

# INSPECTION REPORT

## **BIRDSEGE FIRST SCHOOL**

Huddersfield

Kirklees

Unique reference number: 107649

Headteacher: Mrs Jean Ross

Reporting inspector: Jane Schaffer  
23698

Dates of inspection: 11<sup>th</sup> – 12<sup>th</sup> March 2002

Inspection number: 197521

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
Age range of pupils:	4 - 10 years
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
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Appropriate authority:	Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	Mrs Alison Tribe
Date of previous inspection:	15 <sup>th</sup> September 1997

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

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

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Birdsedge First School is situated in the village of Birdsedge between Huddersfield and Penistone. The school's 74 pupils, 48 of whom are boys and 26 girls, are drawn from Birdsedge and nearby farms and villages. It has no nursery. The school is popular and in some years it is over subscribed. Almost all pupils are of white United Kingdom heritage. Eleven per cent of pupils have special educational needs which is below the national average. Most of these pupils have moderate learning needs but a significant number have dyslexia. The percentage of pupils having a statement of need is above average. There are no pupils eligible for free school meals, which is very different to most schools. When children start in the reception class, they have a wide spread of attainment but overall their knowledge and understanding are greater than for most four year olds. Since September, two of the three classes have undergone a change of teacher and a new headteacher was appointed.

## HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

The school aims to provide its pupils with an excitement for learning and to help the pupils become responsible and caring members of society. It achieves these aims very well, and in so doing, it ensures that its pupils reach high standards in their work and in their behaviour. The pupils' achievements are very good, reflecting the skilful teaching. The headteacher has a clear vision for the school and communicates this well to staff, parents and pupils. With the support of the governors and staff, she has been successful in improving the school's standards in an unsettled period of change. The school provides very good value for money.

### What the school does well

- As a result of the very good teaching they receive, pupils attain very high standards in English, mathematics and science by the end of Year 2 and by the time they leave the school at the end of Year 5.
- Pupils have an exceptionally well-developed sense of their responsibilities to each other and to the school community.
- The headteacher and the deputy headteacher have forged a very effective team to take the school forward.
- Pupils are taught to question and look for their own answers, and as a result they often produce original and thought-provoking work.
- Provision is good and teaching is often excellent in music, art and dance, and consequently many pupils achieve standards above average in these subjects.

### What could be improved

- The classroom for the children in the reception year and Year 1 has insufficient space to meet the needs of the children in both year groups, and the school's organisation to address this is not satisfactory.
- Pupils do not have enough opportunities to use information and communication technology in their learning in other subjects, and so the attainment of pupils in Years 3, 4 and 5 is below that typically expected for their age.

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

## HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

When it was inspected in September 1997, Birdsedge was judged to be a good school. Since then it has continued to improve at a very good rate. It has maintained very high standards in reading and writing and significantly improved standards in mathematics and science. The school was asked to improve assessment procedures so as to provide more detailed information of pupils' performance. The school now has good systems in place to track pupils' progress and to provide information on how well pupils are learning. Pupils from the youngest class upwards are given the confidence to write independently and a range of strategies to learn to spell accurately. The school provides good quality

information to parents so that they can help and support their child's learning. The governors have ensured that their annual report publishes the attendance figures.

## STANDARDS

The table shows the standards achieved by pupils at the end of Year 2 based on National Curriculum test results

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	
well above average	A
above average	B
average	C
below average	D
well below average	E

The pupils attain high standards in English, mathematics and science. The results of the National Curriculum tests at the end of Year 2 have regularly placed the school among the best-performing five per cent of schools nationally and of schools in similar social settings. In 2001, many pupils achieved standards above the expected level and no pupils fell below it. Pupils currently in Year 2 are on track to achieve standards well above the national average in English, mathematics and science. Results are likely to be slightly lower than 2001 because there are a greater number of pupils with special educational needs in this year group. It must be borne in mind that a relatively small number of pupils sit the tests each year, and therefore any increase in the number of pupils with special education needs has a greater effect on results than in a larger school.

Pupils' achievements are very good, and so by the time they are in Year 5, they are attaining standards well above expectations for this year group. The achievement of pupils with special educational needs is very good as many achieve the standards expected for their age by the time they leave the school. The majority of children in the reception class are set to exceed the goals set for their age by the end of the reception year. In information and communication technology, most pupils in Year 2 achieve the standards expected of them. The older pupils, however, have not had enough experience in using computers in their daily work and, although a few pupils who use computers at home are working at the expected level, the majority are working below expectations for their age. The very good teaching in art, music and dance helps pupils achieve beyond expectations in these subjects.

## PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Pupils hold their school and their teachers in high regard. They are keen to work hard and respond with enthusiasm to all the opportunities offered to them. In the reception class, children start the morning with eager curiosity.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Behaviour is very good and a high standard is maintained throughout the day. At assembly times, for instance, a warm friendliness is possible because even the youngest children are conscious of the right way to behave at this formal gathering. There have been no exclusions in the past year.
Personal development and	Very good. Pupils respect each other, and from the youngest class up

relationships	form very good relationships with other pupils and with adults.
Attendance	Excellent. Only a very few days of schooling are missed and all absences are for proper reasons.

## TEACHING AND LEARNING

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

English and mathematics are taught well in every class and teachers use very effective methods to teach the skills of literacy and numeracy. There is a strong base of knowledge in science, art, music and dance.\* In the reception class there is a good understanding of how young children learn through play.

### Strengths in teaching and learning

Clear objectives for learning are identified for each lesson and teachers share these with pupils, so that they understand what they are expected to learn. Teachers' explanations are well formulated and concise, stemming from very well established subject knowledge. In the very best lessons, stimulating activities and resources enliven pupils' learning, and draw on the knowledge they have acquired in other lessons. In all classes, pupils are provided with activities that challenge them to try their hardest, no matter what their level of attainment. A good range of teaching methods are used, particularly for those who learn more slowly than others. Teachers and learning support assistants plan together very well to provide for those with special educational needs and a good range of activities are provided to challenge those who are especially gifted.

### Areas for improvement

When pupils in Year 1 are taught in the hall, or in a classroom other than their own, resources are limited; for instance, pupils do not have the benefit of information charts, reference books and computers. Teachers in all year groups do not make enough use of computers in the majority of their lessons.

\*These were subjects inspected. History, geography, design and technology, games and gymnastics were not inspected.

## OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Very good. The curriculum meets statutory requirements, and in Years 2 to 5 very effective strategies for teaching literacy and numeracy are enriched by a wealth of stimulating experiences in many other subjects. In the reception and Year 1 classes, there is good planning for literacy and numeracy, but on occasions it is hindered by the difficulties arising from the accommodation and organisation of the school day.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Good. Pupils' different needs are identified very early. Learning support assistants are well trained and skilful. Their deployment is carefully structured to where it is most needed. On occasions pupils' targets are too broad and are not set out in small achievable steps.
Provision for pupils'	Very good. Pupils are taught to behave responsibly to each other, to the



personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural, development	school community and to the natural world. The school promotes a family atmosphere but also encourages pupils to have a wide horizon through their understanding of the many cultures of their society and the world beyond.
How well the school cares for its pupils	All staff have the pupils' welfare very much at heart and there are good systems to care for all pupils. However, the headteacher is awaiting training for child protection procedures. Systems for assessment are good and there is a good overview of how well each pupil is progressing.

## HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Very good. The headteacher has a secure vision for the school and this is imparted well to all members of the school community. The able support of the deputy headteacher has been a crucial element in ensuring that the school has remained effective during its recent period of change.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Good. The governors are knowledgeable and keenly interested in the school. They fulfil their legal responsibilities to it conscientiously.
The school's evaluation of its performance	The school uses many methods to check its own performance. This results in a very clear-sighted understanding of its own strengths and areas in need of development.
The strategic use of resources	The headteacher deploys teachers and support staff effectively. However, the current organisation of the reception and Year 1 class does not make the best use of accommodation, and computers are not used efficiently. The school consults with parents and pupils very well. It regularly challenges itself to do as well or better than other schools.

## PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Their children like school because of the friendly atmosphere.</li> <li>• The teaching is good and so their children make good progress both academically and in their personal development.</li> <li>• The school is well managed and led.</li> <li>• The school works closely with parents and they are well informed about their children's progress.</li> <li>• There is a good range of activities outside lessons.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The amount of homework provided.</li> <li>• A few parents felt that the teaching in the reception and year groups did not provide enough challenge for their children.</li> </ul>

The parents have very positive views of their school that are confirmed by the inspection. The school has a great deal to offer all its pupils. The homework provided for pupils is in keeping with what is expected nationally for the age range within the school. Teachers work hard to ensure that the work that is done at home supports and develops what pupils have learnt in class. The inspection team's findings did not agree with concerns relating to teaching in the reception and Year 1. Difficulties with the organisation of the two year groups were identified and attributed, in the main, to the lack of classroom

space and the increase in numbers in January. Despite these difficulties, teaching challenged pupils at the right level for their maturity and attainment and children in both year groups are making good progress in English and mathematics.

## **PART B: COMMENTARY**

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

**As a result of the very good teaching they receive, pupils attain very high standards in English, mathematics and science by the end of Year 2 and by the time they leave the school at the end of Year 5.**

1. The results of the National Curriculum tests at the end of Year 2 have regularly placed the school among the best-performing five per cent of schools nationally and of schools in similar social settings. In science, teacher assessments show that pupils' attainment is of the same high standard. A large proportion of pupils attain standards above those expected for their age. In 2001, three quarters of pupils reached the higher level in mathematics, and two thirds achieved this level in reading. A much smaller proportion of pupils achieved it in writing, although the school's results were still very striking as no pupil fell below the average standard. In most schools, pupils do not achieve as well in writing as in reading and the school is currently looking at the reasons for this. The school has recently changed some of its methods of teaching the children how to write in the reception year so that they rely less heavily on copying words spelt by adults. Writing is now taught very well in the reception class and children are developing as keen writers whose level of attainment in writing is as high as it is in reading. For instance, they have already learnt that a story has a beginning, middle and an end. With the help of adults some children can write their own words and sentences. They have all been able to make their own small books, some with significant help from adults, retelling the story of 'Elmer', the patchwork elephant. They clearly identify a beginning, setting the scene for the coloured elephant, and go on to develop the story as he encounters problems with his grey friends. Those of higher attainment draw the story to a conclusion.
2. The work of the pupils currently in Year 2, shows that the high standards of the past will be maintained, although there is a greater number of pupils with special educational needs in this year group and they are unlikely to attain the very high standards of 2001. It must be borne in mind that a relatively small number of pupils sit the tests each year, and therefore, any increase in the number of pupils with special educational needs has a greater effect on results than in a larger school.
3. The pupils in Year 5 are achieving well above average and a significant proportion are already working at the level expected by the end of Year 6. In mathematics, pupils' skills in calculating mentally are sharp. They try hard to be the first to work out the answers to the quick-fire problems posed by teachers. In all year groups, pupils use a range of different strategies to work out their sums, and many explain succinctly how they have arrived at their answer in their own words, using correct mathematical terms. In English, pupils tackle books at the level expected for their age, and higher attaining pupils are happy to try texts that are challenging and intended for those older than themselves. For example, a pupil in Year 5, remembered reading 'The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe' when she was in Year 3 and could explain why she would still choose this as her favourite book. By the time they are in Year 2, pupils use punctuation well and can make the style of their writing fit different purposes, although choice of words and sentence structures are not always as imaginative as might be expected. Their work reflects a focus on improving punctuation, spelling and aspects of grammar, as at the start of the year few were confident writers. In Years 4 and 5, pupils' writing develops at a very good rate. For example, evocative phrases abound in their pieces, describing a fantasy landscape as "beyond the horizon, purple mountains were dappled in sunlight." Their ability to match their style to a variety of

situations also develops well, as in an imagined newspaper report of Harry Potter's Quidditch match in which the writer effectively used the sharp, exaggerated style of the sports writer: "Harry went into a spectacular dive to catch the golden snitch." In science, pupils' understanding of the processes of scientific enquiry is well advanced and they have good knowledge of scientific ideas and concepts.

4. The principal reason for the pupils doing so well lies in the quality of the teaching. There are very good relationships between adults and pupils, based on trust and respect. The work provided is always challenging. With two year groups in each class, planning is mainly based on the requirements for the oldest year group with work adapted to suit the needs of the younger age range. This provides good challenge for the younger year groups. The school has identified the pupils with special gifts or talents, thus helping teachers focus on tasks to extend the pupils' knowledge and understanding. For example, pupils with a special talent in mathematics in Years 4 and 5 worked on solving problems involving co-ordinates, in which deductions needed to be made on the system of numbering the 'x' and 'y' axes in all four quadrants. The work tested not only their knowledge and understanding of co-ordinates beyond the level expected in Years 4 and 5, but also how well they could look at a problem from different angles. Teachers provide good quality tasks for all groups of pupils at the level they need to progress. They are skilful at ensuring that those with special educational needs, and those that learn more slowly than others, are included during whole class teaching sessions so that they too are challenged and feel proud of their efforts. For instance, in a session at the end of a mathematics lesson in Years 2 and 3, the teacher exclaimed in delight at the extra work the lower attaining pupils had done with the learning support assistant; they had not only calculated their individual sums, about the cost of crisp packets, but had gone on to discover the total amount 'spent' by the group.
5. Teachers' explanations are well formulated, concise and focused on the objectives for the lesson. They stem from a very well established knowledge of the subject. Pupils are made aware of how well they are doing in each lesson as teachers share the lesson objectives at the start and check with the pupils their achievements in the whole class session at the end. This motivates and encourages pupils to try their best. Activities are interesting, and resources of all kinds are used to enliven pupils' learning and extend their understanding. In science, pupils are given good opportunities to investigate and to learn through their own observations the content of the programme of study for science. Teachers relate pupils' learning to practical applications and to what they have learnt in other subjects. For example, pupils in a science lesson in Years 2 and 3 understood the importance of testing fabrics for strength because they had discussed the relative strength of different materials in design and technology when making their own carrier bag.
6. The school has begun to look at the many different ways pupils learn and to adjust its methods accordingly. This is particularly effective for the support provided for pupils with special educational needs at the times when they are withdrawn for extra lessons. The school has identified a range of methods for supporting different learning needs, and teaching assistants are skilful and well trained. The extra help pupils receive is often of a short duration, but takes place daily, so that the pupil quickly improves in the area in which they have difficulty. For example, pupils in Year 2, needing help with using letter sounds to improve their reading, spend ten minutes each day working through a finely structured programme that builds up their knowledge step by step. Others work on computer programs aimed at increasing their observation of the shape of words, and the school has started a ground-breaking initiative aimed at improving pupils' concentration span.

**Pupils have an exceptionally well-developed sense of their responsibility to each other and to the school community.**

7. The school has very high expectations of pupils' behaviour and their attitudes to each other, both of which contribute to pupils' willingness to learn and to help others learn. The school promotes caring for others and the duty of care very well. A family atmosphere pervades the school. From the start of the day to its end, the school's emphasis on good relationships is evident. All staff, including the headteacher, greet pupils in the morning. This creates a warm, welcoming atmosphere to which pupils respond immediately. On Monday, for instance, pupils were keen to tell teachers what had occurred during the weekend, and it was natural for those who had made models, or found items of interest, at home to bring them into school. Because teachers are interested in their achievements, pupils show the same interest to each other. Pupils respect each other's work and are generous in their praise of others' efforts. They share resources for learning and help each other when they work as a pair or in groups. Older pupils are happy to take care of younger ones. For instance, at lunchtime, older pupils sit at tables with younger ones and chat to them happily over the meal. Whilst out at play, pupils are conscious of the games of others and take care to include those who are at a loose end. The out-of-school activity which encourages watching and recording the wildlife around the school is set up so that older pupils train those that are younger.
8. The school has effective systems in place to help pupils develop a mature and responsible attitude to each other and to the school community. Discussion time is provided so that a range of issues appropriate for the different age groups are tackled. Very few instances of bullying occur, but nevertheless, pupils know that bullying would be dealt with in an open and supportive manner. Pupils are taken to visit places of worship of different religions and the written work from Years 4 and 5, done after their visit to a Hindu temple, indicates that they have begun to gain a good view of the world's many faiths and the part they play in society. A school council has been introduced relatively recently and there are now elected members from Year 1 upwards. The method of electing representatives to the council allows pupils to gain a good understanding of what it means to represent others and the responsibilities involved. The pupils know and understand numerous issues relating to care for the environment. They show a mature appreciation of the environment around the school and understand that they have a duty of responsibility towards it. They understand that there are those in the world less fortunate than themselves and they have made a good start in understanding the responsibilities of good citizenship.

**The headteacher and the deputy headteacher have forged a very effective team to take the school forward.**

9. The school has experienced much change in personnel and because of this it was essential that clear educational direction was established from the start, and that staff should be supported and encouraged to form a cohesive team. In a few short months, this has been achieved as a result of the effective professional partnership between the headteacher and deputy headteacher. Although both are very knowledgeable and have an extensive range of educational expertise, their partnership has been fruitful because they have been ready to discuss strengths and weaknesses both of the school and within their own expertise, and most importantly, to learn from each other. They have also been happy to develop their expertise by calling on the knowledge of a nearby Beacon school.

10. Although Birdsedge was already a good school, there were a number of areas in which improvements were needed. The in-coming headteacher sensibly worked with the existing school development plan. In this plan, the need to improve the teaching of information and communication technology, and the provision for children in the reception class, were appropriately identified as areas for development, both with adequate plans of action to address the shortfalls. The school's aim to achieve high standards was clearly being met; however, the new headteacher identified that there were not enough opportunities for pupils to develop self-motivation and self-reliance. Working together, the headteacher and deputy headteacher established a list of points for action that would promote a shared vision with staff, pupils and parents, the over-arching objective being to help pupils become independent learners. They also identified the need to provide for parents a more transparent view of the school's work. Some of these points for action have already been addressed or partly addressed and are making a very positive contribution to the pupils' development. For instance, the school council has been started, productive sessions for discussion have been established so that pupils can make their opinions known, and there are more after-school activities to develop social awareness, including the extremely popular football sessions led by a professional footballer. Parents indicated that they were very pleased to now be included more, both in the process of school development, and in the learning of their children. The school now consults regularly with parents and with pupils to ascertain their views on provision.
11. A major change affecting the staff has been a greater emphasis on co-ordinators taking responsibility for the subjects they lead. This is now well set out within the school's systems of management and linked to the process of performance management that was already established in the school. New members of staff have taken on responsibilities for areas identified for improvement and they are working very effectively to develop these, despite some significant drawbacks with regard to resources and the accommodation. An effective and committed staff team has been established and is supported well by both the headteacher and the deputy. Changes have been carried out sensitively and with a proper regard to the time-scales involved. New members of staff have been given very good support so that they can contribute without fear of criticism at a very early stage of settling in to their new posts.

**Pupils are taught to question and look for their own answers, and as a result they often produce original and thought-provoking work.**

12. The school has set itself the aim of developing an excitement for learning, and to improve the pupils' ability to independently enquire, research, question, investigate and be creative. The realisation of this aim is a strength of the school, even though there are some areas where it could be improved upon as in information and communication technology and outdoor play for the reception year. Lessons are planned with a good emphasis on imparting knowledge to pupils, but alongside this clear objectives are set to develop pupils' ability to question for themselves. Work is often presented as an investigation or problem to solve. Teachers often pose broad questions such as "How do you think this came about?" In the reception class, for instance, the teacher taught the children new words and new vocabulary as they read a story but then opened the discussion up with questions such as "What do you think is interesting about this picture?"
13. Teachers look for opportunities to promote an awareness of the need to have an open mind, to question and, on occasions, to consider that there are many unanswered questions. This was done very well in an assembly that focused on the beauty of nature. The teacher questioned pupils about the propagation of seeds to which they

eagerly responded with many correct answers. Then a question was put as to what was it that ensured each seed would grow into the same type of plant as the one it had come from. Leaving the pupils wondering was a good ploy to get them thinking that some questions are difficult to answer with the knowledge that we have at our disposal.

14. Much of the science teaching is through practical investigation, and as a result, pupils develop a good understanding of the process of scientific enquiry. From an early age they learn to approach tasks in their own way. In the reception class, children investigating repeating patterns in mathematics responded well because the task was open-ended, allowing them to experiment and try out their ideas. A higher attaining pupil made a complex pattern involving four shapes repeated with one alteration four times, a far more advanced sequence, than he would have achieved if the task had been more prescribed. In Year 2, pupils of lower attainment, working on an activity to test the hardness of different surfaces, made an extra discovery in that they had also changed the surface of the penny they were using as a scratch tool. The teacher valued this discovery, thereby helping pupils gain confidence in their own observations and research.
15. Older pupils, working on a history topic about life in Britain during World War 2, gathered facts and information from a range of sources including books, articles and Internet sources, artefacts and the memories of those alive at the time. They were given good opportunities to compare and question sources of information. For instance, one pupil noted that the information they were given by an elderly resident of Birdsedge, who recalled her own experiences, was from a different viewpoint to that of some of the other sources. Pupils in Years 4 and 5 achieve original and inventive pieces of work using their skills from mathematics, art and literacy, for instance, in their eye-catching posters advertising a fiction or non-fiction book, and their own design for games using their knowledge of co-ordinates.

**Provision is good and teaching is often excellent in music, art and dance, and consequently many pupils achieve standards above average in these subjects.**

16. The school places a high importance on the pupils' creativity. It realises that many pupils flourish when allowed to explore this aspect of their personality. Teaching in art, music and dance is good and it is used effectively to support learning in other areas of the curriculum, including numeracy and literacy. The celebration of pupils' work through displays and their performances contributes much to pupils' personal, social, spiritual and cultural development
17. In art and design, pupils achieve good standards in their knowledge and understanding of materials and processes, in their appreciation of elements such as tone, shape and texture; and in their knowledge of artists and craftspeople. In the Years 4 and 5 class, the pupils have been studying the work of the artist Kandinsky. They have gained an insight into the way he produced his pictures, his life and the times in which he lived. They have related the abstract shapes he produced to their knowledge of shape in mathematics, and their vocabulary and use of descriptive phrases has been enlarged. In their own paintings pupils' techniques for applying colour are good and their pictures show a mature understanding of the style of the different artists they have studied. In the Years 2 and 3 class, the pupils have been studying the properties of different materials in science in a series of very effective lessons. They produced pictures and patterns using a collage of varying textures. The pupils chose to use 'natural' materials for their collage, making their own decision as to what was meant by this term. After some discussion, they included items such as

metal paper clips along with sand, wood and leaves, arguing that metal was a natural substance. The teacher allowed their decisions to guide their work, but successfully encouraged them to think about aspects of composition such as contrast of texture according to the shapes they had defined.

18. The school provides good opportunities for pupils to study a musical instrument outside of lessons. Visiting specialists teach instruments such as the clarinet, violin and keyboards. Other pupils learn to play the guitar and the recorder in groups that meet after school. The school integrates the more advanced skills of these pupils in a school band which meets to practise once a week. Plans for lessons take good account of the fact that some pupils have more knowledge than others of musical terms and knowledge, such as that of traditional notation. The quality of teaching in music and dance lessons is very high so that all pupils achieve a standard above that expected for their age. In an excellent music lesson, for instance, pupils in Years 4 and 5 worked together in small groups to produce a composition using tuned, untuned and vocal sounds, in which they achieved a coherent expression of mood, and adhered correctly to limitations such as providing a cyclical rhythm. Their co-operation and understanding of the limitations and purpose of their task reflected a level of work generally expected in Year 6. In dance, they worked very co-operatively to produce a sequence of movements expressing what they had identified as the mood of the two major styles of the painter they were studying in their art lessons. They achieved an above average quality of movement, both as individuals and as a group, showing awareness of the different elements, such as speed, direction and shape, that changed the nature of their dance sequence.
19. In all creative activities, teachers have been successful in helping pupils understand how to evaluate their own work. Keen personal and group evaluation is a well-integrated part of the teaching process so that pupils naturally look at their own achievements and seek to improve.

## **WHAT COULD BE IMPROVED**

**The classroom for the children in the reception year and Year 1 has insufficient space to meet the needs of the children in both year groups, and the school's organisation to address this is not satisfactory.**

20. The school has three classrooms and has two year groups in each class, starting with the reception group and Year 1. The school has an admission number of 15 but in some year groups, such as Year 3, there are almost half this number, whilst other year groups are full. Currently there are 14 reception children and 13 Year 1 pupils. Children start in the reception class up to one or two terms before they are five in September or January. The school has made good efforts to plan a curriculum to match the requirements of the nationally recommended guidance for children in the reception year. Currently there are still some aspects of this curriculum which are not fully in place, such as the full use of the outdoor environment to develop children's learning in all areas, but most importantly in physical and social skills. The school has plans to address this in the immediate future.
21. The difficulty arises in the amount of space in the reception year classroom; it does not allow for there to be enough tables at which pupils can sit, and at the same time, provide for the practical activities for children in the reception year. The school has responded to the problem by teaching the Year 1 pupils for some of the time in the school hall. The hall is used for many other activities, and on occasions, Year 1 use an empty classroom when the room's usual occupants need the hall for physical



education. This results in the Year 1 being unsettled, and whilst behaviour is always good, their concentration has to be re-established each time on arrival in a new teaching area. For some lessons, such as an active science lesson investigating materials, the added space of the hall is a benefit and pupils work well. In other lessons, particularly literacy and numeracy, the pupils are cut off from usual classroom resources such as books, displays and the use of classroom computers. At the end of the session, they do not have the opportunity to put their work somewhere to which they can return and although their work is displayed well in the classroom, it is not there to be referred to during their learning. For the class teaching session in the literacy and numeracy hours, pupils have to sit on the hall floor which is not carpeted as one would expect in a classroom teaching area. Naturally, this results in fidgeting by the time 20 minutes has elapsed.

22. The pupils in both year groups are making satisfactory and sometimes good progress in their learning, but a few pupils in Year 1 are taking too long to settle to productive work. The teaching staff, in reception and Year 1, are new to the school. Prior to January, reception class planning did not reflect the nationally recommended guidance. The headteacher correctly identified that this needed to be done. However, in order to address the planning requirements, changes to the organisation of the classroom space needed to be made. Staff have had little time to consider options with regard to the organisation of teaching areas and the best ways to address the problem. The school has fluctuating numbers because of the intake of children in January as well as at the start of the autumn term. As a result, the problem increases in January.

**Pupils do not have enough opportunities to use information and communication technology in their learning in other subjects and so the attainment of pupils in Years 3, 4 and 5 is below that typically expected for their age.**

23. The school's own improvement planning for the current year identified the need to improve provision for information and communication technology. Staff training and upgrading of resources were identified as priorities. The school has improved its resources so that there is now one computer to an average of 15 pupils, but is planning to increase this. The training of staff encountered difficulties because of the numbers that left the school, including the co-ordinator for the subject. However, there is a good action plan to address this situation and new staff are gaining in confidence because the local authority advisor has provided timely support.
24. Pupils have had opportunities to present their work in different forms using information and communication technology. For instance, pupils in Year 4 and 5 produced a travel leaflet about Birdsedge with pictures taken with the school's digital camera imported into the text. They know that the Internet and CD-ROMs are powerful sources of information and have used these in their research into art, science and history topics. An after-school club has been started and the Year 5 pupils who belong have produced a school newspaper. However, pupils have not used computers as tools to classify and sort information to any great extent, and so have not had the opportunity of linking their learning in mathematics about data handling with this very prominent aspect of computer work. In literacy, computers have been used to help draft and present work. Pupils have been taught to use different fonts and styles of lettering so as to develop their understanding of design and the lay-out of a page, but teachers have not tapped into all the opportunities for using computers to teach grammar, punctuation and spelling. In mathematics, opportunities to run through simple learning programs to sharpen up pupils' knowledge of tables and number facts are not used enough. In science, they have not been widely used for recording scientific data and

the opportunity to carry out tests to monitor changes has not been exploited. Although some good activities have been provided for pupils to research and word process, computers are not fully integrated into the fabric of lessons as a teaching and learning tool. As a result, a significant minority of pupils lack confidence in finding their own stored work and making changes to it.

25. The school's up-to-date computers are sited in the computer suite which allows for half a class to use the machines at a time, with pupils working in pairs. Teaching assistants with good computer skills provide effective support to pupils in the sessions when they are in use. However, for a good part of the day, particularly in literacy and numeracy lessons, the computers are not in use. The computers are put to very good use when learning support assistants provide extra help for those with special educational needs. Even in the reception class, which is situated next to the computer suite, children are not able to access the computers unless accompanied by an adult. The school has not fully established a way in which the computers can be used effectively by pupils to investigate, research and improve their skills when learning in most subjects.

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

18. The headteacher, staff and governors should improve:
- (1) the organisation of the reception and Year 1 teaching groups so that difficulties arising from the lack of space do not impinge on teachers' planning for either year groups or the pupils' learning; and
  - (2) the way information and communication technology is used and taught in all subjects so as to improve the standard of pupils' work when using computers and other equipment\*.

\*This had been identified as an area for improvement by the school.

## PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

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

Number of lessons observed

13

Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils

14

### Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Number	2	4	3	4	0	0	0
Percentage	15	31	23	31	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 seven percentage points.

### Information about the school's pupils

#### Pupils on the school's roll

YR – Y5

Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)

74

Number of full-time pupils eligible for free school meals

0

#### Special educational needs

YR – Y5

Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs

2

Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register

11

#### English as an additional language

No of pupils

Number of pupils with English as an additional language

1

#### Pupil mobility in the last school year

No of pupils

Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission

6

Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving

1

### Attendance

#### Authorised absence

	%
School data	3.3

#### Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.0

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	Boys	Girls	Total
Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	2001	6	2	8

<b>National Curriculum Test/Task Results</b>		<b>Reading</b>	<b>Writing</b>	<b>Mathematics</b>
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys *	6	6	6
	Girls	2	2	2
	Total	8	8	8
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	100 (100)	100 (100)	100 (100)
	National	84 (83)	86 (84)	91 (90)

<b>Teachers' Assessments</b>		<b>English</b>	<b>Mathematics</b>	<b>Science</b>
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	6	6	6
	Girls	2	2	2
	Total	8	8	8
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	100 (100)	100 (100)	100 (100)
	National	85 (84)	89 (88)	89 (88)

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

*\* Information regarding the number of pupils is not included because of the small number in total.*

### ***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	73
Any other minority ethnic group	1

*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 – Y5**

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	4.5
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	21.1
Average class size	24.6

#### **Education support staff: YR – Y5**

Total number of education support staff	5
Total aggregate hours worked per week	85

### ***Financial information***

Financial year	2000/2001
	£
Total income	180087
Total expenditure	178330
Expenditure per pupil	2701
Balance brought forward from previous year	13167
Balance carried forward to next year	14924

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

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	3.0
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	3.5
Total number of vacant teaching posts (FTE)	0
Number of vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of a term or more (FTE)	1
Number of unfilled vacancies or vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of less than one term (FTE)	0

*FTE means full-time equivalent.*

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

**Questionnaire return rate**

Number of questionnaires sent out	74
Number of questionnaires returned	45

**Percentage of responses in each category**

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	71	24	2	2	0
My child is making good progress in school.	64	29	2	0	4
Behaviour in the school is good.	58	38	0	0	4
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	38	44	13	0	4
The teaching is good.	73	20	0	0	7
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	44	38	9	0	9
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	80	20	0	0	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	73	24	2	0	0
The school works closely with parents.	53	42	2	0	2
The school is well led and managed.	76	22	0	0	2
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	67	24	0	0	9
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	71	27	2	0	0