25 pupils):

<i>1997 – 2000 inclusive</i>	Percentage of pupils achieving Level 4 and above*	Comparative average for schools nationally	Percentage of pupils achieving the higher Level 5	Comparative average for schools nationally
English	100	69	52	21
mathematics	88	66	48	21
science	100	75	56	24

\* Level 4 is the level of attainment the average pupil is expected to reach by age eleven.

The table shows that, at age eleven, almost all pupils have reached the expected level of attainment in all three subjects, and around half of them have done better than this by attaining the higher level. Results compare favourably with national averages.

Work seen during the inspection supported the picture from test results that pupils achieve above average standards. At the time of inspection, the school had only two pupils aged eleven – too few for a significant judgement about their standards to be made. However, looking at pupils generally, almost all from the reception class through to Year 6 produce work at least up to the level expected for their age and a good many exceed this level. This was true of work in English and mathematics where a good deal of evidence was seen, and it was also true where work in other subjects was sampled.

Pupils' attainments compare favourably with their attainment on starting at the school and examination of past work shows them making good progress over the school year. Pupils achieve well. This is clearly seen in lessons as pupils respond keenly and industriously to the challenging teaching they receive.

## PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Excellent; pupils are interested and enthusiastic.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Extremely good, with pupils showing a high level of self-discipline.
Personal development and relationships	Outstanding; pupils become very mature, responsible and independent for their ages and establish very co-operative and kind relationships.
Attendance	Good.

This is an exceptionally calm, happy and purposeful school. Pupils behave responsibly and get on keenly with their learning with the need for very little overt direction from adults. Pupils develop high levels of confidence and self-esteem. They are kind and helpful towards others of all ages. Pupils are outgoing, friendly and respectful in their relationships with each other and with adults.

## TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils:	aged up to 5 years	aged 5-7 years	aged 7-11 years
Lessons seen overall	Very good	Very good	Very 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.*

Teaching shows all-round strength. Highly skilled management of pupils' behaviour and provision for their enthusiasm and self-esteem are particular highlights. Planning is systematic and provides well-focused tasks that are challenging and stimulating. As a result, pupils work keenly and with very good concentration. There is a thorough and consistent approach to teaching and reinforcing basic skills in literacy and numeracy. Interesting work and well-devised questioning is very effective in encouraging pupils to think for themselves and to express themselves clearly and extensively. Thorough planning and preparation, good knowledge of individual pupils and well-organised collaboration with support staff mean that the progress of pupils of all ages, abilities and needs is effectively promoted.

Of 17 lessons seen, all were of at least good quality. Sixty-five per cent were of very good quality and a further 18 per cent were excellent. Evidence from teachers' planning and from pupils' past work supports the view that teaching in the school is of overall very good quality.

## OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	The curriculum is broad and presented in a lively, stimulating way, well supported by special events, visits, visitors and community contributions.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Pupils needs are well recognised and they are given good support.

Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Very good, with particular strength in the highly effective provision for moral and social development.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Care is very close, conscientious and well organised.

The curriculum emphasises swimming and lessons start in the reception class. All pupils achieve the National Curriculum target of swimming 25 metres by age eleven much sooner than this. An unusually high proportion of pupils receives tuition from visiting specialist teachers in a range of musical instruments. Integration of information and communication technology into work across the curriculum does not yet meet new national expectations but this development is underway and being supported with staff training and new resources.

The excellent example of caring attitudes and co-operative relationships set by school staff is the backbone of the very effective provision for moral and social development.

Provision for individual pupils' care, welfare, academic progress and personal development is much helped by the school's thorough knowledge of pupils as individuals and the close partnership the school has with parents.

## HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Very good. A highly committed and industrious headteacher gives strong leadership to a united and hard-working staff team. Firmly held aims and values are very effectively implemented.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Governors are supportive, well informed and actively involved in promoting the work and development of the school.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Good checks on teaching and learning mean that strengths and areas for improvement are well understood. Effective action is taken to bring about improvement.
The strategic use of resources	The school is enterprising and efficient in acquiring and making the best use of available resources.

The headteacher is very successful in meeting the challenge of managing the school while at the same time acting as a class teacher for most of the week. A measure of the very effective leadership is the way in which this very small school maximises the advantages of smallness while largely eliminating the potential disadvantages. Staff training and accessing of external support ensure a breadth of up-to-date expertise to support teaching and the curriculum. Good processes of financial planning and management ensure that the school achieves the best value it can from funds.

## PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<p>Almost every aspect, but especially that children</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>like school and make good progress.</li> <li>behave well at school.</li> <li>become more mature and responsible.</li> </ul> <p>and that the school</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>is well led and managed and provides good teaching.</li> <li>expects pupils to work hard and do their best.</li> <li>is approachable, works closely with parents and informs them well about children's progress.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Some parents do not agree that there is an interesting range of activities outside lessons.</li> <li>A very small proportion has concerns about homework.</li> </ul>

Inspectors agree with all of the positive views expressed by parents. They also agree with the great majority of parents that, overall, homework arrangements are good. Although a significant number of parents completing the questionnaire did not agree that there is an interesting range of activities outside lessons, closer examination shows that almost all expressing this view were parents of the youngest pupils. It is not usual for schools to provide after-school activities for such pupils. With very few staff, it is difficult for the school to provide a wide range of activities but it compensates for this by involving parents, the community and the church in extending opportunities for activity after school. With such support, the school's provision is satisfactory, and good for its size.

## **PART B: COMMENTARY**

### **WHAT THE SCHOOL DOES WELL**

**Pupils achieve well; standards of work are good and results in national tests of English, mathematics and science are above average.**

1. As this is a very small school, there are only a very few pupils in each year group. The numbers are too small for the overall attainment of any one year group to be reliably compared with the national standard. This is particularly true in the case of the oldest (Year 6) pupils of whom there were only two at the time of inspection. However, by looking at the attainments of a larger number of pupils over several years, it is possible to make a more reliable comparison. In this way, inspectors are able to judge that the overall picture is one of pupils attaining above average standards. Over the last four years, for example, the results of the oldest pupils in the standard National Curriculum tests for eleven-year-olds in English, mathematics and science have been significantly above national averages. Almost all pupils have reached the expected level of attainment, Level 4, and around half of them have done better than this by attaining Level 5. In both cases, these proportions compare favourably with national averages. Similarly, pupils aged seven taking National Curriculum tests in reading, writing and mathematics in recent years have achieved results significantly above the national averages. Such evidence has led to the school being nominated by its local authority for a national achievement award.
2. Inspectors' observations based on lessons, past work examined and discussions with pupils confirm the positive picture painted by the test results. Almost all pupils from the reception class through to Year 6 produce work at least up to the level expected for their age and a good many exceed this level. This was true of work in English and mathematics where a good deal of evidence was seen, but it was also true where work in other subjects was sampled.
3. In English, skills of speaking and listening develop particularly well, right from pupils' first months in the school before age five. Pupils listen very attentively, partly because teachers and support staff present lessons in a stimulating and often 'fun' way that makes pupils keen to listen and take part. Teaching places much emphasis on stimulating pupils to think for themselves and express their thoughts openly. Pupils respond with clear and confident speech, expressing their ideas at greater length than usual for their age.
4. Reading, too, develops well throughout the school. The youngest pupils soon become fluent and accurate readers. Knowledge of the relationships between sounds and letters or combinations of letters ('phonics') develops well. The expressiveness of pupils' reading aloud is a particular strength, again from the earliest stages. Teaching encourages this, as when pupils as young as six and seven read stories aloud to their class and do so with sufficient skill to hold their classmates' attention. The oldest pupils read aloud with clear attention to the meaning and mood of the text, making dialogue, for example, come alive with appropriate expression. Pupils become keen readers who are mostly well versed in contemporary children's literature.

5. Older pupils' writing is often as lively as their reading aloud. They have a good sense of the range of purposes and audiences there may be for writing and can adapt their style accordingly. Some story writing shows good examples of pupils striving to use interesting words and vary the structures of their sentences to create impact. The youngest pupils' writing gets off to a very good start as they soon develop the ability to form legible, consistently sized letters. By the end of the reception year, pupils are, with some adult help, writing some good sentences of their own.
6. In mathematics, pupils' knowledge, understanding and skills progress well throughout the school. A lesson for the youngest pupils showed them developing good basic skills when they worked out what combinations of coins could produce given sums of money. Pupils learn to add, subtract, multiply and divide with increasingly large numbers, and they grow in understanding which processes to use to solve real-life problems. The oldest can use fractions, decimals and percentages and understand the relationships between them. Pupils develop good knowledge of multiplication tables which they often use to make quick mental calculations. During the inspection, pupils were seen creating and interpreting a variety of mathematical diagrams and graphical forms correctly. Pupils use their mathematical skills well to support some of the work in other subjects as, for example, when presenting data from their science investigations as graphs.
7. Amongst examples of pupils achieving well in other subjects was a science lesson for pupils aged five to seven where they tested a range of fabrics for their waterproof qualities. This was part of a project leading up to the making of a waterproof hat for the headteacher which was to be put to the ultimate test! Pupils made thoughtful predictions about the materials they were to test, set about testing them fairly and accurately, and recorded their results systematically so that they could draw appropriate conclusions. An exciting and potentially messy activity was undertaken by pupils with characteristic good sense and excellent behaviour, as well as evident enjoyment.
8. A history lesson for pupils aged seven to eleven showed pupils successfully tackling tasks of varying difficulty to extract information about their village from the 1851 census. Pupils detected significant differences from contemporary life and could suggest convincing reasons why they had occurred, showing a good chronological sense of how society had changed over 150 years. In information and communication technology, older pupils were seen making good progress while using a range of operations within a graphics program to generate patterns on the computer.
9. Other examples of good achievement during the inspection were the musical compositions of the youngest pupils on the 'Three Little Pigs' story, an activity inspired by their previous listening to Prokofiev's 'Peter and the Wolf'. However, the quality of singing in the school, as heard in assemblies, is a relative weakness. A good many pupils do not sing consistently in tune.
10. Amongst examples of good work seen during examination of pupils' past work was their work in art. This included some good observational drawing and painting that showed boldness when required and sensitive and careful use of colour in other tasks. Some of the youngest pupils' paintings of sunflowers following a study of Van Gogh's painting showed a striking ability to paint with both care and in the spirit of the original.

11. A particular strength in the progress of the reception pupils toward the 'Early Learning Goals' recommended for the age group is their personal, social and emotional development. Their confidence, independence, ability to concentrate on activities and excellent relationships with others are very marked.
12. Another sort of evidence of the good work achieved in the school was found in video-taped recordings of the school's two Christmas performances for parents, one by the younger and one by the older pupils. In both cases, the quality of these performances would have been a credit to any primary school but, for such a small school, the quality was an outstanding achievement. The confidence and infectious enthusiasm with which so many pupils acted their parts was especially striking.
13. The work of the older pupils shows that before leaving the school they attain standards, or are on target to attain standards, that are better relative to their age than was the case when they started at the school. The school's own records of pupil progress from year to year show this, and it is confirmed by inspection of progress over time in pupils' past work. This represents good achievement and is entirely consistent with the good progress pupils are seen to make in individual lessons where they respond keenly and industriously to the challenging tasks they are given.

**Pupils are extremely enthusiastic about school and show excellent behaviour and relationships; they are highly independent and responsible for their ages, thanks to very good provision for their moral and social development.**

14. Amongst the reasons for the good standards of work achieved are the excellent attitudes and behaviour of the pupils. They make this an entirely orderly, calm, relaxed, but also very business-like school. Pupils are enthusiastic about their school and the activities they undertake there. A high level of interest is seen in lessons. Pupils listen attentively and answer teachers' questions keenly. They take pride in their growing knowledge, understanding and skill. Exercise books show the fruits of much earnest endeavour: pupils try hard. This is also a very happy school where learning and playing together are fun. It is a school of many smiles and much laughter.
15. Throughout the inspection, pupils behaved extremely well with hardly any apparent need for direction by adults. Pupils discipline themselves. Even the youngest pupils in the reception class, left to carry out practical activity or role-play in the 'home corner' by themselves, showed entirely sensible behaviour and remarkable co-operation for their ages, for example when helping to tie each other's aprons before starting an activity with water. Some of the oldest pupils trusted to work at their history investigation on their own in a separate room did so in a totally responsible way, concentrating throughout on the task in hand.
16. Pupils make excellent relationships, both with staff, other adults and with each other. Co-operation and mutual support come naturally and cross all boundaries of age, gender, background or ability. In discussion with an inspector, some older pupils spoke emphatically of their regard for their school, their teachers and for each other. They clearly identify very strongly with their school and accept, individually and collectively, responsibility for maintaining the school's values of caring for each other.

17. Parents recognise very clearly the quality of the school's personal and social provision for pupils. One parent adding a comment to the parents' pre-inspection questionnaire summarised many parents' views as follows:

*'the school does promote maturity and responsibility amongst the pupils but it also instils an enormous sense of caring towards different sections of the community and between each other. I am constantly amazed and delighted to see how friendships in school cross over between years and classes and how the older children, both in and out of school, care for the littler ones.'*

18. Because attitudes and behaviour are so good, time in the school can be given entirely to productive work and play. It is a mark of the school's success in promoting positive attitudes and behaviour that, at first sight, very little is apparently done about it. Although there are formal rewards for good work and behaviour, and matters of right and wrong are sometimes explicitly discussed, the backbone of the school's highly successful provision for pupils' moral and social development is informal. The essential factor is that all staff firmly share a clear set of aims which they effectively promote through their emphatic example in every moment of school life. School staff show clear dedication to pupils' welfare and needs. They also show respect for pupils, taking an interest in them, listening to what they have to say, consulting them about school matters, giving them a sense of responsibility for their school and involving them in their own learning. In their purposefully co-operative relations with each other, with parents and with the community, too, school staff provide very good role models.

**Teaching is of very good quality and provides pupils with broad and stimulating opportunities to learn.**

19. Pupils' good achievement and excellent attitudes and behaviour are also the product of the very good quality of teaching that takes place in lessons. Teaching shows all-round strength but skilful management of pupils is an especially positive feature. Teachers set high expectations and clear boundaries which they reinforce with occasional rewards and rare sanctions. Pupils respond with excellent behaviour. As a result, teachers' and pupils' time and attention is given fully to teaching and learning in an entirely harmonious and purposeful atmosphere. Lessons proceed at a lively pace and much good quality work is done. Management of pupils is also very successful in relation to pupils' motivation. Teachers are very sensitive to pupils' needs for self-esteem and very successful in encouraging pupils to think well of themselves as learners. One sign of this is the very confident way in which many pupils, from an early age, speak out in class discussions and take part in school performances. Pupils' marked enthusiasm to learn reflects the infectious enthusiasm and a sense of humour in the teaching. Their sense of responsibility for their own learning is effectively promoted by the way teachers discuss with pupils individual targets for their learning and then give them feedback on their progress.
20. Pupils' good progress is the result of teachers' very good planning of the work pupils are to do. The learning intended for pupils of different ages, abilities and needs within the class is identified very carefully and clearly. Much hard work goes into preparing guidance and resources for different groups of pupils, including the very few with special educational needs. A careful check is kept on each pupil's progress to aid the process of setting appropriate challenges for all pupils. Matching tasks

and support to pupils' needs is helped on occasion in the class for Years 3-6 pupils when a part-time teacher takes half of the class for English or mathematics. Plans have been agreed for an extension of this part-time teaching support for the forthcoming school year. The class for reception, Year 1 and Year 2 pupils is also often divided for parts of lessons so that activities and support can be tailored to different needs. For most of the week, a classroom assistant works very effectively alongside the teacher of this class, often supporting the youngest pupils.

21. The challenge in this very small school of teaching classes of mixed age is well met as pupils' good standards show. Many factors account for this: the hard and skilful work of the teachers in planning and preparation; the effective contribution of support staff; the excellent attitudes and behaviour of pupils and their ability to work independently; and the flexible use of teaching methods to suit the situation. The national strategies for teaching literacy and numeracy have been effectively adapted to meet the needs of mixed-age classes. Only on a few brief occasions, when a class is being taught as a whole, are the needs of some pupils not fully met.
22. A further strength of teachers' methods is the quality of the questioning of pupils. Encouraging pupils to reason, imagine or evaluate for themselves is a consistently strong theme of the teaching. Many open-ended questions are asked and tasks set. Good examples of this were seen in a lesson on story writing for the oldest pupils and in a science lesson for the youngest. In the latter case, reception pupils were very effectively questioned by the classroom assistant on their predictions about which objects would or would not float in the water, and then on their observations, effectively drawing out pupils' appreciation of the significance of the objects' weight. Teachers' questioning is often challenging for pupils but, because teachers value their responses, pupils often show the courage to suggest their own ideas. This is part and parcel of the school's success in making pupils into the confident, outgoing people they are.
23. The quality of the lessons seen during the inspection was never less than good and more often it was very good, while a few lessons which exploited all of the positive aspects of teaching to the full were of excellent quality.
24. Teachers' planning, in addition to being systematic in providing for pupils' needs and progress, also provides for the work to be stimulating and interesting. Often, it is also good fun. There is a breadth and richness to the coverage of the National Curriculum. Interest and enthusiasm are often promoted by the effective links made between different areas of the curriculum. For example, recent history work by older pupils on World War Two, which included a visit to an exhibition with a simulated 'air-raid' experience, embraced work in many curriculum areas including writing, design and technology, music and dance. Pupils made their own gas masks, sang popular wartime songs and learnt to dance the 'Lambeth Walk'.
25. Much use is made of visits to places of local or historic interest. Visitors are also brought into school, for example to introduce pupils to African culture and art or those of Aboriginal Australia. Learning opportunities are enhanced through some valuable community links such as with the church or commercial organisations like Severn Trent Water who manage the nearby reservoir. A link exists with a school in Tanzania with which the school exchanges letters, photographs and e-mails. Pupils have been involved in some major charitable enterprises taking responsibility for much of the organisation themselves. Each year, there is a trip for pupils aged seven to eleven to a residential centre for a range of outdoor and other pursuits. Co-

operation with another small school nearby makes some of these additional learning opportunities viable. Much encouragement has been given to pupils to learn musical instruments and an exceptionally high proportion of pupils participate in this programme.

**The school is very well led and managed; the headteacher shows great commitment and industry and is very well supported by a strong staff team.**

26. The headteacher gives very strong leadership to a united and dedicated staff team who share a very clear vision of the aims and values the school should pursue. This is a school with a very firm sense of its own identity and purpose. Aims are translated into practical action in an entirely consistent, energetic and therefore effective way. Strong teamwork is true not just of all school staff, whatever their role, but also of the school's relations with governors, parents and the wider community. The school is both pervaded and surrounded by an atmosphere of co-operation and commitment, all of it focused on providing pupils with an education that is stimulating, enjoyable and very purposeful. The personal example provided by the headteacher is a vital factor in the creation of this most constructive atmosphere. One parent at the pre-inspection meeting for parents remarked that 'the commitment of the headteacher to the school and to the village is remarkable'.
27. The headteacher surmounts most effectively the challenge of managing the school while at the same time acting as a class teacher for most of the week. She is very successful in both roles. This can only be achieved by giving much personal time to the work. Management tasks of monitoring the school's performance and leading improvements are very well accomplished. The headteacher has a very clear understanding of the school's strengths and of where it should aim to improve. Action to promote improvement is well planned and effectively implemented. This has been evident in the school's response to issues for action identified in the report of the previous school inspection. Improvements to the school's accommodation and resources for the youngest pupils' curriculum and for all pupils' physical education have been energetically and successfully tackled. The headteacher shows drive, imagination and enterprise in promoting school improvement. Examples of this are arrangements initiated with other small schools and the nearest secondary school for co-operation over sharing of physical education accommodation and equipment. Another example is a recent initiative for a group of small schools to share employment of a 'roving' teacher with expertise in information and communication technology and to share resources for the subject. Enterprise has been shown in securing funding support for the school and practical support from business and community organisations. The headteacher works closely with the supportive, well-informed and active governing body in planning the school's development and in making the best use of financial and other resources. The school is efficiently administered by the headteacher, governors and school secretary.
28. A measure of the very effective leadership is the way in which this very small school maximises the advantages of smallness while minimising the potential

disadvantages. The closeness of relationships small size allows is effectively exploited both within the school and in the close partnership with parents and the community. On the other hand, the breadth of staff expertise provided by such a small staff is effectively enhanced through staff training and by co-operation with external sources of expertise. The broad and stimulating curriculum shows how well this is done. The school also addresses the potential limits to pupils' personal and social development within so small and enclosed a school by encouraging pupils to be adventurous and outward looking. This, combined with the very successful promotion of pupil confidence and self-esteem, prepares pupils well for the challenge of adapting to the much larger setting of their subsequent secondary education.

**The school watches very carefully over the care, welfare and progress of each of its pupils.**

29. The school has conscientious and systematic arrangements for safeguarding pupils and their welfare. All relevant legal requirements for procedures in this area of the school's work are effectively met. There are good procedures for monitoring health and safety and good provision for child protection should they be needed.
30. Parents recognise that the school knows its pupils well and keeps effective checks on pupils' progress, behaviour and attendance. Provisions for individual pupils' progress – academic, social or emotional – are well matched to their well-understood needs. Where pupils have special needs, these are identified and appropriate support provided.
31. The closeness of relationships with parents results in an effective day-to-day partnership between teachers and parents in keeping a check on pupils' academic and personal welfare and in working together to provide for their individual needs.
32. The effectiveness of all these measures is seen in the good standards of pupils' work, the excellent behaviour and the good level of attendance.

**The school has a very close relationship with parents and the local community, and parents think very highly of the school.**

33. The school is very close to parents and to the community of the village of Kirk Ireton from which the majority of pupils come. The parents and the community show a strong sense of ownership of, and pride in, their village school. There is much day-to-day contact and parents are frequent and welcome visitors. The strong partnership with parents and the community is mutually beneficial. The school benefits when parents raise funds, help with school outings and swimming lessons, and provide activities after school such as soccer, cricket and computer club. Community members help maintain the natural habitat garden. They contribute to a 'paired-reading' scheme and come to school on National Book Day to read their favourite stories to pupils. Links with the

church also extend opportunities for pupils outside the school day. The school, on the other hand, helps to support community events and traditions such as 'Wakes Week' festivities, maypole dancing, carol singing for charity and church fund-raising fayres and garden parties. The school was also the moving force behind millennium celebrations and a village outing to the Millennium Dome. Pupils entertain local senior citizens with a Christmas concert and a group visits a local centenarian on each birthday.

34. Parents showed their interest in the school by attending the pre-inspection meeting arranged for them, and completing the parents' questionnaire, in good number. Every parent completing the questionnaire agreed that:
  - their child likes school.
  - behaviour is good (three-quarters agreeing strongly).
  - the school is well led and managed (85 per cent agreeing strongly).
  - the school helps pupils become mature and responsible (three-quarters agreeing strongly).
  - the school works closely with parents.
35. Three-quarters of respondents also agreed strongly that teaching is good. Comments at the parents' meeting endorsed all of these positive views.
36. On only one question did a significant number of parents express a negative view: 38 per cent of parents disagreed that the school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons, while four per cent said they did not know. However, examination of the questionnaires shows that almost all of those making a negative response were parents of the youngest children. It is not usual for schools to provide after-school activities for the youngest pupils. Two parents added comments to questionnaires on this matter, one recognising that, with such a small school staff, the range of activities outside lessons was bound to be limited, while another stated that he/she would not be in favour of teachers staging more activities as they already had 'very busy jobs'.
37. Some parents at the meeting expressed a desire to receive more information about the work pupils are undertaking in the curriculum, a wish the school has already begun to respond to. The questionnaire showed the great majority of parents to be content with homework arrangements but a small number would like clearer communication about arrangements for mathematics homework.
38. Overall, parents clearly think very highly of the school. One parent captured the flavour of many positive comments added to questionnaires by stating:

*'Kirk Ireton School is an absolute gem. You couldn't in my opinion receive anything on the same level of care, commitment, support or teaching if you put your children through the private system. The closeness between staff and parents is very real – the teachers care greatly about each individual child.... there is a great sense of team spirit and kindness.... genuine enthusiasm from staff and pupils.... A unique and lasting sense of*

*responsibility and care is instilled in each child before they leave for secondary school.'*

## **WHAT COULD BE IMPROVED**

**Opportunities for pupils to extend and practise their skills in information and communication technology across the curriculum, as set out in the school's plans for improvement.**

39. The school has been undertaking some valuable development in its provision for information and communication technology (ICT). In the last year, additional computers and some additional software have been acquired and connection to the Internet has been established. Older pupils now know how to access the internet and to send e-mails. A parent governor has established a weekly after-school computer club to extend pupils' opportunities to enhance their skills. School staff are in the middle of a programme of training designed to help them take advantage of the new resources.
40. However, the school is not yet fully meeting the higher expectations for ICT within the revised National Curriculum effective from September 2000. This includes pupils using their ICT skills across the subjects of the curriculum. There are some examples of this happening, most often when pupils word-process their writing. However, opportunities for pupils to consolidate or further develop a range of ICT skills in work across the curriculum are not yet sufficient. Pupils are not, for example, using ICT to organise, present or analyse data from their science investigations.
41. The school is well aware of the need to develop further its work in ICT and has good plans for so doing. A promising and potentially cost-effective development taking place at the time of the inspection was collaboration with a group of other small schools in the employment of a shared teacher with ICT expertise to work alongside each school in developing the work in the subject. There are similar plans to share software.

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

The school has no significant weaknesses but can further improve the education provided by:

**Integrating information and communication technology into work across the curriculum.**

The school should press ahead with the plans already detailed in the school improvement plan for the coming school year so as to:

- ensure that teachers' planning across the curriculum provides for the integration of ICT into subjects as appropriate;

- continue with the programme of staff training;
- adopt systematic assessment of pupils' progress in ICT across the curriculum;
- continue to acquire access to the software resources required.

## PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

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

Number of lessons observed	17
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
18	65	18	0	0	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	YR – Y6
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	45
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	1

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs	YR – Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	0
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	2

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

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	0
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	4

### Attendance

#### Authorised absence

	%
School data	5.0
National comparative data	5.2

#### Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.1
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***

	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	2000	8	5	13

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	—*	—*	—*
	Girls	—*	—*	—*
	Total	12	13	12
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	92	100	92
	National	83	84	90

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	—*	—*	—*
	Girls	—*	—*	—*
	Total	12	12	13
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	92	92	100
	National	84	88	88

### ***Attainment at the end of Key Stage 2***

Results of National Curriculum tests taken by pupils aged eleven at the end of Key Stage 2 in 2000 are not reported as the number of pupils was too small to be significant.

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

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	0
Black – African heritage	0
Black – other	0
Indian	0
Pakistani	0
Bangladeshi	0
Chinese	0
White	40
Any other minority ethnic group	0

*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	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.*

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

#### **Qualified teachers and classes: YR – Y6**

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	2.3
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	19.6
Average class size	22.5

#### **Education support staff: YR – Y6**

Total number of education support staff	3
Total aggregate hours worked per week	27.5

*FTE means full-time equivalent.*

### ***Financial information***

Financial year	1999/2000
	£
Total income	111,572
Total expenditure	106,397
Expenditure per pupil	2,047
Balance brought forward from previous year	3,783

## ***Results of the survey of parents and carers***

### **Questionnaire return rate**

Number of questionnaires sent out	45
Number of questionnaires returned	27

### **Percentage of responses in each category**

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	56	44	0	0	0
My child is making good progress in school.	56	41	0	4	0
Behaviour in the school is good.	74	26	0	0	0
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	41	44	11	0	4
The teaching is good.	74	22	0	4	0
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	30	63	4	4	0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	67	30	4	0	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	67	26	7	0	0
The school works closely with parents.	67	33	0	0	0
The school is well led and managed.	85	15	0	0	0
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	74	26	0	0	0
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	25	33	38	0	4